



WEST BUCKLAND  
PRIMARY SCHOOL  
AND NURSERY

# **West Buckland Primary School and Nursery**

## **Attendance Policy**

## 1.0 Philosophy

Attendance is critical to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems that affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

## 2.0 Objective

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

## 3.0 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulation in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, will come into force on 1 September 2013.

### 3.1 Absence During Term Time

To make a request for term time absence an S2 Absence Request Form should be completed and handed into school. The headteacher will then make a decision as to whether the absence will be 'authorised' or 'unauthorised' and the form will then be returned to you.

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** currently allow headteachers to grant leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances

Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

This alteration requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, which is not interrupted by a holiday in term time. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll

### **3.2 Absence during term time and Medical Absence**

The Government has decided, as shown in the amendments to the 2006 registration and attendance Act, that absence should not be taken in term time.

Therefore the school will not authorise holidays in term time.

- If a pupil is taken on holiday during term time and the absence has not been authorised by the School, a penalty notice may be considered appropriate.
- In such a case, each parent will receive a separate penalty notice for each child taken out of school. Should a parent fail to pay a penalty notice issued then the evidence provided by the School will be the only information laid before the court.
- Absence from school may be authorised only in exceptional circumstances, which might include a parents wedding, a family funeral, or an event such as an examination, or to take part in a sporting/music/ event approved by the school. Exceptional circumstances would be considered on an individual basis, and exceptions do not include holidays of any kind.
- If your child has 5 consecutive days off due to medical reasons we may require medical evidence before authorising absence. We may also require medical evidence in other circumstances.

The government has made this law because it is concerned about the assumption that additional holiday time can be taken out of the school year with little or no effect on children's learning. The points below are the reasons, because they directly affect children:

- English and Maths lessons are very carefully and tightly structured. Lessons are built on over the year, term by term. A child missing a week, or worse two weeks of lessons, misses out on building important skills that they may not return to again for a year.
- Other subjects could be missed out altogether if we are having a science or arts week. The child does not then get their entitled access to the curriculum.
- Socially children are disadvantaged by taking holidays at the beginning or end of terms. This is often a special time for establishing the class ethos or making the transition from one year group to another.
- It is difficult for teachers to plan assessment activities and keep monitoring children's progress when they are absent from school.
- Children's friendships can be jeopardised by long absences from school. They can return to school to find that friendship patterns have changed which can be upsetting and difficult for them.
- Children who take holidays during the middle of a term may have started a project, for example making something, and come back to find all their friends have finished the process and moved on to something else. It is difficult for children to catch up in such circumstances.
- Regular nursery attendance provides a good basis for statutory attendance.

The Governing Body feels strongly that parents should be encouraged to take their family holidays during the school holiday times and that time off during term time

should only be authorised for exceptional reasons, on an occasional basis, not as an entitlement nor as an annual event.

## **4.0 Principles**

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.

We will work towards ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.

We will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed. We will consult with all members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.

We will encourage parents/careers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance. We will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they receive training on registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance.

Regular information will be sent to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues. The Schools will promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence and will ensure regular evaluation of attendance and procedures by Senior Managers and the school governors.

Attendance may be an important feature of the School Improvement Plan.

Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place.

## **5.0 Procedures**

### **5.1 Times**

School begins promptly at 8.55 am and this is when the register is taken. Any child missing at this time will be marked with a late mark (L). Any child arriving after 9.00 am will be put down as unauthorised absence (U).

Each class allows children time to enter the class and settle before registration; the children will be allowed into the school from 8.45am.

Afternoon registration will take place when the children return from their lunch break.

### **5.2 Registers**

Registers will be completed at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions using paper registers. Registers should be returned to the Reception Office as soon as possible.

When input onto the Attendance system the following codes will be used:

- L - Late (before registers closed)
- M - Medical / Dental Appointment
- I - Illness
- O - Unauthorised
- N - No reason yet provided for absence
- P - Approved sporting activity
- R - Religious observance
- S - Study Leave
- V - Educational Visit or trip
- H - Family Holiday (agreed)
- G - Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)
- B - Education Off Site
- C - Other authorised circumstances
- E - Excluded
- U - Late after registration

### **5.3 Punctuality**

The importance of punctuality is stressed in the school's prospectus. If children are regularly late to school a 'late' letter is sent to parents stressing the importance of punctuality and the offer of support from the school. If lateness persists the Headteacher will refer the family to the Educational Welfare Officer.

### **5.4 First day Contact**

Parents are asked to telephone the school by 9.00 am on the first day of absence. If contact is not made by this time the school will ring the parent.

### **5.5 Monitoring Attendance**

In the first instance attendance will be monitored by class teachers and administrative staff. Any concerns will be referred to the Headteacher without delay.

## **6.0 Attendance Information**

Information regarding attendance will be included in the child's annual report. It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role that must be carried out in order to raise standards. Responsibility to promote attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

## **7.0 Formal Meetings with the Education Welfare Officer**

The aim of formal meetings with the Education Welfare Officer is to ensure that schools and Education Welfare Service deal with attendance cases quickly and in the most effective way to get the child back to school.

The formal meetings with the Education Welfare Officer framework promotes early intervention and aims to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance as soon as attendance problems become apparent.

Formal meetings involve engaging the parent(s), and/or Carer(s) specifying what improvements needs to be made.

Parents and carers have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. (Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996). Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time-frame, prosecution and proceedings are initiated.

## **8.0 Penalty Notice**

Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is both a legal requirement, and essential in order for students to maximise the opportunities available to them. The Somerset Education Welfare Service will continue to investigate cases of regular non-attendance from school and, following appropriate casework, instigate legal action if applicable. Penalty Notices offer a means for swift intervention which the County Council will use to combat truancy problems before they become entrenched. This code provides that the power to use Penalty Notices is applied consistently and fairly and that suitable administrative arrangements are in place.

Following the implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 it is possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices will require the parent of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay a fine, currently £60.00 if paid within 21 days or £120.00 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid, the matter is then referred to the Magistrates Court for a prosecution for non-attendance