

Head teacher: Mrs L Armstrong

Date: October 2016

Date for review: Annually

Burnside Primary School- Attendance Policy

Burnside Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. A whole school attendance target of **96.5%** has been set for the academic **year 2016/2017** and various measures will be put in place to help work towards this.

The school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

This policy has been reviewed and rewritten in line with the DFE 'School Attendance; Statutory Guidance and Departmental Advice' (August 2013)

The Law

You need to make sure your child attends school regularly and on time. Because parents are responsible for this duty in law, you will be **breaking the law** if you do not do this and there are no good reasons for missing school.

Burnside Primary School and the Local Authority **want to help you if you have a problem**. If attendance does not get better or you do not accept help and support offered, the Council may issue you with a warning notice, Penalty Notice or ask you to attend an interview to ask you questions about whether you have broken the law.

If you go to court and are found guilty of an offence, you could be fined up to £1000 for a less serious offence or up to £2500 if the law breaking is more serious. **In very serious cases, the court may involve the probation service or consider up to 3 months in prison.**

Leave of Absence

Head teachers are no longer able to grant any leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time e.g. termly tests.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form (see Appendix A) which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can

be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. As stated in the most recent DFE guidance on attendance, if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments – currently Year 2 and 6 May/June.

Procedures

1. On the first day off and any further absence

If a child is ill or is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

2. For periods of extended absence

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received then the school will contact home to verify the absence.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action such as a referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and possibly a fixed penalty notice (fine).

If your child is absent from school more than they should be:

At the end of each half term the School Office will use its computer system to analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to frequent hospital appointments and/or long term medical needs).

We send letters for the following reasons:-

- 1. Attendance below 90% for the first time** - Letter sent to parents to say their child's attendance is causing some concern. An appointment with the Head Teacher or deputy head teacher will be offered to discuss ways that the school can offer support in finding a way improve this.
- 2. Attendance falls below 90% over a second half-term**, with no identifiable reason – Letter sent with a specific appointment given to meet with Head Teacher or deputy head for a 'planning meeting'. This will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor attendance.
- 3. If, following stages 1 and 2, there has been no significant improvement to attendance**– Referral to the School Attendance Officer for further action and support. The child may also be included in an attendance intervention group within school and/ or given a personal attendance chart. Further to this the school will inform parents that they are not able to authorise any absences without seeing medical evidence that there has been the need for a Doctor's appointment or a prescription has been issued.

***The Local Authority has access to attendance figures and unauthorised absence data. If they are unhappy that attendance is not being improved in these extreme cases the Local Authority is likely to take action against families where persistent absence is a problem. (which may result in a fixed penalty notice)**

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

Lateness

Registration time is at **9.00am** and **1.00pm** for Foundation and Key Stage One and **1.15pm** for Key Stage Two at which point the pupil entry gates will be locked and all pupils must enter by the main entrance. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to a fixed penalty notice being issued).

If your child is late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (SIMs).

1. If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions;

A letter will be sent home from school to parents to say their child's punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment with the Head will be offered to discuss ways that the school can offer support in finding a way improve this. Incentives to improve punctuality may also be offered to pupils e.g. improving their punctuality over 2 weeks to earn a school alarm clock.

2. If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason –

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment given to meet with Head Teacher or deputy head for a 'planning meeting'. This will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality.

3. If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality;

Then the School Attendance Officer will be alerted and a home visit carried out if appropriate.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

In order to promote attendance and punctuality the school will give out a weekly trophy for the class with the best attendance. Further to this, any children who achieve 99-100% attendance over each half term will receive a certificate and prize in assembly. Attendance percentages will be shared with parents on a weekly basis on the school newsletter, at

termly parents' meetings and also annual reports to parents will contain a record of individual pupils' attendance.

Children Missing from Education

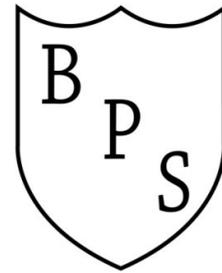
If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

This policy was approved by governors in October 2016

Date for Review: October 2017

Appendix A- Leave of Absence Form



**Application for Leave of Absence during
Term Time**

A. Pupil Details			
Name:		DoB:	
Address:			
Class / Form:			

B. Leave of Absence Request Details			
Start date of requested leave:		End date:	
Return to school date:		No. of days:	
What are the <u>exceptional circumstances</u> for your leave of absence request that you wish the school to consider?			
Name of parent / carer (print):			
Signature:		Date:	
Name of parent / carer (print):			
Signature:		Date:	

C. For School Use			
Current attendance %:			
Previous LOA this academic year:			
Previous academic year's attendance %:			
LOA in previous academic year:			
Does the LOA request time coincide with SATS / other examination periods:			
Any mitigating / aggravating circumstances (Including any ongoing medical issues):			
Is the LOA approved?:		YES	NO
If YES - Number of days to be authorised for this LOA application:			
Signature of Head Teacher:		Date:	
*Register Code to be used for this LOA:			

Appendix B LOA authorised *Send to each person with parental responsibility*****

**STANLEY BURNSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL,
Mendip Terrace,
South Stanley,
Stanley,
Co. Durham,
DH9 6QP.**

HEAD TEACHER – Mrs L. Armstrong B.Sc (Hons)

TELEPHONE : 01207 234020

FAX : 01207 237425

Email: burnside@durhamlearning.net

[Date]

Application for Leave of Absence during term time

Dear [Parent / Carer Name],

Thank you for your recent Leave of Absence application. On this occasion I am able to authorise your child's leave of absence from *date* to *date* due to the exceptional circumstances that you have outlined.

