

BUXTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY 2023

Last Reviewed	Resources Committee
Reviewed by	Caroline Gelsthorpe Assistant Headteacher
Next review date	September 2024

BUXTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL
Attendance Policy Y7 – Y11
Rationale

At Buxton Community School we recognise that attending school regularly and on time has a positive impact on learning and progress. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that their attendance and punctuality is excellent. Your child should be in school and on time every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Most students at Buxton Community School have an attendance record of well over 95%. Many have an attendance record of 100%. In line with the Government and Local Authority guidelines, we expect all our students to maintain an attendance level of well over 95%.

'Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary schools'.

DFE School Attendance October 2014

Aims

To establish systems and practices which will:

- promote a culture across the school which recognises and promotes regular attendance and punctuality
- make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors
- raise student awareness of the importance of uninterrupted attendance, punctuality and develop in students a sense of their own responsibility
- continue to promote good teaching as it is recognised that this provides the best incentive for students to attend school
- develop positive and consistent communication between home and school in encouraging good attendance and in dealing with attendance issues
- set clear targets to improve individual student and whole school attendance levels
- monitor and provide accurate and useful information on levels of attendance and punctuality levels
- develop effective intervention strategies within the school and by maintaining a positive partnership with the Education Social Work Service
- demonstrate through the use of rewards and sanctions that Buxton Community School recognises that good attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves

- recognise, reinforce and support the key role of the form tutor in promoting and monitoring good attendance

Roles and Responsibilities

Buxton Community School is constantly working to achieve regular and good attendance by all its students. The school is using appropriate national targets guidelines for setting overall attendance targets. Good attendance is the responsibility of parents and carers, students, school staff and governors with the local authority support as needed. Buxton Community School operates a policy of working in partnership to improve attendance

The school has a clear framework which defines roles and responsibilities:

Parent/Carers

The school will inform parents and carers through the prospectus and newsletters of the importance of good levels of attendance and punctuality. Parents/Carers will be informed of their child's level of attendance and punctuality with each tracking report. Parents/Carers of students causing attendance concerns will be informed more regularly and may be asked to attend attendance meetings.

It is the responsibility of parent/carers to:

- ensure children attend regularly and are punctual
- contact school on the first day absence before 9.20 a.m.
- for continued absence, school should be contacted each day
- do not organise any term time holidays
- where possible try to arrange medical appointments outside of the school day. If this is unavoidable, try to arrange the appointment later in the afternoon so the child is able to attend as many lessons as possible
- attend meetings if concerns are identified
- make every attempt to attend and participate in Attendance Panel Meetings
- support the school in agreed intervention/action plans

Students

To raise student awareness of the necessity and value of good attendance and punctuality all students will be encouraged to monitor their own attendance during registration activities with their form tutor. Consistently good attendance and punctuality will be celebrated through the rewards systems.

It is the responsibility of Students to

- Attend school every day

- Be in all lessons on time and be punctual to the afternoon tutor session
- Where necessary, follow the appropriate system for 'lateness'

Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for attendance

The Assistant Headteacher is responsible for:

- taking the lead to ensure attendance has a high profile within the school
- overall implementation and monitoring of the Attendance Policy
- sharing information about the policy and related attendance matters with the Head Teacher and governors
- the communication and training of school teaching staff in procedures and protocols, including correct use of codes for absences and their role in meeting targets for attendance
- work closely with the Directors of Progress and Director of Intervention and to ensure the attendance policy and procedures are applied consistently and coherently across the school and a positive culture of attendance is encouraged through the school Reward system
- ensuring there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters
- taking responsibility to ensure the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer will report to the Assistant Headteacher and Heads of Pastoral Care on matters of attendance and punctuality. Specific responsibilities:

- operation of the SIMS and ClassChart system for recording attendance and absence
- operate the school's first day contact system by contacting parents/carers directly on the first day of a student's absence where no note of telephone call has been received from home.(initially by schoolcomms message and subsequently by telephone call and/or letter)
- liaise with Heads of Pastoral Care to ensure there is contact parents following unexplained absences
- monitor and record attendance students who are receiving education elsewhere

