



WEST BUCKLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL
AND NURSERY

West Buckland Primary School and Nursery

Attendance Policy

At West Buckland Primary School, we are committed to delivering exceptional education opportunities for all our children and recognise that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting exceptional school attendance. Quite simply, children cannot take full advantage of the opportunities available to them or achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some children find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with children and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour, SEND and pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving children's attendance.

We recognise that parents and carers have a vital role and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems. We will provide effective and efficient communications with children, parents and carers, and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support to meet our objectives.

We are committed to:

- Developing, promoting and modelling a whole-school culture that promotes the
- benefits of high attendance.
- Ensuring this Attendance Policy and our expectations for attendance are clear and easily understood by staff, children and parents.
- Accurately completing admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absences.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify children or cohorts that require more support.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our children.
- Building strong relationships with families, listen to, and understand to remove barriers to attendance.
- Sharing information and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, the local authority as well as other agencies when absence is at risk of becoming
- persistent or severe.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.

The Headteacher is the overall lead for attendance and can be contacted via the School Office. Staff, parents and carers and children will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance.

In order to improve the overall attendance of pupils in school we aim to:

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers, support staff, volunteers and governors.
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and pupils.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Develop effective partnerships with supporting services and agencies through the Local Authority.
- Recognise and address the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Definitions

It is the Head Teacher's discretion as to whether a child's absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence:

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent emails or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. Authorised absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised absence:

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- The school reserve the right to ask for written evidence for any absence or illness.
- Unauthorised absence includes lateness after the register has closed and truancy.

Persistent absence (PA):

- The DfE define a 'persistent absentee' as a pupil who, at any point in the year, has accumulated absence at 10% or more of the available sessions regardless of whether or not any of it is authorised. The PA status may change as the terms progress but these pupils are at particular risk of achieving poor outcomes at school and beyond.

Timings:

School begins promptly at 08:50. The register is taken at 09:00.

Each class allows children time to enter the class and settle before registration; the children will be allowed into the school from 08:40.

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

Codes:

There are a series of codes (see appendix A) which are used to denote authorised and unauthorised absence. It is the school's responsibility to ensure the correct codes are recorded and that patterns and trends in children's absence are analysed.

Late Pupils:

Pupils arriving after 08:50 but before 09:05 will be marked using the 'L' code.

Pupils arriving after 09:05 will be marked with the 'U' code which indicates that a child arrived after the registration window and that this was unauthorised by the school.

Punctuality:

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.

Medical appointments:

Children will be marked as 'M' for a medical appointment. Where possible these should be made for out of school hours.

Requests for leave of absence:

We believe that all children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. For this reason, as a general rule, we do not authorise leave of absence (including holidays) in term time.

The Head Teacher has the discretion to make exceptions to this rule and can authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, when the leave of absence is for no more than 10 days. Special circumstances may include:

- Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Religious Observance:

The DCSF recommends the use of Code 'R' when children are absent from school to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.

Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.

This is interpreted to mean that if the parent's religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival then the school must authorise the absence. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

If the religious body has not set the day apart there is no requirement for the school to approve the absence or grant a leave of absence. Additional holidays and days off linked to the religious festival but not "exclusively set aside for religious observance" by the religious body are not marked using Code 'R'.

Truancy:

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence. All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8:50am and again by 1:00pm, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school. The Senior Leadership Team may make a home visit to provide a welfare check. This may be conducted alongside the Community Policing Team.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school. The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Leave during lunch times:

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the Headteacher – it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises. Parents will submit a written request, outlining the reasons for their child to leave the premises during lunch time. The Headteacher reserves the right to grant or refuse a request and will inform the parent in writing of their decision. Where permission has been granted, the parent must sign the child out via the office and back in again ensuring they are back in class for afternoon registration. The Headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time – this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision.

Reporting

Information regarding your child's attendance will be available for you to see on the My Child At School App (MCAS) and a full report 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. When input onto the attendance system we will follow the National guidance for coding.

