

Butler's Hill Infant and Nursery School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Review : October 2024

In accordance with: Nottinghamshire County Council Code of Conduct

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Nottinghamshire County Council School Attendance Flow Chart (2018)

Weblink: <https://nscp.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/eufnuyn5/school-attendance-flowchart-january-2018.pdf>

Attendance Expectations:

- Attendance is mandatory.
- Parents' **have a legal obligation** to ensure their child attends school regularly.
- School **has** responsibility to record attendance **accurately on a daily basis**.
- **School could** issue sanctions, including **Education** penalty notices in line with LA codes of conduct, **and or referrals to the Early Help Unit for support with attendance**.

School Attendance Officer – Katherine Campsall

School will follow up with families if not satisfied with a reason why a pupil is not in school. School will request supporting evidence from the family, where school is not satisfied with reasons given for the absence we will issue an appropriate unauthorised absence codes, in line with the school attendance: guidance for schools.

Remote Education

If a pupil is not attending school because their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation school will offer pupils access to remote education. School will keep records of and monitor engagement with this, but will not be tracked in the attendance register.

Mission Statement

It is our aim for all pupils at Butler's Hill Infant and Nursery School to achieve their full potential and ultimately fulfil our school motto of 'Dream Big Aim High'. All pupils must attend school regularly in order to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them, through a rich and varied curriculum. Teachers plan carefully sequenced lessons for the children's learning and prolonged and persistent absence will severely effect their knowledge and skills in key areas of their learning. Many children benefit from additional intervention programmes and their absence will result in the gaps in their understanding widening not closing. Our aim is for all children to make excellent progress and this will not be achieved without good attendance.

Our partnership with parents and carers is paramount, as our children's educational success rests on a combination of a firm home-school foundation and strong communication links between the two. All staff are dedicated to supporting children and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually, as it is widely acknowledged that the link between attendance and achievement are intrinsically linked.

The school has a system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils and parents/carers to improve their attendance and timekeeping, but will also challenge those parents/ carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

Butler's Hill has an effective system of communication with parents (by telephone, letters, email and Class Do-jo) and the appropriate agencies to provide information, advice and support, recognising the need for confidentiality at all times. It is a shared responsibility of pupils, parents/carers, teachers, Senior Management, Governors and the Head Teacher.

This policy has been written in line with guidance from the government and the Local Education Authority.

Our target is that all children should attend school for at least 97% of the time.

Support, advice and guidance for parents

1. Accurate and up-to-date attendance information is provided through the school's Management Information System – ScholarPack.
2. Parents can speak to the Attendance Officer, Katherine Campsall, if they have any attendance concerns.
3. If there are any concerns relating to attendance or punctuality, parents are involved from the earliest stage.
5. Support is also available from the Nottinghamshire County Council Early Help Unit –

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/safeguarding/childrens-mash/services-available-for-non-safeguarding-concerns/early-help-unit>

Telephone: 0300 500 8080 – Monday to Friday 8am – 6pm

Text relay service: 18001 0115 977 4050

Expectations

Parents are expected to:

1. Provide the school with up to date home and emergency contact details.
2. Ensure their child attends school regularly, as is their legal duty as parents.
3. Contact the school on the first and each subsequent day of absence, unless a definite date of return is known.
4. Parents should offer reasons for absence but whether the absence is marked as authorised is a decision that can only be made by the school.
5. Ensure their child arrives in school on time, well prepared for the school day. School begins at 8:45 am for a prompt start and finishes at 3.15pm. Classroom doors are locked at 8.50 am, along with the gate. Morning Nursery should arrive by 8.40am – 11.40am and afternoon nursery by 12.20pm – 3.20pm.
5. Contact the school in confidence whenever any problems occur that may affect their child's attendance or performance in school.
6. In some circumstances provide evidence from a medical professional for prolonged absence (also see Unauthorised Absence).

Parents and children can expect the following from school:

1. Regular and prompt recording of attendance.
2. Early contact with parents when a child doesn't attend school without providing a good reason.
3. The use of a computerised system to record registers (ScholarPack) to ensure consistency across the school.
4. Rewards for good and improved attendance.
5. Students with attendance below 97%, whether absences are authorised or not, will be closely monitored. Any children arriving after 9.15am, when the register has closed, without a reasonable explanation will be marked with a 'U' code which counts as an unauthorised absence for the morning session. Any child arriving between 8.45am and 9.15am will be marked with an 'L' for 'Lateness'. Please see our "Lateness and Punctuality" section for more information on this.
6. Home visit – The Local Authority Advice is as follows

Visiting parents/carers and students at their homes is a reasonable and suitable response to attendance concerns. It will often be the first contact with a family and will establish a line of communication and hopefully form a positive working relationship. (Notts County Council - Improving School Attendance: A Toolkit for Maintained schools, July 2020).

The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

1. Genuine illness.
2. Family bereavement.
3. Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
4. Days for religious observance.
5. Fixed term exclusion.
6. Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.
- 7.

Partnerships with Outside Agencies

1. We carry out initial enquiries/intervention with staff within school, mainly the Attendance Officer, prior to referral.
2. Where school interventions fail to improve attendance, we gather and record relevant information to assist support with intervention from other relevant agencies.
3. When a pupil continues to have excessive amounts of unauthorised absence and/or lateness, despite the interventions made by school, then school will refer the case to Targeted Support (which is a service provided by Nottinghamshire County Council). This could result in legal action being taken against parents/carers for the non-attendance of their child.
4. Multi-agency liaison meetings are arranged as appropriate.
5. Involvement of other services and agencies are actively encouraged in the life of the school.