- the review of registers on a daily basis and identify trends of absence. Inform Directors of Progress and Heads of Pastoral Care of concerns regarding trends of absence
- monitor lateness
- collate and provide whole school and individual attendance data for analysis as directed by the Assistant Headteacher (and others e.g. Directors of Progress, Heads of Pastoral Care): this may include:
 - student registers for Panel meetings
 - inconsistent use of absence codes by staff and/or any missing marks

Heads of Pastoral Care

The Heads of Pastoral Care will be responsible for co-ordinating and monitoring attendance across their Year groups. They will:

- ensure that form tutors adhere to the attendance policy and procedures
- monitor the attendance and punctuality of their Year group on a daily and weekly basis
- ensure attendance concerns are followed up and appropriate and effective interventions are implemented
- provide monthly overview and half termly detailed reviews on attendance within the Year group
- be responsible for communications with Parents/Carers on attendance issues
- work with the attendance officer and form tutors to monitor and follow up on any truancy including post-registration truancy
- develop a positive ethos within the Year group which recognises good attendance and punctuality by developing effective strategies with the form tutors and using effective Rewards and Sanctions
- have daily oversight of attendance and punctuality of all students in their Year group and support form tutors with attendance concerns
- take an active role in becoming a link with Parents / Carers by telephone contact or meetings
- provide early intervention of target groups and provide these students with appropriate support

- work with the Director of Intervention to support students struggling to access school through poor attendance. This may take the role of home visits, interviewing students, supporting students in lessons, helping families access relevant financial support and liaising with outside agencies as appropriate

The Form Tutor

The form tutor will be a key person promoting and monitoring good attendance and punctuality.

The form tutor will:

- help raise the profile of attendance with their form group and monitor the attendance and punctuality of their tutees on a daily basis
- follow the attendance policy procedures when dealing with absence and punctuality
- maintain effective communication with the Head of Pastoral Care on all attendance matters concerning the tutor group
- assist students in the recording and monitoring of their own attendance
- work closely with the Heads of Pastoral Care in developing a positive ethos within the Year group which recognises and values the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- develop good relationships with parents and carers and contact them where appropriate in matters regarding attendance

All Staff

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere for all students
- provide a safe learning environment and ensure an appropriate, engaging and enjoyable curriculum
- ensure all registers are taken within the first 10 minutes of every lesson
- provide a sympathetic response to any students' concerns
- to be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- to participate in training regarding school systems and procedures and follow them accordingly

- Complete accurate registers in line with the schools Attendance Registration guidelines

Governors

It is the responsibility of Governors to:

- adopt the School Attendance Policy and review the policy annually
- agree statutory targets for attendance for the school
- be aware of attendance issues through the Governors Committee structure

Procedures

Registration

The school is legally bound to register students at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. This will be at the start of lesson 1 and lesson 4. Heads of Pastoral Care and the Attendance Officer will follow up immediately any students who are marked absent. All teachers should adhere to the attendance registration guidelines as set out in this policy.

Attendance registration guidelines:

- All teachers are expected to take morning and afternoon registers promptly at 8.50am and 1.20pm. Teachers are expected to take a class register within the first 10 mins for all lessons.
- If a student is not present in the room they must be registered as absent unless there is a red flag which indicates the student is in HU.

Punctuality:

If a student arrives late to Registration/PD

The classroom teacher should mark the minutes late on the register. If a student is late during registration, without a valid reason, they will be sanctioned with a 15-minute lunch detention. If a student misses reg and arrives late to PD they will be issued with a 30 minute lunch detention.

If a student arrives late for lessons 1,2, 3,4 or 5

- If a student arrives late, the teacher should immediately overwrite the absence mark with L (late) and enter the number of minutes late on the register
- Students who are late should be kept in the lesson. This lateness should be followed up by departments. Departments should have their own strategies/sanctions for addressing lateness to these lessons with proportionate responses that support the whole school policy

- If a student is persistently late, departments should inform Heads of Pastoral Care of actions taken.
- Parents / Carers will be regularly informed about persistent lateness.

Signing in and out

- If a student needs to sign out of school during the day, they must bring a note from their Parent / Carer indicating the reason. The student should sign out at reception. Administration Staff will then record the date and time of their leaving.
- Parents/Carers are asked to avoid arranging medical appointments during the school day. Where this is unavoidable Parents/Carers are asked to arrange the appointment as late in the day as possible to minimise lessons missed.
- When the student returns to school (if appropriate) they should report to Reception to sign in. The time will be recorded. They will be given a slip and should return directly to their lesson.