Working with the Local Authority:

Schools have a mandatory data sharing duty to report daily attendance to the DfE and work with the Local Authority to highlight poor attendance, long term sickness, and the issuing of fixed penalties. Schools must consider this if a pupil misses 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence which can include lateness.

Roles and responsibilities:

All members of the school community have roles and responsibilities in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality.

Role of the pupils

Pupils have a responsibility to themselves and others to play a positive role in the life of the school and to make the most of the education opportunities available.

All pupils will:

- Understand the importance of attending school and see the value of education.
- Ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.
- Be aware of their own attendance.

- Be aware of the consequences of poor attendance or truancy.
- Arrive to lessons punctually.
- Not leave school without permission.
- Respect themselves and others.
- Encourage friendship and a sense of belonging.
- Be happy and encourage others to feel happy
- Inform a trusted adult if they feel that they are being bullied or feel unhappy in school.

Role of parents

Parents have an essential role in ensuring their child's good attendance.

We ask parents to:

- Establish good attendance habits by acting as a role model and showing the children that good attendance and punctuality is important.
- Praise and reward good attendance, even small successes, e.g. getting ready quickly, even if resisting going to school.
- Talk regularly with their child about school and how they feel about it. Children are more likely to want to attend and learn if they feel supported and their anxieties are listened to.
- Contact the school by phone or email as soon as possible to say why their child is absent, and when they are expected to return.
- Only grant days at home for genuine illness.
- If appropriate, arrange for a friend to take a child to school if a sibling is sick.
- Avoid taking holidays in school time.
- Ensure that wherever possible, medical appointments are made outside of the school day.
- Know routines of the school day to avoid issues, e.g. ensuring children have their P.E. kits on the right days.
- Establish a good bedtime routine, so that their child can sleep well, get enough sleep and make mornings less of a struggle.

Role of the Class Teacher

We ask teachers to:

- Encourage good attendance.
- Ensure that registers are correctly and promptly marked.
- Set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Provide a safe and secure environment in which to learn.
- Provide engaging and worthwhile learning experiences that encourage children to regularly attend lessons.
- Listen to and value children's views.
- Make initial contact with parents when concerns arise.
- Role of the School
- As a school we:
- Create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.

- Give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- Develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- Develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- Encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- Develop procedures leading to the formal referral to Somerset County Council.
- Adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of the resources available, and ensure the appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

Role of the Headteacher

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement, including the impact of interventions.
- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents and carers are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every child has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Communicating clearly and effectively with children, parents and carers with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to children, parents and carers regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any child being deleted from the admission and attendance registers

Role of Governing Body

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Role of the Local Authority

The Local Authority provides an 'Advice, Assessment and Early Intervention Service'. Somerset County Council may also support the school with legal action to tackle poor attendance where appropriate.

Intervening with Attendance Concerns

- Where we have concerns around a pupil's attendance we may intervene in one or more of the following ways:
- The Head Teacher will review the attendance of all the schools pupils on a half termly basis and any pupils identified as a cause for concern on a more regular basis.
- A letter may be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems, informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending.
- Where patterns are identified a phone call or meeting between the Parent and the Head Teacher may take place to discuss the pattern and resolve any issues preventing attendance.
- The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and reviewed.
- A second letter will be sent to parents if attendance does not improve.
- The school will seek support from Somerset Council where attendance remains a concern.
- The local council have the authority to issue a fine.
- To support us with the process we will work with external agencies such as our local PCSO and the Wellington TAS network.
- Where no contact can be made, a home visit may be necessary to provide a welfare check. This will be undertaken by two senior members of school staff or one member alongside the Community Policing Team.

Support & intervention

We will use a number of methods to help support children with low or poor attendance and those at risk of PA to attend school, including:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with children to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading regular check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC or other plan may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

Children with SEND or health related absence

We recognise that children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support children who find attending school difficult.

In line with our SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, we will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for children with

SEND to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC or other plans that have been implemented. We will seek to secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where we have concerns that a child's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents and carers will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a child that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed.