Early Help Assessment Form (EHAF)

To make a referral to the Early Help Unit parents must be notified by letter and we require their consent to support (if consent is not obtained, we are required to report to an Enforcement Case Manager, see Fines and Prosecution)
<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/childrens-social-care/family-services>

Holidays in Term Time

The Government outlines:

You must get permission from the head teacher if you want to take your child out of school during term time. You can only do this if:

- You make an application to the head teacher in advance (as a parent the child normally lives with).
- There are exceptional circumstances.
- It is at the head teacher's discretion how many days your child can be away from school or if leave is granted.

Please see: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

The Local Authority outlines:

- The law states that for your child to be considered to attend school regularly they must be at school every day they are required to be there by the head teacher. This was confirmed in a Supreme Court ruling in 2017.
- The head teacher will decide whether to agree the leave of absence and whether this is marked as authorised or unauthorised in the attendance register.

- Please note that head teachers are only permitted to agree a leave of absence in term time for exceptional circumstances.

Please visit: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-discipline-and-exclusions/attendance-absence-truancy for more information on this.

Please note the following information regarding holidays in term time:

Butler’s Hill Infant and Nursery School **DO NOT** authorise any holiday taken during the school term. However, the Head Teacher has the ability to authorise an absence in ‘exceptional circumstances’.

- If a parent still wishes to apply for leave of absence for a family holiday which would result in their child missing time from school then they may request a holiday application form from reception. School will consider authorising your requests in **exceptional circumstances**. Family holidays will not be considered exceptional. **If we do not receive formal notification in the form of an email or letter, but have evidence that you are on holiday then the below remains the same.**

- Should you still choose to have a family holiday in term time, the absence will remain unauthorised. *Please note; Nottinghamshire County Council has stated that from September 2015 Penalty notices can be issued if the school has evidence that a parent/carer has removed a child from school for the purposes of a holiday during term time without authorisation and the level of absence is above 6 sessions/3 days over a rolling 6 week period.*

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-holidays-and-closures/holidays-during-term-time>

Fines and Prosecution

Holidays in Term Time

Local Authority Guidance outlines Fines and Prosecution

You can be fined for taking your child on holiday during term time without the head teacher’s permission. Penalty notices are issued at £120 (per child, per parent) and must be paid within the statutory 28-day deadline. Penalty notices are only reduced to £60 if they are paid in full, within 21 days of issue. All fines must be paid within 28 days of issue otherwise you may be prosecuted in court.

Schedule for the issuing of Penalty Notices for holidays in term time

| | |
|---|---|
| Parent applies for holiday | Reply to application in writing to explain that the holiday absence has not been approved and the absence will be unauthorised and that this may lead to a EPN being issued |
| Child is absent for family holiday | Mark register as unauthorised |
| Child returns to school following holiday | Write to parent to explain that request has been made to LA for issuing EPN |
| | Write to LA with all info necessary to issue a EPN within 2 weeks of holiday. |

School Evidence – Holiday

- Up to date and accurate attendance register showing 7 sessions or more of unauthorised absence over a 6 week attendance period.
- Copy of leave of absence form or information relating to how school came to know of the absence due to a holiday (i.e. stated by the child / friend of the family / other evidence). If goes to court parent will have to prove they were at home).
- Copy of letter informing parent that their holiday was not authorised and a penalty notice will be requested.
- Following the absence a letter informing parents that an **education** penalty notice has been requested.
- All letters should be addressed to each parent with responsibility.
- A chronology of any contact with the parent regarding the absence.

For further information on Penalty Notices and legal action please see:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

Unauthorised Absences

As per our "Expectations", parents should contact the school on the first and each subsequent day of absence, unless a definite date of return is known. If parents do not contact the school within 24 hours of an absence then this will be marked as unauthorised.

Authorised and unauthorised absences and illness.

In line with guidance from the DfE and LA, school will not routinely ask for all absences to be authorised.

However, we still have a responsibility to act promptly and robustly to raise attendance.

In light of both these directives, school will authorise clearly diagnosable conditions (e.g. chicken pox, measles etc.) as illnesses without requesting evidence unless the child's attendance is causing concern, or we have cause to question the reason given.

For parents reporting symptomatic conditions, (e.g. headache, feeling under the weather, got a cough / cold etc.) we will authorise the first three days each year as illness but then will ask for evidence to support getting the correct code for any further absences.

Where we decide an illness is authorised we will record it as 'I' in the register. Where we decide it will not be authorised it will be recorded as an 'O' code.

Both of these codes count as absences and will impact on your child's overall attendance, regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

However, as mentioned previously, whether or not the absence is marked as authorised is still a decision that can only be made by the school.

Where your child has been absent due to attending a medical appointment, the school must receive evidence in order for this to be approved. This could be a letter detailing an appointment or could simply be an appointment card/ email / text message. Parents are encouraged to contact the school if they are unsure as to what qualifies as 'evidence'.

