



1839 + Bures School

## **Pupil Attendance Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

Bures CEVC Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its children and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – children, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and Statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the school community know of the policy and have access to it via the school website.

### **2. School's Roles and Responsibilities**

#### Staff

All staff at Bures CEVC Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our children are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

#### Attendance Leader – The Headteacher

The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Pupil Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Headteacher, known as the Attendance Leader, will ensure that:

- whole-school weekly attendance is published on the school newsletter for parents and children;
- a half- termly Attendance Report is produced which highlights school attendance by class, including noting children whose attendance is below 90%, along with vulnerable group analysis;
- that teachers are informed of child attendance once a term in time for parent's evening (Autumn and Spring Term) and for the school report (Summer Term), so that this information can be discussed with the child's parents;
- attendance data is readily available through SIMs;
- School absence is always recorded, a reason sought and patterns noted, and discussed with the Attendance Leader;
- Action is taken where needed in the form of letters being sent home, children being monitored, doctor's notes being requested, or Attendance Conversations taking place with parents when needed;
- Termly meetings with the Education Welfare Officer, in which poor attendance is highlighted, take place.

- A summary overview is presented to the Governing Body termly within the Headteacher's Report.

The purpose of the role is to ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. Any of the above jobs or roles may be delegated by the Attendance Lead.

### 3. Registering Attendance

The school is required to mark the Attendance Register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. The following national codes are used:

#### REGISTER CODES

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. child attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work Experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Child not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to children	Not counted in possible attendances

## Punctuality

All children need to be in their classroom to register at 9.00 am. Classroom doors open at 8.50 am and children are encouraged to arrive at this time where possible. The registration period closes at 9.00 am. Children arriving after this time will be registered with a late mark (an 'L'). Children arriving after 9.20 am will be registered with an unauthorised absence for that session. Lateness is regularly monitored and challenged where necessary. Registers open at 1.10 pm in the afternoon. Children arriving after this will again be marked as late. If they arrive back at school later than 1.30 pm they will be registered with an unauthorised absence for that session.

For Health and Safety reasons, it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Children arriving late should therefore report to the School Office. **It is important that all children arriving late follow this procedure.**

For the same reason, it is important that children leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day, report to the School Office.

## Staff Training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

## **4. Absence**

Bures CEVC Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment. If absence is frequent or continuous, staff at Bures CEVC Primary School will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. This is carried out in part through the School Office contacting by telephone parents of children that are not in attendance at school to seek an explanation as to why a child is not in school, if no reason/contact has been made by the parent/carer. This communication will happen on the first day of absence. A note or explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the Headteacher.**

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school if a child is unable, for any reason, to attend the school. If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised.

## **5. Illness and Medical Appointments**

When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school after 8.30am and before 9.10am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the School Office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.

An appointment card or verification by the doctors/ dentist/hospital is required.

If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

If your child is absent due to vomiting then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.

For more than three days of absence through illness the school may require a written explanation. The school office will request this if it is not produced.

Medical certificates will be required for absence greater than five days.

Where a child appears to be having an unacceptable level of absence due to medical reasons, the school may request that medical evidence (such as appointment cards or prescribed medication) be provided to cover all absences. Failure on the part of the parent to provide such medical evidence will result in absences being recorded as unauthorised and referral to the Education Welfare Service will be considered.

We expect parents to work with the school and/or Education Welfare Service to resolve any attendance issues.

## **6. School Attendance and the Law**

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application has been made in advance and the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the aforementioned Regulations (2013). Whilst the headteacher will consider all requests on a case - by - case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time which has not been agreed by the Headteacher, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (G code) and the Local Authority may be asked to issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child (where 5 or more days of unauthorised absence are recorded as a result).

If a leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will usually be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority being asked to issue a Penalty Notice. The law says that parents/carers, whose children of compulsory school age, are absent from school without good reason are committing an offence and the parents/carers may be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.

The Governing Body of Bures CEVC may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice on the occasion of 10 or more unauthorised absences within one academic year. These absences do not need to be consecutive in order for the Penalty Notice to be issued. A Penalty Notice will be issued where an absence is not authorised. A penalty notice will be issued within 15 school days from the final day of unauthorised absence.

In compliance with the Education Act 436A (Chapter 2 Part 6) the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing from Education to the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service, which has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

## **7. Collection and Analysis of Data**

The Attendance Leader will ensure that whole-school attendance data is complete, accurate and reported to parents weekly through the School's newsletter, the governing body (through the Headteacher's Report) and the LA. The report to governors and parents will include the school yearly target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

## **8. Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Attendance**

Attendance has a high profile at Bures CEVC Primary School and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in class. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and at school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment. Individual attendance records are monitored closely and attendance records are sent home annually.

