



1839 + Bures School

## 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 has been drawn up after consultation with the whole school community and 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, supported by the Attendance and Admissions Officer, will ensure:

- 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;
- teachers are informed of child attendance for the school report so that this information can be discussed with the child's parents if required;
- 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;
- Half-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 this is to ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

### 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

#### COVID Coding

Changes have been made to coding in response to the COVID pandemic. We continue to use these codes as advised by the DfE. If a pupil is required to self-isolate, this will be coded as an 'X'. If a pupil is confirmed as having COVID, it is coded as an 'I' from the day of diagnosis.

## Punctuality

All children need to be in their classroom to register at 8.40 am. Classroom doors open at 8.40 am and children should arrive at this time. The registration period closes at 8.50 am. Children arriving after this time will be registered with a late mark (an 'L'). Children arriving after 9.10 am will be registered with an unauthorised absence (a 'U') for that session. Registers open at 1.00 pm in the afternoon. Children arriving after 1.10 pm 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. Lateness is regularly monitored and challenged where necessary.

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 Headteacher, with support from the Admissions and Attendance Officer, 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 Admission and Attendance Officer 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 as to 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 leave a blank space in the register for the Admissions & Attendance Officer to follow up. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the Admissions & Attendance Officer 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 Admissions and Attendance Officer will request this if it is not produced.

Medical certificates may be required for frequent or prolonged absence.

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, 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 leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing 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 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 Admissions and Attendance Officer 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 an academic year, 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 9.10 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 every three years with its allocated Education Welfare Officer and the Governing Body.

Date: Autumn 2021

Review Date: Autumn 2024

## **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 9.10am and before 9.30am he/she will be marked late (L). If your child arrives after 9.30am he/she will be marked unauthorised absence (U).

If your child arrives after 1.10pm and before 1.30pm he/she will be marked late (L). If your child arrives after 1.30pm, he/she will be marked unauthorised absence (U).

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, 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%)**

**Lates**  
Letter "L" sent after concerning lateness

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

Improved  
No Further Action  
monitor

No Improvement  
School to take further action

Discuss Pupil with EWO if lateness continues to cause concern

**Yes**

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

**No**

**School Letter 1**

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

Reason given and improved attendance:  
No Further Action - monitor

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

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

**No**

**School Letter 2**  
If no improvement and no satisfactory explanation has been received to explain the absence  
  
Refer to Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

**YES**  
Contact made if patterns of illness and medical absence exist and no explanation why

No Improvement, concerns still exist and no medical evidence received

Improved or reason known  
No Further Action  
- monitor

**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.



## Letter 1

Date

Dear

**Re: xxxx Attendance**

Please find enclosed your child's latest Attendance Report. You will see that currently their attendance is below 90% at xxxx.

As you know, regular attendance is important to help your child achieve and reach their full potential and we want to offer as much support as possible. Therefore if you feel that the school can assist you in any way in order to increase your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact the school office to book an appointment.

We do understand that the absences are mainly due to xxxx however we look forward to seeing it improve in the future and will notify you if it falls any further.

Many thanks for your anticipated support.

Yours sincerely

**Ms R Slater**  
**Headteacher**

## Letter 2

Date

Dear

**Re: xxxxx Attendance**

Please find enclosed your child's latest Attendance Report. You will see that currently their attendance is significantly below 90% at xxxxx.

As you know, there is real concern when attendance falls below 90% that this will impact negatively on their achievement in school. As a result, when the Education Welfare Officer came into today, xxxxx's attendance was reviewed as part of their routine visit to the school.

We always encourage children to attend school unless they are too ill and would request that you provide medical evidence for any further absences which can then be shared with the Education Welfare Officer. If medical evidence is not provided, the absence will be unauthorised.

We want to do everything we can to support you to ensure that your child attends regularly, therefore please do not hesitate to contact us if there is anything else we can do to support you in this matter.

Many thanks for your anticipated support.

Yours sincerely

**Ms R Slater**  
**Headteacher**

**Letter B**

**Date**

Dear

**Re: Reason for the absence**

According to our records, xxxx was absent xxxxx. We tried to call you and subsequently left a message but received no reply.

Please could you complete the slip below and return it within 5 days in order that our records may be updated. If we do not hear from you, this absence will be unauthorised.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely

**Mrs G Turner  
Admissions & Attendance Officer**

.....

Class Teacher:

Pupil:

Dates and sessions of absences(s):

Reason(s) .....

Signed ..... (Parent/Guardian)

## Letter L

**Date**

Dear

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we monitor pupil attendance on a regular basis. During our regular monitoring of pupil attendance we identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern, including those pupils who have arrived late to school on a number of occasions. We are therefore writing to you due to xxx's current number of late sessions this term.

Being late to school can have a considerable impact over the whole school year. The table below shows you just how much time can be missed over a year just by being 5 minutes late to school every day:

<b>5 minutes late every day = 3 days of school lost a year</b>
<b>10 minutes late every day = 6.5 days of school lost a year</b>
<b>15 minutes late every day = 10 days of school lost a year</b>

We understand that mornings can be hectic especially with a new addition to the family, but when your children are late for school they are missing out on vital parts of their education. Lateness can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher – everyone's education is compromised.

The school opens its gates at 08.40am and all children go straight into class. Classroom doors open at 8.40 am and the registration period closes at 8.50 am. Children arriving after this time are required to sign in at the School Office and will be registered with a late mark (an 'L'). If children arrive after 9.10 am, it will be registered with an unauthorised absence for that session and will count towards a penalty notice being issued in the case of a child receiving eight unauthorised absences or lates in the course of one academic year.

We look forward to seeing xxx's punctuality improve in the future.

Many thanks for your anticipated support.

Yours sincerely

Ms R Slater  
Headteacher

## Letter MED

Date

Dear

Child's name and DOB

Since we wrote to you on <date of 1<sup>st</sup> letter>, <name of pupil>'s attendance has failed to improve significantly, and is now <attendance percentage>%. This is below what we expect and to put this into perspective 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 days of school per year.

When looking into the reasons why <name of pupil> has been absent from school, we noticed that the majority of the absence was linked to illness and/or medical reasons.

Due to the level of illness and/or medical absence, I must ask that if any further absence occurs, evidence must be received by the school that shows that the pupil has been absent and is being supported by a Doctor. Some examples of evidence that could be used are: Prescriptions, Appointment Cards, Doctor's Notes, e.t.c.

If this evidence is not supplied when your child returns after an illness or medical absence, your child's absence will be recorded as an "unauthorised" absence. The parents of a child who receives eight unauthorised absences in one academic year will be subject to a penalty notice.

We would appreciate your support to make sure <name of child>'s attendance improves. The school will continue to monitor the situation and will be in touch again if it does not improve.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely

Ms R Slater  
Headteacher