There may be various reasons why an absence is marked as unauthorised. Below is a list; including, but not limited to, absences that will not be authorised:-

- Parents have not called in to explain why their child is absent.
- Family holiday (see previous section).
- Pupils refusing to come to school.
- Pupils have been absent for 3 days or more and evidence has not been provided.
- Pupils are otherwise engaged in non-educational activity rather than attending school e.g. concerts, fairs, shopping, etc.
- Parents have been unable to or are refusing to send their child to school (unless there are extenuating circumstances which are discussed with the school).

Schools are **within** their legal rights to request that the Local Authority issue an 'Education Penalty Notice' for your child's **unauthorised absence** (fine of £120, or £60 if paid within **the first 21 days of the Educational Penalty Notice being issued**).

School Evidence – Absence

- Completed penalty notice Proforma (with parents full name).

- Up to date and accurate attendance register showing 7 sessions or more of unauthorised absence over a 6 week attendance period.
- Copy of letter 2 following 3 days of unauthorised absence, requesting that parents attend a meeting to discuss their child's attendance, to see if school can offer any support in improving said attendance.
- A copy of letter 3 (if parents attended the meeting) or letter 3a (if parents did not attend meeting) Explaining this is our final warning and should there be **more than** 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absence from the date of letter 2 a referral will be made to early help, or an Education Penalty Notice will be requested.
- A chronology of any contact with the parent regarding the absence.
- Following further unauthorised absences (**7 sessions or more**)– a copy of letter 4 informing parents that a Penalty Notice has been requested.
- All letters (not emails) should be addressed to each parent being included in the **Education** Penalty Notice request (even if they do not reside in the same property but have parental responsibility).

Checklist for the issuing of Penalty Notices

| | |
|--|--|
| Has there been in excess of 3 days (6 sessions) of Unauthorised absences over 6 week rolling period where the absence is general in nature? | |
| Has there been in excess of 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absence over a 6 week rolling period and evidence that this was for the purpose of a family holiday? | |
| Is the attendance certificate attached? | |
| Is it fair to issue a PN? Suitable provision? Needs met? Support offered and fair warning given? Other agencies in agreement? | |
| Who has parental responsibility? 1 or 2 parents at home? (if a step parent is in the family home they too can be issued) | |
| Are parent(s) first names given? | |
| Are contemporaneous notes kept of all conversations, meetings and copies of letters also? | |

Alternative to Prosecution: Enforcement Officer (no need for parental consent)

Education Penalty notices are issued for seven or more sessions of unauthorised absence over a six week period of attendance. This is the same for holidays in term times and general absence from school.

Nottinghamshire schools make penalty notice requests directly to the Enforcement Officer

penalty.notices@nottscc.gov.uk

West Notts: paul.sherridan@nottscc.gov.uk Tel: 0115 804-2090

Request for Attendance Enforcement:

https://forms.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/en/AchieveForms/?form_uri=sandbox-publish://AF-Process-bl836309-28df-4c23-b841-cb29858eb615/AF-Stage-616a3b12-cc19-410b-8b97-53e97c0fbd19/definition.json&redirectlink=%2Fen&cancelRedirectlink=%2Fen&consentMessage=yes

Lateness and Punctuality

- We expect all children to be in their classroom by **8.45am**. Doors open at **8.30am** to give the children plenty of **time** to settle ready for assembly at 9.00am.
- Where a pupil arrives after **9:15am** they will be coded with a "U" which is classed as an unauthorised absence for that session.

- Where a pupils arrives **between 8.45am – 9.15am** they will receive an 'L' for late. This will also be monitored alongside 'U' codes.

Rewards and Sanctions

Attendance is actively promoted through a range of rewards. It is implemented consistently across school

1. Weekly attendance – on Friday the class with the highest attendance receives 'Butler's Bear' and a certificate to display for the following week.
2. Weekly attendance for the class will be shared and celebrated with parents via Do-jo and displayed in the classroom window.
3. Half termly – children with 96+% receive a certificate, 100% attendance receive a certificate and 100% attendance sticker.
4. Half termly – the class with the highest attendance receives a whole class treat – i.e. film and popcorn afternoon etc.
5. Yearly – all children who have had 100% attendance over the year receive a special award and the class with the highest attendance over the year will receive an additional trip out i.e. a picnic in the park etc.

Sanctions:

1. We have strategies in response to low attendance (also see Monitoring).
2. We take action in accordance with this policy between school and outside agencies.

Roles and Responsibilities

Teachers:

- Accurately complete their register at the start of each day/after lunch.
- Refer any patterns or concerns about poor attendance to the HT / SLT.
- Teacher to provide background information, such as attainment, if a referral is made to outside agencies.
- To discuss attendance and punctuality at parents evenings / review meetings.
- To promote their class attendance on the Class Do-jo every Friday.

Office:

- Monitor attendance on a daily basis and respond to lateness and absence using the MIS –
- Contact parents/carers if no reason has been provided by the second day of absence.

Attendance Officer:

- **Monitor whole attendance on a weekly basis.**
- Issue monitoring letters as appropriate.
- Complete appropriate forms for Nottinghamshire's Early Help Unit once approved by the Head Teacher.
- Meet with parents of pupils who have been identified as cause for concern'. Liaise with parents and complete Targeted Support Referrals for persistent absence.

Governors:

- The governors will read and review the head teacher's termly report to governors.
- **Support the school with prioritising attendance.**
- **Work with the school leaders to develop a whole school attendance culture.**
- Governors may attend attendance assemblies to present certificates and rewards.
- A named governor will monitor school action on attendance.

