

BURLINGTON INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

POLICY TITLE: Attendance Policy

Persons with Responsibility: Su Yay-Walker

Key Legislation:

Education Act 1996, Equality Act 2010, DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance', DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)', DfE (2016) 'Children missing education', DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education', The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Documents consulted:

Kingston's Exclusion Guidance Booklet for Head Teachers, Kingston Model Attendance Policy and Guidelines, National College Model Attendance Policy, Fixed Penalty Notices Code of Conduct for School (Feb 2018)

Policy History:

Issue No.	Date	Author	Summary of Changes	Next Review Date
9	April 2023	SYW	Updated legal framework, reviewed	Summer 2024
10	Oct 2024	EW, SYW	Updated	Autumn 2025
11	Summer 2025	EW, TE, SYW	Updated	Summer 2026
12	Sum 2026	SYW, EW	Updated	Summer 2027

Approved by Governors at a meeting on :

Please refer to signed minutes of this meeting

Equality Statement

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for our stakeholders with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in our community.

BURLINGTON JUNIOR, INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOLS

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction and Aims

Burlington Infant and Nursery School aims to work together with parents in order to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality for all children. Regular attendance is crucial to children achieving their full potential in learning, making friends and feeling more settled and happier in school.

Monitoring attendance is a statutory responsibility and part of our safeguarding procedures. The school takes a whole-school approach to attendance, recognising that barriers are complex and that our efforts across curriculum, behavior, SEND support, and pastoral care directly impact pupil attendance.

Parent Responsibility in the Law

The Education Act 1996, Part 1, Section 7 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient full time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any SEND they may have.

Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the School's Governing Body, the Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).

Parents and carers must ensure that they support the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a large impact on their child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents and carers are responsible for ensuring excellent attendance in order for their child to achieve their full potential.

The offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1966. Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, should a parent not pay a fixed penalty notice within 28 days, the local authority will prosecute for the original offence rather than non-payment, which can lead to a fine of up to £1,000, a conditional discharge, or a custodial sentence under section 444(1A).

Categorisation of absences

Absences may be categorised as **authorised** in the following circumstances:

- Absence due to illness, unless the school has genuine concern about authenticity, e.g. where there is a pattern of absence
- Urgent hospital or therapy appointments (evidence required). Where possible, these should be arranged out of school hours.
- Religious observance (limited to 1 agreed day exclusively set apart by the religious body).
- Temporary exclusion or suspension.
- Absence of 3 days or more - medical evidence must be provided.

- Where the school is satisfied that unavoidable circumstances prevented attendance, e.g. extreme weather conditions resulting in school closure
- Where there has been a family bereavement - 1 day authorised for the funeral and 1 day authorised for travel.
- Family weddings - 1 day authorised for the wedding and 1 day authorised for travel.
- Any other **exceptional** reasons [An appointment must be made with the head teacher to discuss this in advance of any proposed travel bookings being made.]
- Any applications for a 'Performance Licence' to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service are not an indication of absences being authorised. With such applications, the child's current overall attendance and attainment will be considered. For a request to be authorised, the child must maintain satisfactory attendance at the time of each request for absence. If a child falls into the Persistent Absent category (PA = attendance below 90%), the request for performance related absence will not be authorised. If all the above requirements are met, a maximum of 1 day's absence in one term may be granted.

Absences will be regarded as **unauthorised** in the following circumstances:

- No explanation is provided or the explanation is unsatisfactory (e.g., woke up late, or parent/sibling was ill).
- Leave taken during term time that is not deemed exceptional.
- Leave taken during term time without prior approval cannot be authorized retrospectively. If term-time leave is refused and the pupil is still taken out of school, it will be marked as an unauthorised holiday (Code G) and will trigger fixed-penalty protocols under the national threshold.
- Where the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness
- Where a child is off for 1 or more days, for any medical or sickness reasons, immediately before or after a school (or other booked) holiday or closure AND no evidence is provided
- Holidays and trips abroad will not be authorised
- Where there is a pattern of poor attendance, broken weeks and no medical evidence has been provided

If a child is absent from school for more than 20 days, without prior permission from the Headteacher, their name may be taken off the school roll and their place offered to another child.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Monitoring implementation and ensuring school leaders fulfil statutory duties, including accurate register maintenance and data sharing.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring that the Children Missing Education guidance is in place within the Safeguarding policy which is regularly reviewed and updated.

