



**Unsworth**  
Primary School

Together we build understanding

# Attendance Policy

**Author:** Mrs S Watt  
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Part of the

**Oak**   
Learning Partnership

Unsworth Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Bury attendance targets. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals, (monthly meetings) to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets, including:

- Schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence.
- Parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where they are of compulsory school age.
- The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

### **Start of the school day**

The school gates open at 8.40-45am. Classroom doors open at 8.50am. Parents should arrive at school so children can make their way to their respective classrooms and get ready for the school day. The school gates will be closed at 9.00am after which children will enter school via the main entrance.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school].

Only the head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised (code 'n').

## **Lateness**

Anyone arriving through the main entrance after 9.00am will be registered via the main Reception Office.

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 9.00am. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as 'n' before registers close and changed to a 'L' code by the school office staff.

Any pupil arriving after 9.30am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of others. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, or if a child has been late for 5 sessions or more we will send a letter home to bring it to a parent's attention. If a child is late for 10 or more sessions, parents will be asked to a meeting with school and could also be issued with a fine.

## **First Day Absence**

If a child is absent, parents/carers should call the school on the first day before 8.30am stating the reason for the absence.

If by 9.30am no message has been received explaining a pupil's absence, the school will phone home to try to secure an explanation (leaving a voicemail message). If by 10.00am no message has been received, the school's Attendance officer will make additional phone calls to emergency contacts, as well as sending a ParentHub message or email. Where the school is unable to make contact the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. If no contact has been made by 10.30am the School Attendance Officer/Safeguarding team will make a home visit. Any involved agencies such as social workers will be notified.

On the second day of absence the same protocols will be followed. After the 2nd day of absence, the class teacher will also contact the family (via phone call) to offer support.

After the child returns to school, if no further explanation of absence is given by the parents/carers, the school will send a message asking for an explanation of absence.

Our attendance figures are monitored on a fortnightly basis by the Head Teacher, and school's own Attendance Officer. At our meetings, we look at attendance figures that have dipped below 90%. We are particularly concerned about individual pupils who are defined as 'persistently absent'. The government defines children whose attendance falls below 90% as 'persistent absentees'.

If a child does fall under this category, a letter will be sent home to bring this to parent's attention. If no improvement has been made within four weeks, we may ask parents to make an appointment to come in and see us so we can discuss ways in which we can support the family and improve a child's attendance.

Either authorised or unauthorised, a child who is persistently absent is at risk of failing to achieve their full potential within the school environment.

Please see Attendance and First day calling flowchart as Appendix 3.

### **Onward referral to support services**

It is the responsibility of the School Attendance Officer to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s. If this is unsuccessful the school may refer to the School Health Adviser / School Nurse etc. if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases, the school will seek advice or involve other Support Agencies.

### **Absence notes**

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be scanned and entered onto our School Database and kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

### **NHS Self-Certificate forms**

NHS Self-Certificate forms will be accepted for a self-limiting illness, for a maximum of 3 school days' absence, however, any absence for 5 school days or more we will require evidence from a medical professional, which can include proof of a GP appointment card or sight of prescription boxes/bottles if appropriate.

### **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

### **Promoting attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. An attendance newsletter will be sent out to each family at the beginning of the academic year and the termly newsletter will be used regularly to reaffirm policy and procedure.

## **Authorised absences**

We cannot legally authorise any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. These are:

- a child is ill or receiving medical attention.
- day of religious observance, notified in advance (the day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong).
- absence due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness).

There are other absences, such as approved sporting activities that can be authorised if your child's attendance is above average.

Routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible.

## **Requests for absences in term time**

The law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Head Teachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.

If the request is denied school will inform the parent/carer of the reason by letter. If the parents/carers choose to continue with the planned holiday it will be taken as an unauthorised absence.

## **Penalty Notices**

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LA Officers, Head Teachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absences from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came in to force on 27th February 2004.