- Governors may attend Attendance Panel meetings with **the Attendance Officer**.
- Must be informed where a Penalty Notice is served for a child.

Gathering and Analysing Attendance Related Data – ScholarPack

We systematically collect, record and store attendance information onto our computerised data system (ScholarPack), ensuring consistency and accuracy across the school. This monitors trends and patterns with regards to absence and lateness for specific children, groups of children (such as SEND and Pupil Premium), classes and year groups.

Standardised recording of:

- Authorised/unauthorised absence
- Educational activity
- Presence

Decisions are made about what information, if any, is provided for:

- Governors
- Staff
- Parents/Carers

Information for Parents/Carers

- School prospectus to include attendance and expectations for parents.
- Weekly class and whole school attendance to be displayed on class/whole school Do-jo.
- Half termly attendance for each class is provided in the newsletter.
- Attendance policy and key information displayed on the website.
- Attendance policy to be sent out to parents annually, along with a simpler Guidance for Parents and Carers pamphlet
- Termly letter to be sent out at the start of every half term highlighting the importance of attendance.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

1. Letter 1 to be sent to children who have fallen below 97%. **During the Autumn this will be issued when a child has been absent from school for more than 6 sessions (3 days). This is to ensure a child is not disproportionately penalised for have a period of absence in the first term of the year. The letter should** Highlight that their child has fallen below the required level and its effect on progress.
2. Letter 2 **to be sent where 3 days of unauthorised absences have been recorded since letter 1.** Attendance has remained low in the previous 6 weeks and parent/carer is invited into a review/panel meeting with **the Attendance Officer** to discuss an action plan to increase attendance with immediate effect.
 - **Letter 3 Issued at the meeting stating** *If the unauthorised absence is in excess of 3 days (6 sessions) over a 6 week rolling period of 12 weeks, since the date of letter 2 then the school can ask the Local Authority to issue Educational Penalty Notices to each parent for each child to whom persistent absence applies. Nottinghamshire Code of Conduct, (reviewed 2021)*
 - **Letter 3a sent if non-attendance at meeting stating** *If the unauthorised absence is in excess of 3 days (6 sessions) over a 6 week rolling period of 12 weeks, since the date of letter 2 then the school can ask the Local*

Authority to issue Educational Penalty Notices to each parent for each child to whom persistent absence applies. Nottinghamshire Code of Conduct, (reviewed 2021)

3. Letter 4 is issued when significant improvement has not been maintained and there are more than 6 sessions of unauthorised absence since letter 3 or 3a have been issued. It states a request has been issued for a Education Penalty Notice.

Improving School Attendance: School practice to improve attendance will include:

- Having in place an Attendance Policy that staff, pupils and parent/carers are familiar with. The Policy should outline the school's ethos, expectations in relation to behaviour and attendance and any arrangements for the escalation of concerns including the use of enforcement action.
- Promotion of the importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Following the Pupil Registration Regulations, particularly for accurate, up to date and correct usage of coding.
- Robust systems for monitoring attendance and data to analyse absence patterns.
- Setting of trigger point/thresholds.
- Early intervention and a clear understanding of who does what and when.
- Clear and timely communication with parent/carers concerns and expectations about attendance; by letters, meetings in school (or other venues) or home visits.
- Identifying the causes for absence from pupils and parent's point of view.
- Setting realistic targets and plans to support improved attendance.
- Supporting the most vulnerable pupils by: referral/signposting to other agencies, offering more suitable curriculum, encouraging the return of pupils with catch up opportunities and reintegration plans.
- Sending formal letters to parent/carer where there is no improvement after casework.
- Discuss cases with the Family Service's Senior Education Welfare Practitioner. They offer advice on casework and quality of evidence in the case file.
- Make a referral through the Early Help Unit for a pupil whose attendance has not improved and whose parents have not engaged with school's efforts to resolve the issues.
- Make the case file available to the Family Service Enforcement Lead.

Butler's Hill Infant and Nursery School Attendance Policy conforms with the guidance set out in the Nottinghamshire County Council 'Local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices' (Revised January 2021)

Introduction

Nottinghamshire Local Authority (LA) is committed to working with, and supporting schools, parents/carers and children to ensure that every child achieves the highest level of attendance at school. The LA is also committed to working in partnership with other agencies who can contribute to a holistic approach to improving school attendance.

A brief explanation of the Nottinghamshire Code of Conduct

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 (introduced by section 23 of the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003) introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution under section 444. Parents may discharge potential liability for conviction for an offence under section 444(1) by paying a penalty.

Nottinghamshire Local Authority Area has a Code of Conduct to enable Penalty Notices to be issued by authorised persons for truancy or where a pupil is found to be in a public place during the first five days of exclusion.

The purpose of the local Code of Conduct is to ensure that the power to issue penalty notices is applied consistently and fairly across the local authority area and that suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the scheme.

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance or whereabouts but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so.

The law states that authorised LA staff, Head Teachers and school staff authorised by them (deputy/assistant heads), the Police, Community Support Officers and accredited persons may issue Penalty Notices, although there is no requirement for them to do so.

Head teachers can request that the Local Authority through its Family Service issue Penalty Notices on their behalf. In Nottinghamshire head teachers (or school staff authorised by them) can issue penalty notices. Should a school issue penalty notices it is necessary to inform the local authority in order for the payment to be monitored. The Local Authority will only prosecute cases where the Penalty Notice has not been paid if the Code of Conduct has been followed by the school issuing a penalty.

