



# Buckingham Park

Church of England Primary School

Excellence, through God who strengthens us

Jubilee Square, Buckingham Park.  
Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. HP19 9DZ

**Email:** [office@buckinghampark.org](mailto:office@buckinghampark.org)

**Web:** [www.buckinghampark.org](http://www.buckinghampark.org)

# School Policy Document:

# Attendance Policy

<b>Date Adopted by Full Governing Body:</b>	02/02/2023
<b>Last reviewed on:</b>	02/02/2023
<b>Next review due by:</b>	31/01/2025

## **1. Aims and expectations**

- 1.1. At Buckingham Park Church of England Primary School it is important that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, and that each person is treated fairly and well. We are a caring community, built on a clear Christian foundation and rooted in Christian values. We aim to provide the highest quality all round education, for each and every child, in partnership with parents, within the context of a Christian community. In short, 'Excellence, through God who strengthens us'.
- 1.2. The school attendance policy is therefore designed to support the way in which all members of the school can live and work together in a supportive way. It aims to promote an environment where everyone feels happy, safe and secure.

# **Attendance**

## **Registers**

The school uses an electronic register through SIMS.net

The class teacher completes the register directly using SIMS on the classroom computer. Paper registers should only be used in exceptional circumstances as these cause huge workload implications for the office team.

If a child arrives after 8.45am, the class teacher should check that the child's arrival has been recorded when he or she came in to school. Where there is an absence, you are required to enter the appropriate code in the register. A sickness may only be authorised if you have received a message from the office, or from a parent/guardian.

SLT use their professional judgement in deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. Clearly, where there is a definite pattern of non-attendance or where the explanation for absence is unsatisfactory absence may not be authorised even with a message from a parent. We may authorise an absence without a message if we feel that the explanation given is genuine and that the child concerned has normally good attendance. In any event, please seek an explanation for every absence and keep a note of the response (please remember to update Behaviour Watch if you communicate with parents).

## **Procedures**

You have initial responsibility for expecting good attendance and punctuality from the children in your care. You are expected to find out reasons for absence and record these as outlined above. Where you are receiving no response from parents, you should try to talk to them personally.

Should concerns persist, you should talk to the Headteacher. He will write to the parents to help clarify the situation and make the school's position known. If necessary, the issue will be referred to the County Attendance Officer.

## Contents

<a href="#">1. Aims</a> .....	- 3 -
<a href="#">2. Legislation and guidance</a> .....	- 3 -
<a href="#">3. Roles and responsibilities</a> .....	- 4 -
<a href="#">4. Recording attendance</a> .....	5
<a href="#">5. Authorised and unauthorised absence</a> .....	7
<a href="#">6. Strategies for promoting attendance</a> .....	8
<a href="#">7. Attendance monitoring</a> .....	8
<a href="#">8. Monitoring arrangements</a> .....	9
<a href="#">9. Links with other policies</a> .....	9
<a href="#">Appendix 1: attendance codes</a> .....	9

---

### 1. Aims

Poor attendance disadvantages children. At Buckingham Park Church of England Primary School, we aim to ensure that the children in our school attend regularly and on time, and where this is not the case, we follow a staged procedure designed to encourage consistent attendance.

We encourage every child to attend 100% of the time, although in many cases this can be prevented by illness or other factors. If a child's attendance falls below 95% this is a concern, especially where a child is known to be in reasonable health and there are no other extenuating circumstances

Our target at Buckingham Park is at least 96% attendance for every child.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Our link governor for attendance, as safeguarding governor is Dr Andrew Hill. Attendance for the whole school will reported at all Full Governing Body meetings.

#### **3.2 The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **3.3 The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance are the Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher and can be contacted via 01296415687 and via email [office@buckinghampark.org](mailto:office@buckinghampark.org)

#### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher and senior leadership team when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Gwenda Forsdyke and can be contacted via 01296415687.

### **3.5 Classroom Teachers**

All classroom teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office

In order to ascertain the levels of individual children's attendance, we aim to ensure that a complete register check is undertaken every week, and where there is cause for concern, appropriate action shall be taken.