- Regularly reviewing robust attendance data and ensuring school staff receive regular, role-appropriate attendance training.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Day-to-day implementation and management of this policy, ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- **Authorising or issuing fixed penalty notices in accordance with the local authority code of conduct and statutory thresholds.**
- **Sharing information collaboratively with the LA by notifying them whenever a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the admission register outside standard transition times.**

Staff (including Class Teachers) are responsible for:

- Following the policy and maintaining accurate registers twice daily.
- **Using professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether welfare or attendance concerns should be escalated.**

The Attendance Officer / Lead is responsible for:

- Monitoring trends, executing attendance agreements, and data analysis.
- **Ensuring the school uses national attendance codes consistently and securely sharing daily attendance data automatically with the DfE and LA via the electronic Management Information System.**
- Following up on persistent absence (PA) when attendance drops below 90%, supporting families as appropriate, e.g. through attendance agreements, reporting concerns to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), carrying out home visits.

Parents are responsible for:

- Ensuring regular and punctual attendance.
- Informing the school by 8:50am by telephone, email or via the school's website, on the first day of a child's absence, with an explanation for the absence if their child will be absent from school.
- **Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number and proactively engaging with any family-based attendance support offered by the school or LA.**
- Gaining medical evidence for prolonged illness (3 days or more)
- Only in exceptional cases, where leave of absence is required, a parent can make an application in writing on the school's 'Application for School Absence for Exceptional Circumstances' form, giving the reason for the request. This must be done at least a month in advance and in most cases this will be followed up by a meeting with the Headteacher and/or the school's Attendance Governor.
- Avoiding medical and dental appointments during the school day
- Working with the school and EWO to improve lateness and attendance.

School's Registration Procedures

- Doors open at 8:50 am and registers close at 8:55 am for Reception to Year 2. Nursery doors open at 8:30 am and registers close at 8:45 am for morning nursery classes and open at 12:30 pm and registers close at 12:45 pm for afternoon classes.
- Late arrivals must be signed in via the school office.
- Medical appointments will be authorised with an appointment card or letter.
- Parents will be contacted by telephone/email/text if they have not informed the school of the reason for their child's absence by 9:00 am.
- If the reason for absence has not been provided on the day, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- If contact has not been established, you may receive a home visit from the Attendance Lead/Family Outreach Worker. In the case of a vulnerable child, a home visit may be conducted on day 1 of absence.
- **If contact has not been established within 5 days, we have a legal obligation to make a referral to Social Services as your child has become a Child Missing from Education [CME].**
- When a child's attendance falls below 95%, parents will initially receive a letter advising them of the school's concern (letter 1). Attendance will continue to be monitored.
- If attendance falls to 90% parents will receive a second letter (letter 2) advising of the school's continuing concerns, and will be invited in for a meeting with the Family Outreach worker. An Attendance Plan will be put in place.
- If attendance continues to fall below 90%, this is classed as **Persistent Absence**. Parents will then be invited in for a meeting with the Family Outreach Worker and Headteacher. The Attendance Agreement will be reviewed.
- If attendance continues to fall following a meeting with the Headteacher, parents will be invited to attend a final attendance meeting with the Headteacher and in some cases, the Attendance Governor. This will be recorded on the child's personal file.
- Children whose attendance falls below 90% are identified as '**Persistent Absentees**'. This level of attendance immediately prompts the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. The Educational Welfare Officer may meet with parents or carry out home visits where attendance is a concern.
- **On going poor attendance can indicate a safeguarding concern/neglect and will prompt the school to follow its safeguarding procedures including a referral to Social Services.**
- If a holiday/trip is taken, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Local Authority will be notified and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)

Since 2004, Local Authority officers (Education Welfare Officers or EWO), Headteachers (or Deputy/Assistant Headteachers) and the Police have had the power to issue fixed penalty notices for unauthorised absences. A fixed penalty notice (FPN) can also be issued if a parent or carer fails to ensure their child is not present in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusion. Burlington schools reserve the right to issue FPNs according to the 'Penalty Notices Practice Guidance for Schools' issued by AfC in 2014.

There are two levels of Fixed Penalty Notices which will be issued by the local authority to **each parent/carer for each child** absent from school. For example, for one child per parent:

- £80 fine if paid within 21 days
- £160 fine if paid later than 21, but within 28 days

FPNs may be considered appropriate when input from the EWS has failed to affect a return to school and in the following specific circumstances:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost due to unauthorised absence in any 10 week period;
- Parentally condoned absence;
- Unauthorised term time leave (includes holidays/trips): any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave of more than 10 sessions (5 school days), not authorised by the school under exceptional circumstances rule, may receive a penalty notice;
- Unauthorised delayed return from extended holidays;
- Where a child is off for medical or sickness reasons immediately prior or after a school holiday, totalling an absence of 5 days, and no evidence is provided – e.g. 1 day sickness, 4 days unauthorised absence due to holiday
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed) equivalent to 10 occasions in any 5 week period (even where attendance for the whole academic year is above 90%).