The penalty is set at £120 and should be paid within 28 days of the date on which the notice starts. If the penalty is paid within 21 days of the date on which the notice starts the sum is reduced to £60. In line with the national requirements the notice is always payable to the Local Authority.

The following may issue penalty notices, although there is no requirement for them to do so:

- authorised local authority staff;
- **head teachers and school staff authorised by them (limited by regulations to deputy and assistant heads);**
- the police, community support officers and accredited persons.

A penalty notice may only be withdrawn by the local authority named in the notice as the authority to which payment is to be made. The only circumstances in which a Penalty Notice will be withdrawn include cases in which:

- It ought not to have been issued; or
- It ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient; or
- It appears to the authority that the notice contains material errors,
- It interferes with existing intervention strategies or legal proceedings.

Where a penalty notice has been withdrawn –

- Notice of the withdrawal must be given to the recipient; and
- Any amount paid by way of penalty in pursuance of that notice must be repaid to the person who paid it.

The policy must comply with the following:

- ✓ Head teachers wishing to issue, or authorise their staff to issue, penalty notices should first discuss this with their school's governing body.
- ✓ Schools deciding to issue Penalty Notices themselves should ensure that this is made clear to parents/carers and is reflected in their Attendance and Behaviour Policy (Letter 3 is sent advising of this).
- ✓ Schools should make it clear to parents/carers and pupils in their attendance policy what they categorise as being late ("L") and the time after which arrival will be marked as unauthorised absence ("U") in the attendance register.

For further information please see:

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/127161/code-of-conduct-for-penalty-notices.pdf>

Useful websites in this document:

<https://nscp.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/eufnuyn5/school-attendance-flowchart-january-2018.pdf>

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/care/safeguarding/childrens-mash/services-available-for-non-safeguarding-concerns/early-help-unit>

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-holidays-and-closures/holidays-during-term-time>

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforce-school-attendance>

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/127161/code-of-conduct-for-penalty-notice.pdf>

Appendix I- Example letter: Start of Term Letter

Dear Parents,

As we start a new term we would like to remind all parents and carers that at Butler's Hill Infant and Nursery School, attendance is a key priority. We would like to work together with parents to ensure excellent attendance and punctuality for all of our children. Our aim is to ensure all children, if at all possible will achieve a minimum attendance of 97%.

The following information shows how school attendance may affect your child's academic progress.

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Above 96% | Less than 6 days absence a year: Excellent attendance! Pupils with this attendance should achieve the best grades they can, leading to the best possible start in their next phase of education. |
| 95% | Less than 10 days absence in a year: Pupils with this attendance are likely to achieve their target grades and will be well prepared for starting the next phase of their education. |
| 90% | 19 days absence over the year: Pupils with this attendance are missing a month of school per year and may fall behind in Maths and English; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best. Attendance at this level is deemed to be persistent absence - parents of pupils with this level of attendance could be issued with a Penalty Notice by the LA. |
| 85% | 29 days absence in a year: These pupils are missing 6 weeks of school a year, it will be very difficult for them to keep up and achieve their best. |
| 80% | Pupils with this attendance are missing a day for every week of school. It will be almost impossible to keep up with work. |

If your child's attendance was below 90% at the end of the last school year, their attendance will be under close scrutiny from the beginning of this school year. Should this pattern look likely to continue, you will be invited into school for a formal meeting to discuss these concerns and to create an attendance plan.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind you that parents/carers are not entitled to remove their children from the school for holidays. Butler's Hill will not authorise absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

We hope you find this information helpful. If you have any queries or would like to discuss the contents of this letter in more detail, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs R. Hallam Head Teacher

Appendix 2 – Letter 1

Dear [[title]] [[addressee]],

Good attendance at school is vital for pupils to do well at school and is of high importance to everyone at Edgewood Primary School. Evidence shows that children who attend school on a regular basis, go on to achieve better than those who are regularly absent from school. It does not take many absent days for children to start to fall behind, both socially, and academically.

Our aspiration is that every child has attendance of 97% or better so they do not miss important pieces of learning through the school year. 97% over the entire school year means only missing 6.5 school days.

[[firstname]] has missed more school than expected so far this year. Their overall attendance is currently x%.

A child that only attends school for 90% of the year will miss 19 school days – nearly four weeks of school or a day every fortnight! That is a lot of schoolwork to miss and often puts those children at a distinct disadvantage to others.

We understand that there may well be very legitimate and unavoidable reasons for your child absences this year but we know that it is important to communicate with you so that we can hopefully take measures to improve [[firstname]]'s attendance.

We will be closely monitoring [[firstname]]'s attendance and, if there are further absences, will write to you again to invite you to a meeting to discuss what can be done to improve their attendance.

If we cannot secure better attendance there may be a possibility of a Penalty notice being issued under section 444 of the Education Act, in line with DfE and Local Authority guidance.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, or if you feel you need some support with improving [[firstname]]'s attendance then please contact school and ask to speak to myself (Mrs Campsall).

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Katherine Campsall

Attendance Officer.

Appendix 3 – Letter 2 – Requesting a meeting.

[[title]] [[addressee]]
[[address]]

Dear [[title]] [[addressee]],

Attendance Information for: [[firstname]] [[surname]] [[dob]]

Since our last letter, the registers at Butler's Hill show that [[firstname]] has missed 6 sessions (3 days) of school due to unauthorised absences within the last 6 weeks. This means that [[firstname]]'s absence from school now meets the persistent threshold.