A Penalty Notice may be issued in the following circumstances:

- Overt Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Holidays in term-time
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement

- Persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed at 9.30am)

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority at £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of date of issue, rising to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days of date of issue. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may lead to legal action being taken against a parent.

### **Children Missing in Education**

Children 'missing from education' are children and young people of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and are being educated otherwise (at home, privately or in an alternative provision). They have usually not attended school for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more).

Unsworth Primary School implements the Bury Children Missing Education (CME) Protocol. Key responsibilities include:

- If school are aware of the existence of a child in Bury not in school, then this will be reported within five days.
- Correctly enter pupils who transition into school and follow up any failure to attend including informing the CME Officer.
- Make all reasonable enquiries to make contact and establish reason for any absence and report any absence that is more than 20 days. This includes all safeguarding procedures.
- All pupils at Unsworth whom have an EHCP will not be taken off roll until a new provision is named on a pupil's EHCP, or the LA has ceased an EHCP with an alternative package in place.

### **Attendance Data**

The number of sessions missed over a school year due to both authorised and unauthorised absence, are presented as a percentage of total possible sessions attended over a school year in the school prospectus. A fortnightly attendance report is sent to the DfE via the Census return.

Individual attendance figures are presented to parents on a termly basis and on an annual basis as part of their pupil progress updates and end of year report.

### **Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

The DfE requires every school to set targets with relation to improving attendance. In conjunction with the LEA these targets are set for a two-year period and presented for school approval.

Our school's target is 97%.

### The registration system

The school will use a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

| 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    | Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils                           | 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 |

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.





## Appendix 1

### The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

[a] To his age, ability, and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

## **Appendix 2**

### Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

#### **Unauthorised absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

#### **Authorised absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

#### **Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

### Appendix 3

| Day                       | Time                                                 | School actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Actions taken if no contact made                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>First day absence</b>  | <b>8am - 8.30am</b>                                  | Voice mail/check emails – absences<br>(Admin team to begin collating information)                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                |
|                           | <b>9.00am</b>                                        | Teacher takes class register.<br>All pupils arriving after this point, are marked as late by the Admin team.<br><br><b>If class teacher is absent, the Teaching Assistant or cover is to do a manual register and return to office by 9.10am</b> | Admin team begin pulling data for unexplained absences.                                                                                        |
|                           | <b>9.30am</b>                                        | Registers close. Non-attending children issued with an unauthorised absence.<br><br>Attendance officer to phone home to secure reason for absence.<br><br><b>Start with Y6 independent travellers first</b>                                      |                                                                                                                                                |
|                           | <b>10.00am</b>                                       | If parents have not contacted school, Admin team to phone home again to secure reason for absence.<br>If no response –send a message via Parent Hub and begin contacting emergency contacts for the child.                                       | DSLs informed verbally                                                                                                                         |
|                           | <b>10.30am</b>                                       | Attendance team/Safeguarding team to make a home visit and involved external agencies will be notified.                                                                                                                                          | Home visit to be conducted (2 members of staff)<br>Leave a calling card to inform parents someone has made a home visit and to contact school. |
|                           | <b>On returning to school</b>                        | Other agencies contacted - if under Safeguarding                                                                                                                                                                                                 | MASH/Police referral if there are other safeguarding indicators                                                                                |
| <b>Second day absence</b> |                                                      | As day 1 response                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | If still no response DSL to request a welfare check from Police                                                                                |
| <b>Third day absence</b>  | <b>For children whose absence has been explained</b> | Class teacher to make a welfare phone call to family – offer support and check in /ask if been to the doctors, etc.<br>Report back to DSL/attendance office verbally – CPOMs updated.                                                            |                                                                                                                                                |

**Safeguarding - priority given to CP plan/CIN plan/ LAC/ SEN + and other vulnerable children.**

**Y6 – independent travellers (walking to school) – phone numbers to make contact with children if needed.**