



1839 + Bures School

BURES SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Bures School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils 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.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils, 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.
- 1.3 The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the whole community and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and Statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

2 School's Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Bures 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 pupils 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.
- 2.2 Attendance Leader – The Head teacher
The Head teacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Head teacher, known as the Attendance Leader, will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the Governing Body termly. He will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.
- 2.3 Registration
- (i) 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 prescribed 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. pupil 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	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

- (ii) Children enter the classroom and self-register promptly at 9.05am and 1.05pm (Years 1 and 2) and 1.20pm (Key Stage Two). In Reception Class the register is called and over the course of the year the children are encouraged in developing the skill to be independent by self-registering. A mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.
- (iii) The registers will close at 9.15am and 1.15pm (Reception and years 1 and 2) and 1.30pm (years 3 to 6). Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **late**. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para 4.6).

2.4 Categorising absence

- (i) A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as having unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance, or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment/correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the class teacher.
- (ii) Bures School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence and will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is unacceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Bures School will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.
- (iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;
- (iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
 - (a) Where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example:
 - A pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority.
 - A pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence, the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered.
 - (b) Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
 - (c) Where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours, wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand);
 - (d) Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence, which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;
 - (e) The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;

- (f) The pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
- (g) The pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil has attended a school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months.
- (h) In other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a limited period**.
- (v) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:
 - No explanation has been given by the parent;
 - The school is not satisfied with the explanation;
 - The pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
 - The pupil is shopping during school hours;
 - The pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
 - The pupil is absent from school on a family holiday;
 - The pupil is absent due to an exceptional circumstance that exceeds 10 days (unless in agreement with EWO for such a reason as due to terminal illness);
 - The pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

2.5 Approved Educational Activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 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.

3 Collection and Analysis of Data

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

3.2 Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Attendance

Attendance has an increasingly high profile at Bures School and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in class. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and 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 each term. Parents will be informed by letter or in person by a member of staff:

- as soon as pupil reaches 90% attendance
- as soon as pupil reaches 85% attendance (EWO is also informed)

- as soon as pupil reaches 80% attendance
- as soon as pupil reaches 10 unauthorised absences

3.3 First-day calling

Bures School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation, to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.

4.4 Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (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. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil 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.

4.5 Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.6 Penalty Notices

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. From September 2014, the Education attendance service on behalf of Suffolk County Council will issue fixed term penalty notice fines when unauthorised absence occurs and where a pupil is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.

4.6 Lateness and Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes (see para 2.3(iii)) will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence (see para 4.3). If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service. School will also monitor pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes.

- 4.7 For Health and Safety reasons, it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the School Office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**
- 4.8 For the same reason, it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day, report to the School Office.

5 Term-time Holidays

- 5.1 Our policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday, other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays is not a right.

The Head teacher will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision. We will not authorise absence during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS.

6 Extended Leave of Absence

- 6.1 In considering absence for extended trips overseas, Bures School will take account of the following:
- A visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
 - Such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up.
 - Parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
 - The reasons for wishing to make a visit are more difficult, particularly for ethnic minority families, where huge distances and high costs are involved;
 - Where extended leave of absence is granted, there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

7 Parents'/Carers' Responsibilities

- 7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Bures School.
- 7.2 Bures 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;
 - Not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.
- 7.3 Parents will also be expected to:
- Notify Bures School, before 9.30 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 School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

8 **Pupils' responsibilities**

- 8.1 All pupils 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.
- 8.2 Pupils should attend school on time, ready to learn. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

9 **Governors' Responsibilities**

Section 175 (2)

- 9.1 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 pupils at the school.

10 **Conclusion**

- 10.1 Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the outcomes of Every Child Matters:

Be healthy:

- Attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development.
- The school curriculum teaches children to be healthy.

Stay safe:

- Schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children.
- The best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly.

Enjoy and achieve:

- Good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings.

Make a positive contribution:

- Membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others.

Achieve economic well-being:

- Good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy each year with its allocated Education Welfare Officer.

Mr D Quayle

Reviewed: January 2015

Review date: January 2016

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. 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 promptly at 9.00am and the afternoon register at 1pm for Reception, Years 1 and 2 and 1.15pm for years 3 to 6.

2. What happens if my child is late?

If your child arrives between 9.05 am and 9.15am he/she will be marked late.

If your child arrives after 9.15am he/she will be marked absent.

If your child is in Reception, years 1 or 2 and arrives between 1.05pm and 1.15pm he/she will be marked late. If your child is in years 3 to 6 and arrives between 1.20pm and 1.30pm he/she will be marked late.

If your child arrives after these times he/she will be marked absent.

Pupils who arrive after registration should report to the school office.

3. 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 need a written explanation on your child's return to school. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report –

4. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness;
- Emergency dental / medical appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays);
- Day of religious observance;
- Family bereavement;
- Attending an interview or transfer day for secondary school.

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

5. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for holidays, day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters, etc.

6. 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.

7.I am thinking about sending my child on an extended absence for an overseas trip to visit relatives. What should I do?

The school recognises that such absence can be important for children to keep in touch with their extended family. Contact your child's class teacher or Head teacher as soon as possible to discuss the best time for such a visit.

The school would strongly recommend that such absences do not take place during your child's SATs examinations. You need to complete an application form for extended leave of absence and if the Head teacher then approves the visit, the school will set work for your child to complete while away.

As far as possible we will ensure the work set reinforces the educational value of such a visit.

8. 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.

9. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher or Head teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, 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. The Education Attendance Service is based at:

**Western Area Education Office
Suffolk County Council
West Suffolk house
Western Way
Bury St Edmunds
IP33 3YU**

Tel. No. 01284 352000

ATTENDING SCHOOL REGULARLY

A GUIDE FOR PUPILS

1. Attending regularly and on time

Regular attendance will help you make the most of the opportunities here at Bures School. It will help you:

- keep up with your school work and get the best results you can;
- get a job – employers like people who are reliable.

Remember, your attendance at school is shown in your school records.

2. Absences

Acceptable reasons for absences include:

- illness
- emergency dental / medical appointments (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- day of religious observance
- family bereavement
- attending an interview or transfer day for secondary school.

Looking after your brothers and sisters, birthdays, general trips such as shopping and helping at those are NOT reasons to be absent from school.

3. Need help?

Problems with your school work? Are you being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at school? Are things difficult at home?

You may feel that missing school is the answer. It is not – it may even make things worse. TALK TO SOMEONE – your class teacher, form tutor, another member of staff, your parents. We will do everything we can to help you get over the problem.