We are now writing to request that you attend an attendance panel meeting at school to discuss the issues contributing to poor attendance and support to be offered where possible. Please attend on at It would be helpful if you could provide medical evidence from your GP (a note or prescription) for any dates that your child may have been absent so we can formally authorise them. We can then discuss the way forward and the possibility of a referral to the Early Help Team and completion of an Early Help Assessment Form (EHAF) if necessary.

You, as parents, have a legal responsibility under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, for ensuring that your child attends school regularly. As such unless your child's attendance improves you will be referred to the local authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, for failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child.

In some circumstances the local authority may decide a prosecution via Magistrates Court is more suitable, for instance repeated or lengthy periods of absence.

From the date this letter, [[firstname]]'s attendance will be formally monitored for 12 weeks. Should unauthorised absences reach in excess of 3 days (6 sessions) over a 6 week rolling period, we will request that the local authority issue a penalty notice. The notice can be issued to both parents/carers for each child whose absence is persistent. Please note parent is defined by the Education Act (1996) as anyone who lives in the household and is responsible for the child's care, not just those with legal parental responsibility.

I am sure that we can work together to see a marked improvement in [[firstname]]'s attendance over the remainder of the academic year.

Yours Sincerely,

Katherine Campsall
Attendance Officer

Appendix 4— Letter 3 Given to parent/carer at meeting

Letter warning about possible action for unauthorised absence

[[title]] [[addressee]]

[[address]]

Dear [[title]] [[addressee]]

PENALTY NOTICE WARNING

Child [[firstname]] [[surname]] [[dob]]

The registers at Butler's Hill Infant and Nursery School show that, to date, your child has missed 3 days (6 sessions) of school due to unauthorised absences over the last 6 weeks. This means that your child's absence from school now meets the persistent absence threshold.

You, as parent, have legal responsibility under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, for ensuring that your child attends school regularly. As such unless your child's attendance improves you will be referred to the local authority for a Education Penalty Notice to be issued under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child.

In some circumstances the local authority may decide a prosecution via Magistrates Court is more suitable, for instance repeated or lengthy periods of absence.

From the date of the letter inviting you to this meeting, [[firstname]]'s attendance will be monitored for 12 weeks. Should unauthorised absence reach in excess of 3 days (6 sessions) over a 6 week rolling period we may make a referral to the Early Help Unit, or we will request that the local authority issue an Education Penalty Notice. The notice can be issued to both parents/carers for each child whose absence is persistent. Please note parent is defined by the Education Act (1996) as anyone who lives in the household and is responsible for the child's care, not just those with legal parental responsibility.

Please work with us to take steps to ensure your child gets to school on time every day or to obtain medical evidence if he/she is too ill to attend. Any further absences without medical evidence should be discussed with the school as it is the school's decision whether to authorise any absences.

Yours sincerely,

Katherine Campsall
Attendance Officer

Appendix 5 – Letter 3a Sent when parent has failed to attend meeting

Letter warning about possible action for unauthorised absence and second request for a meeting regarding attendance

[[title]] [[addressee]]
[[address]]

Dear [[title]] [[addressee]],

Following on from the letter we sent to you requesting a meeting, we were disappointed that you did not attend the meeting, nor did you answer the phone when we attempted to conduct the meeting over the phone.

We still need to arrange a meeting with you to discuss your child's attendance, so please contact the school within 5 working days of the date of this letter to arrange a date and time so we can discuss your child's attendance and to see if the school can do anything to support you in improving their attendance.

If you do not do this the school will be forced to move to the next step of our policy which could mean issuing a Education Penalty Notice for failure to ensure your child attends school on a regular basis and/or making a referral to Early Help.

This will be our final letter to you before taking that action.

On the reverse of this letter you will see a repeat of the Penalty Warning Notice and we have also included your child's attendance record along with this letter.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs Katherine Campsall
Attendance Officer

PENALTY NOTICE WARNING

Child [[firstname]] [[surname]] (D.O.B. [[dob]])

The registers at Butler's Hill Infant and Nursery School show that, to date, your child has missed 3 days (6 sessions) of school due to unauthorised absences over the last 6 weeks. This means that your child's absence from school now meets the persistent absence threshold.

You, as parent, have legal responsibility under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, for ensuring that your child attends school regularly. As such unless your child's attendance improves you will be referred to the local authority for

a Education Penalty Notice to be issued under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure the regular attendance of your child.

In some circumstances the local authority may decide a prosecution via Magistrates Court is more suitable, for instance repeated or lengthy periods of absence.

From the date of the first letter asking for a telephone meeting with you, your child's attendance will be monitored for 12 weeks. Should unauthorised absence reach in excess of 3 days (6 sessions) over a 6 week rolling period, we will request that the local authority issue a Education Penalty Notice. The notice can be issued to both parents/carers for each child whose absence is persistent. Please note parent is defined by the Education Act (1996) as anyone who lives in the household and is responsible for the child's care, not just those with legal parental responsibility. Please work with us to take immediate steps to ensure your child gets to school on time every day or obtain medical evidence if he/she is too ill to attend. Any further absences the do not have medical evidence should be discussed with the school and it is the school's decision whether to authorise any absences.

