

# **BURCHETTS GREEN C.E. INFANT SCHOOL**

## **WHOLE SCHOOL POLICY ON PUPIL ATTENDANCE**

### **Background**

Although many children enjoy the benefits of some form of structured pre-school learning through attendance at playgroups, nursery schools and other similar organisations, their formal statutory education usually begins on entry to primary school at the start of the academic year following their fourth birthday. The attendance patterns established during the first valuable years of a child's educational experience will profoundly affect their future attendance and learning.

Absences from school are governed by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (Education) (Amendment) Regulations 2013) (together the Regulations).

The governing body endorses the LAs support and implementation of the Regulations

### **Aims**

- To make explicit the importance of regular school attendance to the educational outcomes of all pupils.
- To clarify the legal and moral obligation of those with parental responsibility to ensure that absences are kept to a minimum, and restricted to those necessary for medical or educational purposes.

### **Objectives**

- To establish and reinforce positive attendance patterns for all pupils from the point of entry into the school.
- To actively discourage the practice of taking children out of school during term time.

### **Delivery of the Policy**

In recognition of the importance placed by the school on regular attendance, the governing body shall normally refuse all requests for term-time absence except where the request falls within the exceptional circumstances set out in the Regulations.

As the individual with responsibility for delivery of the policy, the headteacher shall ensure that:

- ⇒ Parents/guardians completing a request for Term Time Absence Form are encouraged to reconsider and are advised of the legal implications and educational and social disadvantages to their child.
- ⇒ Parents/guardians understand clearly that teachers will not set additional work for pupils who fall behind as a result of taking voluntary absence during the term.
- ⇒ Any absence unsupported by a Term Time Absence Form completed in advance shall be recorded in the registers as unauthorised.

In addition, the school endorses the Local Authority (LA) policy on the use of Penalty Notices to address poor attendance at school. Penalty notices may be used under such circumstances as:

- ⇒ Overt truancy, including pupils found during truancy sweeps.
- ⇒ Inappropriate parentally-condoned absence.
- ⇒ Unauthorised term time absence.
- ⇒ Unexplained delayed return from leave of absence.
- ⇒ Persistent late arrival at school after the Register has closed.

As the school monitors attendance through daily pupil registration, it has the earliest visibility of emerging non-attendance patterns. If the school has concerns about a pupil's attendance, it will contact the LA Education Welfare Officer to consider initiating the formal Notice process/ issue a Penalty Notice. The school will refer the matter to the LA in every case where a pupil has 10 session (5 school days) unauthorised absence in any term.

To ensure consistency in approach the following criteria will be applied by the LA before a Penalty Notice is issued

- (i) At least 10 sessions (5 school days) must have been lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil in one term, and
- (ii) **Other than in the specific circumstances set out in (iii) below**, the parent must have received a formal written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to effect a sustained improvement, or
- (iii) The deliberate taking of a leave of absence in term time without/against school permission (where it can be clearly demonstrated that the parent understood that permission had not/would not be given) and where this has created a period of unauthorised absence in the current term of at least 10 session (5 school days).

### **Publicising the Policy**

This policy will be published on the School's website and a copy is included in the New Entrant's Pack issued to parents whose children are joining the school. The governing body statement of refusal to grant authorised term-time absence will be included on the school's Request For Term Time Absence Forms.

### **Reporting and Monitoring**

The headteacher will report to the governing body three times per year the number and duration of all absences, authorised and unauthorised, other than those taken for medical or educational reasons.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed at least every 2 years by the Education Committee or earlier as necessary.

This policy was approved at a meeting of the Education Committee on 19 November 2013.