



BURWELL VILLAGE COLLEGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

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This guidance is to remind parents and carers of the importance of regular and punctual attendance at school.

We all know that attending school and being on time is an important part of school and life in general. It is obvious that there is a clear link between attendance and a child's ability to fit in & form friends and the levels they achieve in reading, writing & maths. The more they miss of school or the later they are, the harder it is for them to fit in and catch up with their work. The Local Authority suggests that 17 days absence in any school year equates to a drop of 1 level in achievement or 1 GCSE grade.

Whilst attendance levels at Burwell are good there remains a small but significant number of children whose attendance and punctuality is poor.

From September 2015 the Government changed their thresholds for school absence. The expectation is that all pupils will be at school for **at least 95%** of the time, which means 180 out of the possible 190 school days. A pupil is now classified as **persistently absent** if he or she does not attend for 10% of sessions making their attendance level 90% or below. The previous figure was 85% attendance and 15% absence.

Through the Educational Welfare Officers, the Local Authority monitors school attendance levels very closely and uses the following guidance:

<p>Did you know that the government state that all primary school children are expected to be at school at least 95% of the time?</p>	<p>190 school days in each year</p> <p>190 days or 38 weeks for pupils to learn.</p>	<p>8 days absence</p>	<p>10 days absence - over 2 weeks.</p>	<p>13 days absence - 3 weeks.</p>	<p>19 days absence - that's 4 weeks of school</p>	<p>28.5 days absence - nearly 6 weeks or 1/2 term off school.</p>	<p>175 NON-school days a year to spend time on: family visits Holidays Shopping Household jobs Dentist Opticians Sleeping Relaxing Celebrating</p>
	<p>GOOD</p>	<p>182 days of education</p>	<p>180 days of education</p>	<p>177 days of education</p>	<p>171 days of education</p>	<p>162 days of education</p>	
	<p>100%</p>	<p>SATISFACTORY</p>	<p>OF CONCERN</p>		<p>UNACCEPTABLE AND OF SERIOUS CONCERN</p>		
	<p>Best chance of success. Children get off to a flying start. They are more likely to make good progress and reach their full potential.</p>	<p>96%</p>	<p>95%</p>	<p>93%</p>	<p>90%</p>	<p>85% Below</p>	

Attendance of 100% is deemed to be **good**.



Burwell Village College Primary School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Attendance which falls between **96 - 99%** is deemed **satisfactory**

Attendance between **95 -93%** is deemed **of concern** and the initial attendance letter is sent indicating that attendance should improve and offers parents an opportunity to speak to the school regarding absences and any support they may need.

Attendance which falls between **93 - 90%** is deemed **unsatisfactory** and the school will send a second attendance letter indicating that attendance must improve. At this point parents will be invited into school to attend a meeting with the Head teacher. Often regular illness may indicate that there is an underlying medical issue which needs resolving through the GP or hospital. Because of this further absences might only be authorised with medical evidence such as GP letter / appointment card. Parents will be offered an EHA form at this point.

Attendance below **90%** is classed as **unacceptable and of serious concern** and the pupil becomes a **persistent absentee**. A third attendance letter is sent indicating that if attendance fails to improve within the next 4 weeks then the case will be referred to Cambridgeshire County Council for a Penalty Notice Fine to be issued. At this stage Educational Welfare Officer support or legal intervention is initiated.

Many parents ask: “Missing a few days a year isn’t really a problem is it?”

Often parents comment that a few days absence makes very little difference. We all know that pupils can catch up from a few days missed through unavoidable circumstances or illness. We are also aware that a child may be sick one year and not the next. However when we look back at attendance levels we often find that absence rates are repeated year after year. Over time this can build up to significant amounts of time away from school. The question is which days, weeks, terms or years would you like your child to miss?

School days Missed in	<u>Minimum</u> expectation	Persistent Absentee	
	95% attendance = 180 days	90% attendance = 171 days	85% attendance = 162 days
	5% Absence = 10 days	10% Absence = 19 days	15% absence = 28 days
1 Year	10 days	19 days (4 weeks of school)	28 days (½ term of lessons)

Key Stage 1 (Rec – Yr2)	28 days	57 days	84 days
Key Stage 2 (Yr3 – Yr6)	38 days	76 days	112 days
Primary School (Rec – Yr6)	66 days (or 13 weeks)	133 days	196 days over 1 year

12 years to end of secondary school(R – Yr11)	114 days (or 23 weeks)	228 days or over 1 school year	336 days or over 1.5 years of school.
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“So I have 10 days for absence and that includes holidays?”

For most children 10 days is more than enough to cover general childhood illnesses and unforeseen circumstances. It is important to note that the 10 days is not for family holidays. The guidance is quite clear that parents do not have the right or entitlement to take a child out of school for a holiday unless there are “exceptional circumstances”. The Local Authority guidance for exceptional circumstances include:

- A parent, grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill
- There may have been a significant trauma in the family recently and the head teacher might consider that an immediate holiday might enable the child to better deal with the situation

This can be a really contentious issue for parents. The guidelines, available from both the school office and website, are quite clear: there are very few occasions where we are actually allowed to authorise term time holidays. Unless they fall within the strict guidelines they will not be authorised and may be subject to a fine from the Local Authority. The new national expectations are far stricter – and the threat of fines by the Local Authority has impacted on both school & parents.