Appendix 6– Letter 4 – Request made for Education Penalty Notice

[[title]] [[addressee]]

[[address]]

Dear[[title]] [[addressee]]

Re: [[firstname]][[surname]] – [[percent]]

Penalty Notice Request for unauthorised absences

Further to our meeting and letter given to you following that meeting advising you that should your child's attendance not improve, a referral could be made for a Education Penalty Notice.

We are now writing to advise you that [[firstname]] has had [[unauthcodes]] this academic year. As unauthorised absences are in excess of 3 days over a 6 week rolling period, a request has now been made to the Local Authority to issue a Education Penalty Notice to you for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

In some circumstances the local authority may decide a prosecution via Magistrates Court is more suitable, for instance repeated or lengthy periods of absence.

Should you wish to discuss any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Katherine Campsall
Attendance Officer

Appendix 7: Holiday request form

Dear Parents / Carers

Ref: Important: School Attendance Regulations and Leave of Absence for Holidays

Since September 2013 Government regulations have prevented schools from granting ANY holiday requests for pupils. The Government legislation prevents the granting of leave for: family holidays or family occasions (except in **exceptional circumstances**). If you believe there are exceptional circumstances then a "withdrawal from learning" request should be submitted at least 4 weeks before the intended absence.

Butler's Hill will not authorise any holiday unless it is considered an exceptional circumstance at the discretion of the Head Teacher.

From the Department for Education website:

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 currently allow Head Teachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

From Nottinghamshire County Council: Nottinghamshire Local Code of Conduct, revised January 2021

Holidays During School Term Time

If the school has evidence that a parent has removed a child from school for the purposes of a holiday during term time without authorisation and the level of absence is in excess of 3 days (6 sessions) in total over a 6 week rolling period, then the school can issue or request the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices to each parent for each child to whom unauthorised absence applies. In some circumstances the local authority may decide a prosecution via Magistrates Court is more suitable, for instance repeated or lengthy periods of absence.

REQUEST FOR WITHDRAWAL FROM LEARNING – TERM TIME ABSENCE

Pupil's name: _____ Class: _____

Home address: _____

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of last day at school: _____ Date of return to school: _____

Total number of school days missed: _____

Please explain the exceptional circumstances that make it necessary for your child to be absent in term time:

I have enclosed a copy of a relevant document to support my request, e.g. a special invitation letter.

I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. I understand that holidays will not be authorised.

There will be circumstances where it is considered that a Penalty Notice is not appropriate. This may be due to a variety of reasons, including, but not limited to: (a) repeated offences indicating that Penalty Notices are not bringing about a change in behaviour, for example, repeated unauthorised term time leave; (b) the high level of unauthorised absence, including extended unauthorised term time leave cases; and (c) the complex or long standing nature of the particular case. In such cases, the Local Authority may consider instigating a prosecution under Section 444 (1) or 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996 as an alternative to a Penalty Notice.

Name of Parent/Carer making application:

Signed: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE.

| | |
|--|--|
| For school use : | Date received: |
| Has been authorised <input type="checkbox"/> | Has not been authorised <input type="checkbox"/> |

Signed: Date:

Head Teacher

Attendance Guidance for Parents and Carers

School Motto: **Dream Big, Aim High**

School aims:

We are caring
We are confident
We are creative



*Issued - October 2023
Review Date - October 2024*



What does good attendance look like over the year?

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Above 96% | <p>Less than 6 days absence a year: Excellent attendance! Pupils with this attendance should achieve the best grades they can, leading to the best possible start in their secondary education.</p> |
| 95% | <p>Less than 10 days absence in a year: Pupils with this attendance are likely to achieve their target grades and will be well prepared for starting secondary education.</p> |
| 90% | <p>19 days absence over the year: Pupils with this attendance are missing a month of school per year and may fall behind in Maths and English; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best. Attendance at this level is deemed to be persistent absence - parents of pupils with this level of attendance could be issued with a Penalty Notice by the LA.</p> |
| 85% | <p>29 days absence in a year: These pupils are missing 6 weeks of school a year, it will be very difficult for them to keep up and achieve their best.</p> |
| 80% | <p>Pupils with this attendance are missing a day for every week of school. It will be almost impossible to keep up with work.</p> |

Why good attendance matters

All parents want the best for their children and for them to have the best possible start in life in life. Having a good education is important to ensure that they have the best opportunities in their adult life. They only get one chance at school, and your child's future may be affected by not attending school. The aim should be to attend 100% of the time. It is also important to arrive at school on time. If a child arrives late to school every day, their learning begins to suffer. Much of our learning follows a carefully sequenced learning approach and lessons build on previous learning, therefore when they are absent they often struggle when they return. Irregular attendance also affects children friendships and peer relationships.

Rewards

Attendance is actively promoted through a range of rewards. It is implemented consistently across school

1. Weekly attendance – on Friday the class with the highest attendance receives 'Butler's Bear' and a certificate to display for the following week.
2. Weekly attendance for the class will be shared and celebrated with parents via Do-jo and displayed in the classroom window.
3. Half termly - children with 95+% receive a certificate, 100% attendance receive a certificate and 100% attendance sticker.
4. Half termly – the class with the highest attendance receives a whole class treat – i.e. film and popcorn afternoon etc.

- Yearly – all children who have had 100% attendance over the year receive a special award and the class with the highest attendance over the year will receive an additional trip out i.e. a picnic in the park etc.