I must remind you that if *name of pupil* does not return to school following the dates of the leave of absence granted shown above, without reasonable cause, this will be classified as unauthorised absence. I should inform you unauthorised absences on your child's attendance record may mean that you are liable to incur a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) or could face prosecution. The 'Frequently Asked Questions' page attached explains the circumstances where enforcement action may be taken more fully.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please feel free to make an appointment to see me.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs L Armstrong

Appendix C LOA authorised **Send to each person with parental responsibility**

STANLEY BURNSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL,

Mendip Terrace,

South Stanley,

Stanley,

Co. Durham,

DH9 6QP.

HEAD TEACHER – Mrs L. Armstrong B.Sc (Hons)

TELEPHONE : 01207 234020

FAX : 01207 237425

Email: burnside@durhamlearning.net

[Date]

Application for Leave of Absence during term time

Dear [Parent / Carer Name],

Thank you for your recent Leave of Absence application. On this occasion I am not able to authorise your child's leave of absence from *date* to *date*.

I have no wish to deprive families of a well earned family holiday but my first concern has to be the educational development of *pupil name*.

Requests for leave are never taken lightly, and in taking this decision, you will be aware that as of 1st September 2013, Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. I do not consider the reasons provided for your leave of absence request to be exceptional.

If you decide to go ahead with your proposed leave of absence, *pupil name* absences will be marked as unauthorised. I should inform you that unauthorised absences on your child's attendance record may mean that you are liable to incur a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) or could face prosecution. The 'Frequently Asked Questions' page attached explains the circumstances where enforcement action may be taken more fully.

If you wish to discuss this matter further please feel free to make an appointment to see me.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs L Armstrong

Appendix C Frequently Asked Questions (to be given out with LOA request form)

Holidays in Term Time

Frequently Asked Questions

Why have the rules on Holidays in Term Time changed? / Why has my child's school told me that they will no longer authorise term time holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances?

In July 2012, Charlie Taylor (the Government's expert advisor on behaviour at that time) was asked by Michael Gove (Secretary of State for Education) to conduct a review of school attendance.

Mr Taylor stated in his report that if children are taken away for a two week holiday every year and have an average number of days off for sickness and appointments, then by the time they leave at sixteen they will have missed a year of school.

Mr Taylor's report recommended that changes were made to strengthen the rules on term time holidays, and that whilst head teachers should continue to have some discretion over the issue, holidays in term time should be the exception rather than the rule.

In his response to the report, Michael Gove endorses this recommendation, stating that more needs to be done to discourage term time holidays and that the rate of these absences in primary schools is double that of secondary schools. He comments that the expectation will be that schools only give permission for absence where there are exceptional circumstances that warrant it.

Head Teacher's Associations welcomed the recommendation to strengthen rules on term time holidays, recognising the disruption that holidays can cause to a pupil's education. Following consultations, the law around term time holidays was then changed from 1st September 2013.

What does the law now say about Holidays in Term Time?

It says that from 1st September 2013, Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

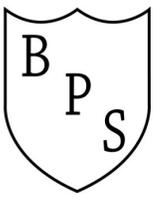
If my child's school refuses to authorise my term time holiday request, will I receive a fine (Fixed Penalty Notice) and can I be prosecuted?

Durham County Council's Fixed Penalty Notice Protocol acknowledges that regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice might be issued include unauthorised holidays in term time, but only where the holiday absence amounts to seven days or more in a maximum 12 rolling school week period. You can be prosecuted if you receive a fine and it is not paid.

Under the Education Act 1996, parents commit an offence if they fail to ensure their child's regular school attendance. Taking a child out of school for a holiday without permission, and where the absence amounts to seven days or more of unauthorised absence is viewed as failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school.

Payment of a Penalty Notice, where offered, is an alternative to prosecution. If unpaid, prosecution for the Education Act offence may therefore ensue. A fine will be issued to **each person with parental responsibility** for the child / children who is deemed liable for the offence / offences.



Burnside Primary School – Attendance Planning Meeting Record

Child's Name: Year Group:	
Date of Meeting:	
Current attendance % (year to date)	
Number of late marks (year to date)	
Initial date of concern:	
Action taken to date:	
Present at planning meeting:	
Agreed Actions:	
Date for Review:	
Signatures of those involved:	