To support the attendance of children with SEND and/or health issues, we will also consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a Pastoral Support Plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying children's unmet needs.
- Using internal or external specialists.
- Enabling a child to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a child can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby children can request to leave a classroom if they feel
- they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

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 nonattendance 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.

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 £80.00 if paid within 21 days or £160.00 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 nonattendance.

Penalty Notices are not a money-making scheme for Local Authorities and the school does not gain financially in any capacity.

Appendix A: The Attendance register and codes

At West Buckland Primary School, we use Bromcom to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether children are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole or partial school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed

- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When we have planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant children who are absent.

Children who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Appendix B: The importance of Attendance



Across all Huish schools, we recognise the importance of improving attendance for all our pupils. We aspire to secure high standards of attendance by building a culture where all pupils can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn. Outcomes for pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stages 2 and 4 demonstrate that they have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment, whilst children who attend school regularly get the most out of their school experience, including their wellbeing and wider life chances. We recognise that regular attendance for our most vulnerable pupils is an important protective factor and best allows needs to be identified and support provided.

In proactively managing and improving attendance across our school communities, we will:

	What will we do?	Who is this aimed at?	Examples of strategies we use, and support provided
PREVENT	<p>Consistently promote the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Set high expectations and communicate them clearly and consistently to pupils and parents.</p>	<p>Every pupil and parent.</p>	<p>Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, receiving any training needed.</p> <p>Demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life, for example through displays, assemblies, sensitive and non-discriminatory reward systems, newsletters and on school websites and social media accounts.</p>

	Build strong relationships with families.	Every pupil and parent.	Communicate respectfully with parents to discuss links between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing, challenging parents' views or misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like where necessary.
	Support parents and pupils by identifying any patterns of absence or any risks of attendance becoming problematic early.	<p>Pupils and parents where patterns of absence are spotted, or poor attendance is of possible concern.</p> <p>Through regular data analysis to identify and provide support, schools are encouraged to prevent poor attendance becoming habitual for pupils with an attendance of: <96%</p>	<p>Communicate via Stage 1 Attendance Concern Letter to express concerns and invite parents to meet with attendance lead to ensure support needed is put in place.</p> <p>Work together with parents to listen to, and address, any in school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Work with the necessary partners and agencies to listen to, and address, any barriers to attendance that are outside of the school's control, including referrals to services as discussed, agreed and reviewed with pupils and families.</p> <p>Resource attendance improvement appropriately, for example through effective use of pupil premium funding or pastoral staff to work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school and external professionals.</p>

INTERVENE	Where absence intensifies, so will our support.	<p>Pupils and parents identified as, or at risk of being, persistently absent.</p> <p>Through regular data analysis to identify and provide support, schools are encouraged to intervene for pupils with an attendance of: <92%</p>	<p>Communicate via Stage 2 Attendance Concern Letter to express significant concerns and invite parents to formally meet with attendance lead to ensure support needed is put in place, such as a Parenting Contract, and clearly explain the consequences of continued absence, for example a Penalty Warning Notice.</p> <p>Work together with the local authority and others to secure the support necessary, for example a voluntary early help assessment or alternative provision placement.</p>
TARGET	Formalise our support where voluntary support has not been effective and/or engaged with to protect our pupils' right to an education.	Pupils and parents with significantly poor attendance and/ or entrenched barriers to attendance.	<p>Communicate via Stage 3 Attendance Concern Letter to express ongoing, significant concerns and to inform parents of request to the local authority for attendance casework, for example through a parenting contract, the issuing of a fixed penalty notice or prosecution where all other routes have been unsuccessful.</p> <p>Make a statutory referral to children's social care, especially where absence becomes severe (<50%).</p>

We know that improving the attendance of all our pupils is a continuous process and that barriers to attendance evolve quickly. Therefore, our messages, approaches and strategies outlined above are reviewed and, where necessary, updated regularly.