Sanctions:

- We have a strategies in response to low attendance:
Letter 1 – Advising you your child's attendance has fallen below the required 97%,
Letter 2 – Attendance has not improved and you are invited into school to discuss an action plan for improvement with the Attendance Officer.
Letter 3 – Given when you attend the meeting to advise what happens next, attendance will be monitored for 12 weeks should there be in excess of 3 days (6 sessions) of unauthorised absences recorded a request will be made to the Local Authority to issue a Education Penalty Notices, or a referral will be made to Early Help where necessary.
Letter 3a – Issued if failed to attend meeting and details above. Letter 3 and 3a are final warning letters.
Letter 4 – Issued when Education Penalty Notice has been requested.
- We take actions in accordance with this policy between school and outside agencies.

School timings:

Foundation Stage 2 and Key Stage 1 (year 1 and 2) starts prompt at 8.45am

Foundation Stage 1 (Nursery) starts at 8.40am – 11.20am for morning session and 12.20 – 3.20 for afternoon session

KS 1

- A Late mark will be given up to 9.15am and marked as an L on the register. This will also be monitored.
- After 9.15am your child will have an unauthorised U mark for that complete morning session.

Lunch times are as follows:

F1 – 11.40 - 12.20 pm

F2 – 11.45am – 12.45pm

Year 1 / 2 - 12.00 - 1.00pm

If your child will be late or absent please call the office as quickly as possible in order for your child to be accurately recorded on the register. You must call for each subsequent day they are off and after.

Authorised and unauthorised absences and illness

In line with guidance from the DfE and LA, school will not routinely ask for all absences to be authorised.

However, we still have a responsibility to act promptly and robustly to raise attendance.

In light of both these directives, school will authorise clearly diagnosable conditions (e.g. chicken pox, measles etc.) as illnesses without requesting evidence unless the child's attendance is causing concern or we have cause to question the reason given.

For parents reporting symptomatic conditions, (e.g. headache, feeling under the weather, got a cough / cold etc.) we will authorise the first three days each year as illness but then will ask for evidence to support getting the correct code for any further absences.

Where we decide an illness is authorised we will record it as 'I' in the register. Where we decide it will not be authorised it will be recorded as an 'O' code.

Both of these codes count as absences and will impact on your child's overall attendance, regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Incorrect reasons for absence given by parents

The school has a legal obligation to complete the register for each child accurately. To do this we rely on accurate information from parents/carers.

If the school believes that a parent/carer has given incorrect information, we are entitled to ask for evidence for that absence. If it cannot be provided, we will ask that evidence is provided for all future absences.

The most common instance of this is a parent reporting their child as being ill when they are actually on holiday, believing it will avoid a fine. If we think you have been on holiday but you have said otherwise and you cannot provide evidence to support the illness we reserve the right to not authorise the absence and to proceed as if the absence was an unauthorised holiday.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Wherever possible, medical appointments should be made outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, it is expected that pupils only miss part of the day. Evidence in the form of an appointment card, text or email should be provided.

Sickness

After sickness or a stomach bug, please keep children off for 4-8hrs after the last episode. Please ensure they are able to eat and drink something and are fit for a day of school activities before they return. Please note you **may** be required to prove medical evidence if your child exceeds 3 days of **symptomatic illness for the illness to be authorised.**

Home visit – The Local Authority Advice is as follows

Visiting parents/carers and students at their homes is a reasonable and suitable response to attendance concerns. It will often be the first contact with a family and will establish a line of communication and hopefully form a positive working relationship.

(Notts County Council - Improving School Attendance: A Toolkit for Maintained schools, July 2020).

Holidays during term time

The Department for Education (DfE) does not allow children to take holidays during the school term.

However, the school and the DfE understand there may be **exceptional circumstances** and will deal with these on a case by case basis through discussion with parents and the Head Teacher.

All requests for such leave of absence must be sent to the school in writing (a proforma is available on the school website or from the school office).

Unauthorised holidays taken during term time could be subject to a fine from the Local Authority.

Fines and Prosecution

Local Authority Guidance outlines Fines and Prosecution

You can be fined for taking your child on holiday during term time without the head teacher's permission **or if attendance is deemed as persistent.**

You, as parent, have legal responsibility under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, for ensuring that your child attends school regularly. Failure to ensure this happens can result in Education Penalty Notices being issued under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure your child attends school regularly.

Penalty notices are issued at £120 (per child, per parent) and must be paid within the statutory 28-day deadline. Penalty notices are only reduced to £60 if they are paid in full, within 21 days of issue. All fines must be paid within 28 days of issue otherwise you may be prosecuted in court

Schedule for the issuing of Penalty Notices for holidays in term time

| | |
|---|--|
| Parent applies for holiday | Reply to application in writing to explain that the holiday absence has not been approved and the absence will be unauthorised and that this may lead to a PN being issued |
| Child is absent for family holiday | Mark register as unauthorised |
| Child returns to school following holiday | Write to parent to explain that request has been made to LA for issuing PN |
| | Write to LA with all info necessary to issue a PN within 2 weeks of holiday. |

We thank you for your on-going support and look forward to working together to ensure your child can fulfil their true potential both now and in the future.

Nottinghamshire County Council School Attendance Flow Chart (2018) Weblink:

<https://nscp.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/media/eufnuyn5/school-attendance-flowchart-january-2018.pdf>