Absence

Absence will be monitored very carefully by the Attendance Officer and Heads of Pastoral Care as directed by the Assistant Head teacher.

If a student is absent:

- Parents/Carers should always contact school by 9.00 am if their child is going to be absent. For continued absence Parents/Carers should contact school on each day of absence. Parents/Carers are asked to keep absence to a minimum.
- Parents should indicate the reason for absence
- If school does not receive parental contact, the attendance officer will send a message via schoolcomms after 9.30am and subsequently by telephone/letter until a reason for absence is given.
- If an acceptable reason is given, the appropriate absence code will be entered into the system. Tutors will be able to see the code on the register.
- Tutors are encouraged to try to make telephone contact with the parent/carer in cases of absence and will inform the Attendance Officer of any information gained. Tutors should always accept absence notes from students if offered and deliver the note to the Attendance Officer. If the form tutor is concerned that a note is forged it should be referred to the Head of Pastoral Care.
- The Attendance Officer and/or Heads of Pastoral Care will endeavour to make telephone contact if a student reaches three days of absence and no contact has

been made from home. A letter and subsequent home visit may be carried out by the Family Support Worker.

Requests for Leave of Absence

Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their education. The school follows guidance from the DFE and the Local Authority in relation to requests for leave of absence. We expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. There is no entitlement in law to take leave of absence.

It is important that parent/carers understand that the school will not authorise Leave of Absence for the purpose of holidays in term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents are reminded that taking children on an unauthorised holiday could lead to a referral to the Local Authority and the implementation of a Penalty Notice Fine.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Any application for leave of absence must be made in advance, by the parent/carer using the 'request for leave of absence' form from the school Pastoral Administration Office. The school will consider any request individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. Leave of absence will **not be** agreed by the school unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents to be exceptional. In considering the request we would look at various factors such as:

- The timing of the request:
When a student is just starting school, absences should always be avoided as this is a very important transition period
Students should not be absent during assessment periods or in the time before and afterwards
- When a student's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- Where a student's attendance level is already below 94% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking the leave
- There are other periods of leave a student has had either during the current or previous academic year

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may lead to sanctions such as a Penalty Notice fines

Use of Penalty Notices

The school may request the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices (PN) in respect of unauthorised absences.

Persistent Absence (PA) and Serious Absence (SA)

From September 2015, a student falls into the 'Persistent Absence' category when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year **for whatever reason.** They fall into 'Serious Absence' when they miss 50% or more of their schooling. Absence at this level will

do considerable damage to any child's educational progress and we need parent/carers full support and co-operation to tackle this.

Attendance is monitored thoroughly and regularly. Any student whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA/SA threshold will be given priority attention and parents will be informed of this immediately.

Likely PA/SA students are tracked and monitored by carefully by our Progress and Pastoral Teams. All our PA/SA students and their parents will be subject to an Action Plan. The plan may include:

- Allocation of additional support by Heads of Pastoral care
- Referral to our Family Support Worker
- Individual incentive programmes
- Parenting and student contracts
- Referral to any other appropriate external agency

In situations where no improvement is evident, this may well lead to Penalty Notice fines being issued

All students at Buxton Community School should strive to keep their attendance well above 95% and avoid falling into the Persistent Absence category.

Re-integration following extended absences

For students who have had an extended absence for whatever reason, arrangements will be made to re-integrate them into school on an individual basis.

Most reintegration programmes will involve meetings with the student, parent/carer and relevant agencies:

- Following an extended illness (including school refusal) or medical reason, the re-integration will be managed by the Pastoral Team and may involve consultation with the Director of Intervention. This may include support from the school's HU team
- Following extended periods of truancy, this will usually be managed by the Pastoral Teams. Support from the Intervention team may be requested.

Part-time timetables

In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet the individual needs of a student e.g. where a medical condition prevents a student attending full time and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A part-time timetable must never be treated as a long-term solution and must have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend fulltime or be in alternative provision.

It is important that parents understand that in agreeing to a part-time timetable the students will be given an absence (authorised) mark for when they are not in school. This may well cause them to fall into the 'Persistent Absence' category.

Where a part-time timetable is considered, each case will be agreed on an individual basis and the terms agreed with the student, parent/carer, the Headteacher and the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for attendance.