Where attendance falls below 90%, we write to parents informing them on a half - termly basis. This includes authorised and unauthorised absence and alerts both the school and the parents that their child is in danger of this slipping further during the year.

### **Meetings with parents**

Where there is a concerning emerging pattern to a child's absence over a half-term period, identified through the attendance report, or sooner if staff are particularly concerned, with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Where a meeting is not possible, a telephone conversation will take place. Plans should be put in place with the parents and child to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them. Where a child's absence is below 90%, and a child is absent due to illness, the school reserves the right to request a medical note from the GP.

## Sending a Letter Home

Where a child's attendance drops below 90% but a meeting is not deemed necessary or possible, an attendance letter will be sent out.

Where a meeting has taken place and attendance has not improved, a further letter will be sent from the school, as outlined in Appendix 1, explaining that good attendance is important. It will highlight the steps the school will take if attendance does not improve. These may include the referral to the Education Attendance Team (Education Welfare Officer) and the issue of a Penalty Notice where absence is not authorised. The Poor Attendance Flow Chart (Appendix 2) outlines the process for repeated lateness and poor attendance.

In the case of lateness, a letter will be sent home if a child receives five late marks over a term, as outlined through the Poor Attendance Flow Chart (Appendix 2). This will be analysed after each half term as part of the Attendance Report and a letter sent to parents accordingly.

## **9. Parents'/Carers' Responsibilities**

Bures CEVC Primary School expects parents/carers will:

- Ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- Support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- Notify Bures CEVC Primary School, before 9.00 am, on the first day of absence, by telephone: 01787 227446. An explanatory note may be required when the child returns to school.
- Ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- Work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Bures CEVC Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

## **10. Children's responsibilities**

- All children should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their Class Teacher.
- Children should attend school on time, ready to learn. Children also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

## **11. Governors' Responsibilities**

The Governing Body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are children at the school.

**Reviewing the policy**

The school will review this policy each year with its allocated Education Welfare Officer and the Governing Body.

Date: Autumn 2017

Review Date: Autumn 2020

## **Appendix 1: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

### **When does my child need to be in school?**

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The morning register will be called/started promptly at 9.00am and the afternoon register at 1.10pm.

### **What happens if my child is late?**

If your child arrives later than 9.10 am and before 9.30am he/she will be marked late. If your child arrives after 9.30am he/she will be marked absent.

If your child arrives after 1.20 pm and before 1.40pm he/she will be marked late. If your child arrives after 1.40pm, he/she will be marked absent.

Children who arrive after registration should report to the School Office.

### **Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?**

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will phone you. However, we may ask for a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we may decide not to authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

### **What reasons will the school accept for absences?**

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. The Headteacher will consider your request and will authorise absence if she deems that the occasion is an exceptional circumstance. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

### **Will the school contact me if my child is absent?**

The school operates a first day response to absences: we will phone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

### **What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.

### **My child is reluctant to come to School. What should I do?**

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, friendship problems, or family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.

**Appendix 2:  
Poor Attendance Flow  
Chart**

**A Pupil's Attendance is causing concern (i.e. attendance below 90%)**

**Are there unresolved "blank" Codes due to absence?**

**Yes**

- Letter sent to parent/carer(s) to ask for explanation of absence
- "Blank" codes changed to "O" if no explanation given two weeks after the absence occurred

**No**

Reason given and improved attendance:  
No Further Action - monitor

No reasons given OR the reasons given are unsatisfactory OR attendance fails to improve

**Initial Letter**

- Sent to parents of pupils whose attendance is causing concern (i.e. below 90%)
- Sent by Senior Member of Staff i.e. Head Teacher.

**Is Absence due to Illness/Medical Reasons?**

**Follow Up Letter**  
Sent after 2 weeks if no improvement and no satisfactory explanation has been received to explain the absence  
Refer to Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

**YES**  
School Letter to ask for evidence of medical conditions to be sent if patterns of illness and medical absence exist with no explanation

No Improvement, concerns still exist and no medical evidence received

Improved or reason known  
No Further Action - monitor

**Lates**  
Letter sent to parents after 5 sessions of lateness in one term

Improved  
No Further Action monitor

No Improvement  
School to take further action

Discuss Pupil with EWO if lateness continues to cause concern

**Child Missing from Education?**

If a child is missing from school for 20 consecutive days without response to school enquiries, and it is believed they are not at home, they may be taken off roll. Contact CME Officer.