The school uses an electronic register through SIMS.net

The class teacher completes the register directly using SIMS on the classroom computer. Paper registers should only be used in exceptional circumstances as these cause huge workload implications for the office team.

We are obliged to make our attendance figures known to legitimate agencies (e.g. the DfE and the County Council) by completing appropriate returns. Electronic school registers, on which these returns depend, should be kept accurately.

### **3.6 School Office staff**

School Office staff will:

Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

Check the answer phone absence line and report absences and reasons on Sims (in the comment box) and Behaviourwatch.

Transfer calls from parents where relevant to the Designated Safeguarding team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every day on time

Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.50am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.

Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

Attend school every day on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register online via SIMS.NET for all pupils.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. These times will be 8.45am and after lunch (timings will vary depending on staggered lunch but include between 12.55 and 1.30pm) It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

- Teachers to put N code unless there is a preexisting code already on the system

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school between 8.30am and 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am. Any pupil arriving after 8.45am will be marked L. If they arrive after 9.00am, then the register code will be a U for unauthorised absence. The register for the second session will be taken between 12.55pm and will be kept open until 1.45pm due to nature of staggered lunch.

#### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

Parents will phone or email the school on the first day of absence.

These absences and their reasons will be recorded by office staff who take message/ receive email.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

#### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Leaves of absence forms should be completed by parents requesting time for a medical appointment and a copy of appointment evidence attached.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

After the register has closed will be marked with a U code which means they arrived after the register has closed.

For those pupils who are consistently late, punctuality letters are written in the first instance. This is followed by issuing a 1A letter (see appendix) and where, necessary, followed up with a Attendance Support Meeting. In more persistent cases, this would be escalated to the County Attendance Team.

#### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts by phone, the school may contact the parents via email, and then contact any other relevant professionals involved. Identify whether the absence is approved or not

Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer. If a pupil is missing for 10 days then we would refer to Child Missing in Education.

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be discussed at parents meetings twice per year and also be reported in the end of year report.

### 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

#### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. It is important to note that no term time absence will be authorized for the purposes of holiday.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a **significant close family illness, a close family funeral or a close family wedding.**

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least **4 weeks** before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the Parent Point Desk and School Office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher may grant term-time holiday, such as a significant sporting competition.

Study leave

Flexi-schooling requests – your school can add details of its procedures for requesting and deciding on this

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Good attendance is celebrated in Collective Worship times. ARE WE DOING CERTIFICATES?

## 7. Attendance monitoring

Where there are pockets of non-attendance, these are monitored carefully and supports put in place via parents support meetings, Family Support Referrals, if pupil premium, offering a Breakfast Club space and pastoral support. Individual attendance support plans are put in place.

Attendance of any pupils who have social care involvement or any safeguarding concerns are discussed weekly in Designated Safeguarding Meetings.

If attendance is an issue with a Young Carer, the pastoral team supports the family and pupil to remove barriers by putting in extra support measures.

For all pupils where attendance is cause for concern, a 1A letter will be issued followed by a period of monitoring and after which if attendance has not improved, an Attendance Support Meeting Scheduled. In situations where improvement is evident a 1B letter will be sent.

If after the Attendance Support Meeting, there is not improvement, then we will refer this to County Attendance team. The county attendance team will then set up a parent contract meeting and decide next steps. This may involve issuing a fixed penalty.

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is



published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## 7.2 Analysing attendance

At Buckingham Park Church of England Primary School we will:

Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

At Buckingham Park Church of England Primary School we will:

Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Where there are pockets of non-attendance, these are monitored carefully and supports put in place via parents support meetings, Family Support Referrals, if pupil premium, offering a Breakfast Club space and pastoral support. Individual attendance support plans are put in place.

Attendance of any pupils who have social care involvement or any safeguarding concerns are discussed weekly in Designated Safeguarding Meetings.

If attendance is an issue with a Young Carer, the pastoral team supports the family and pupil to remove barriers by putting in extra support measures.