At the same time we all understand the need for a family holiday and most families will take their holidays in the 13 weeks available. We also appreciate that contractual or work issues can determine when some families can take their holidays.

One issue for some schools are the number of parents phoning their children in sick when they are really on holiday in the sun, skiing, having a day at Legoland, watching a football match or at a local forest holiday resort. This approach is readily undermined when all the other children in the class know where the absent child is or the child comes back with a sun tan. Better still, when asked on their return, “Are you feeling better?” the children look puzzled and reply that they weren’t ill – they have been on holiday. Some children have clearly been told to lie – which puts them in a really difficult position. We are sure it is not a good life skill to teach children to cover up for missing school or work.

So if you are going to take a term time holiday – then please come & talk to us. Whilst we may not be allowed to authorise an absence at least we will know where the children are. This is really important because (whilst the following may not apply to you and your family) 2 days or more off school has been used by some parents as a cover for domestic violence; parental

mental health issues; child abuse, neglect or harm. If the children are away and we can't contact the parents (because they have neglected to tell us that they are actually abroad on holiday) it can potentially cause all sorts of issues.

All too often poor attendance and lateness can also hide bigger family issues. As a school we have access to a wide range of free support for families from the Early Help Team, which includes the school nurse and family support workers and support for: children's behaviour, mental health, bereavement, housing, finances & benefits, ADHD; Domestic Violence, adult literacy & numeracy classes; child counsellors & therapists.

Local Authority guidance has changed recently and we are obliged to make parents aware of the implications of this change in connection with holiday absence.

Any parent who takes their child out of school for term time leave for 6 consecutive sessions (3 days or more) over a 4 week period, not authorised by the school under the exceptional circumstances rule will be subject to a penalty notice fine from the Local Authority without warning.

Fines

The fines are issued to each parent for each child and are;

- £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £120 if paid between 21-28 days

What should I do if my child is sick or has a medical appointment?

Children should be in attendance at school for both the morning and afternoon sessions. If your child is unwell then we ask parents to telephone or call in to the school office each day and leave a message giving their name and class along with the illness they are absent with and an estimated return date. If a daily message is not received by the school office then your child will be marked down as an unauthorised absence until we are notified otherwise.

If your child is leaving early for a medical appointment it is acceptable to notify the school via a letter to the Class Teacher who will then pass it onto the school office, alternatively please notify the school office directly who will then pass a message on to the Class Teacher.

Absence Reporting

If your child is absent from school or for any other reason please call the School Office on 01638 613103 using option #1. Please ensure that you ring and report your child absent every morning to keep us up to date. If for any reason we have not heard from you to report a child absence we will call you for an update.

Late Arrivals in School

When your child arrives late at school they miss the teacher's instructions and the introduction to the lesson. Many children also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. Persistent lateness is also monitored by Education Welfare Officer and in extreme circumstances of this it may be deemed necessary to meet with the Head Teacher to discuss any support that may be required.

Frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning lost and can seriously disadvantage your child. Please help your child learn the importance of being punctual.

Key stage 2 doors open at 8.45 a.m. and pupils have daily literacy or numeracy activities with school starting at 8.55 a.m. Key Stage 1 doors open at 8.50 a.m. with school starting at 8.55 a.m.

if your child was late every day - minutes late per day during the school year	They would miss this much teaching in a year
5 minutes	3 days
10 minutes	6 days
15 minutes	9 days
20 minutes	13 days
30 minutes	20 days

What should I do if my child is late?

Doors to Key Stage Two open at 8.45 a.m.
Doors to Key Stage One open at 8.50 a.m.
Both sets of doors will close promptly by 8.55 a.m.

If your child has arrived late and the doors are closed they must be walked round to the front of the school and signed in via the main school office by a parent/carer. It is not acceptable for them to come in through another classroom door or through the courtyard.

The reason for this is so that we can keep track of the children we have in school for safety and evacuation purposes should we have a fire. If a child were to enter the school without signing in and miss the class register we have no way of knowing if they were in school or not, thus putting their safety at risk.

All children should arrive in school with everything they require for their school day, including PE kit, water bottles, packed lunch and any other necessary items. We would very much appreciate your support in this.

And finally..

We all know how important attendance is and we ask you to keep the school fully informed of any circumstances which affect your child's attendance. We would also ask you to not take offence when the school, on behalf of the Education Welfare Officer and the Local Authority, raises the issue of your child's attendance or if they issue a fine. After all the school is only trying to ensure that all children get every opportunity to learn.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Smith', with a large, stylized initial 'N'.

Mr N Smith
HEAD TEACHER