Who receives a Fixed Penalty Notice?

FPNs are issued to any parent whether married or not, to each parent/carer for each child. Any parent who although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children's Act 1989 for a child.

Please see Education Welfare Service guidance in Appendix 1, 'Fixed Penalty Notices: Information for Parents and Carers'

Child Missing Education (CME)

As a school we follow the guidelines as set out in AfC's 'Educational Welfare Information and Guidance for Schools' which in turn follows 'Children Missing Education' – statutory guidance for schools September 2024 which can be found [here](#). Children missing education falls under the school's safeguarding duty. Also see Safeguarding Policy.

Removal From The School Roll

- [NEW STATUTORY UPDATE: Where a pupil fails to return from an expected period of leave or has a continuous period of unexplained absence exceeding 10 school days, the school and the LA will jointly conduct reasonable enquiries under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 to establish the pupil's whereabouts before any deletion from the admissions register occurs].

Encouraging attendance and punctuality

Burlington encourages regular attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- By responding promptly to a child or parent's concern about the school or other pupils
- By informing parents in writing of irregular attendance, including lateness by accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registrations
- By publishing attendance statistics
- By celebrating good attendance and punctuality through certificates and prizes
- By educating our children through assemblies, through lessons in relation to the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality as a crucial part of becoming successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens
- By presenting attendance certificates at the end of each term, and 100% badges at the end of each academic year
- By presenting weekly class attendance awards for each year group
- Monitoring punctuality every day to encourage good punctuality

Late collection: School

School closes at 3:20pm for YR - Y2, and at 11:30am/3:30pm for Nursery. Parents must ensure that their child is collected on time every day. In addition, extra-curricular clubs finish between 4:15pm to 4:30pm. If a child is collected late either from school or a club, this can be distressing for the child. This can also result in staff needing to stay beyond the end of their shift. This incurs a cost which will be passed on to the parents at £5.00 for up to a delay of 15 minutes and a further £1 for each subsequent 5-minute period. In exceptional circumstances, these costs may be waived at the discretion of the Headteacher. **In extreme circumstances, regular late collection can also indicate a safeguarding issue and the school will follow its safeguarding procedures, which may include a referral to Social Services.**

Late collection: Acorns

Acorns After School Club finishes at 6pm. It is the parent's/carer's responsibility to ensure their child is collected by this time. If unavoidably delayed, the club must be contacted and alternative arrangements made for collection. A late payment fee of **£15.00 for up to 15 minutes' delay** will be charged for late pick-ups. **For every additional 15 minutes' delay, a further £15 will be charged. Persistent offenders will result in the cancellation of the child's place.**

If a child remains uncollected after 6.15pm, and no contact has been made by the child's family, staff will ring the local authority duty social worker in SPA (Single Point of Access) to report this as a safeguarding concern.

Appendix 1

Education Welfare Service Fixed Penalty Notices: information for parents and carers

What is a Fixed Penalty Notice?

Since 2004, local authority officers (typically education welfare officers), headteachers (or assistant headteachers and deputy headteachers) and the police have had the power to issue fixed penalty notices for truancy/unauthorised absences. A fixed penalty notice can also be issued if a parent or carer fails to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during the first five days of exclusion.

There are two levels of fixed penalty notices. The following is issued for each child, per parent:

- **£80 fine if paid within 21 days**
- **£160 fine if paid later than 21, but within 28 days**

Parents or carers who pay the fixed penalty notice within the time limit cannot later be prosecuted for the offence to which the fixed penalty notice relates. The money paid as a result of fixed penalty notice is retained by the local authority.

Who receives a fixed penalty notice?

Any natural parent whether married or not.

Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the children's Act 1989 for a child or young person.

What if I don't pay?

Should a parent not pay the notice within 28 days, the local authority will prosecute for the offence to which the fixed penalty notice relates rather than for non-payment of the fixed penalty notice.

The disposals available to the courts will generally include, for example, a fine of up to £1,000 or a conditional discharge. You may wish to seek your own independent legal advice in respect of this.

Can I appeal against a fixed penalty notice?

There is no right of appeal against the fixed penalty notice, however if you believe it to have been wrongly issued, you should contact the school immediately. Once issued, the fixed penalty notice will only be withdrawn in the following circumstances.

- Proof has been established that the fixed penalty notice was issued to the wrong person.
- The fixed penalty notice did not conform to the terms of the code of conduct.
- The fixed penalty notice contains a material error.

Should the fixed penalty notice not be withdrawn and you do not pay, you may be prosecuted under s444 of the Education Act 1996. A court will consider the evidence and determine the appropriate punishment.