For all pupils where attendance is cause for concern, a 1A letter will be issued followed by a period of monitoring and after which if attendance has not improved, an Attendance Support Meeting Scheduled. In situations where improvement is evident a 1B letter will be sent.

If after the Attendance Support Meeting, there is not improvement, then we will refer this to County Attendance team. The county attendance team will then set up a parent contract meeting and decide next steps. This may involve issuing a fixed penalty

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by a member of the Senior Leadership team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

Child protection and safeguarding policy

Behaviour policy

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## **Appendix**

Please see below for example of 1A, 1B

Punctuality Letter

Parent Meeting Letter

Unexplained Absences



To the parent(s)/carer of: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Unexplained Absences**

Attendance for the whole school is monitored on a weekly basis. We have noticed we have a  
recorded on our system for your child but have not yet been provided with a reason for this a

Please complete and return the slip below with a reason for the absence listed as soon as pos  
can update our system.

If we do not receive a reason for the absence by Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>, this will be recorded as un

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this with me.

Yours sincerely,



Headteacher

---

**Reason for Absence**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_



Jubilee Square, Buckingham Park,  
Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP19 9DZ

Telephone: 01296 415687

Email: office@buckinghampark.org

Web: www.buckinghampark.org



To the parent(s) of: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear parent(s),

Further to the 1A letter dated ....., we have noticed your son/daughter's attendance continues to be irregular and of concern.

We would therefore like to invite you and your child to attend a Support Meeting, to identify if there are any barriers to attending school regularly, and if so, what strategies can be put in place to support improved attendance.

The Support Meeting will be held in school :

Date :

Time :

If this date/time is not convenient, please contact us and we can re-arrange.

Please do not hesitate to contact one of the team if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Fell, Mrs Whytewood, Mrs Forsdyke

Attendance and Safeguarding Team



Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Letter: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Parent or Carer,

I am writing to inform you that your child has been late to school on \_\_\_\_\_ occasions this half term, during the period up to and including the date of this letter.

I do appreciate that many factors can contribute to children being late for school. However, when pupils arrive late they miss out on social time at the start of the day, essential information during registration time, and instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This 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.

Therefore, can I remind you of the importance of punctual attendance at school and request that you ensure that your child arrives at school on time in the future. If there is anything we can do to support your child getting to school on time, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely,



Headteacher



Jubilee Square, Buckingham Park,  
Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP19 9DZ

Telephone: 01296 415687

Email: office@buckinghampark.org

Web: www.buckinghampark.org



To the parent(s) of: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear parent(s),

Further to the letter dated ....., we are pleased to inform you that following the monitoring period, your child's attendance has improved.

Given that your child's attendance is improving, we will not be taking any further action at this time.

We will continue to monitor attendance each week and contact you if we have any further concerns. We would expect to see this improved attendance pattern continue for the rest of the year.

Please do not hesitate to contact one of the team if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Fell, Mrs Whyte, Mrs Forsdyke

Attendance and Safeguarding Team





To the parent(s) of: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Percentage attendance this academic year: \_\_\_\_\_

Percentage attendance for last five weeks: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear parent(s),

By law parents are responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance. We are writing to you as your child's attendance at school is currently irregular and therefore a cause for concern.

Attendance has been monitored over the last five weeks and is currently below the expected level.

Every effort will be made to support your child if you feel he or she is experiencing significant difficulties that may impact upon attendance. Should this be the case, please contact one of the team to discuss the matter further. In the meantime, we will continue to monitor attendance for a further three weeks, during which time we expect to see a significant improvement.

Only the Head teacher has the authority to authorise absence; further absences may not be authorised without supporting evidence that your child was unable to attend school with good reason (for example, an appointment card or note from the doctor).

Should your child's attendance remain irregular during this time we will have no choice but to refer the matter to the County Attendance Team.

Enclosed is your child's attendance summary for your information.

Please do not hesitate to contact one of the team if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Fell, Mrs Whyte, Mrs Forsdyke

Attendance and Safeguarding team