

'A Caring Christian Family Where We Grow Together'

Bunbury Aldersey CE Primary School

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12th September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

Each year school has a statutory duty to inform parents and carers of the local authority's position on school attendance, absence from school and the taking of holidays during school term time. New government statutory guidance came into force for schools in August 2024 and it is important that you are aware of some of the key changes which will affect parents/carers moving forward. The new guidance states that **'where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends that school regularly'**.

Unauthorised Absence from School

To support schools in improving attendance of students the Government has made a number of changes: There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice (previously called a fixed penalty notice) must be considered by school of 10 sessions, (i.e. a combined total of 5 days, not necessarily consecutive) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. School will unauthorise absence if:

- You do not advise us of the reason for your child's absence.
- If the reason is not sufficient for school to feel able to authorise the absence.
- If, due to already high levels of absence, you have already been notified that further absences will not be authorised without some further evidence of the need for an absence from school.

Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

Appointments should be where possible made out of school hours for example for routine dental or medical checkups. Where this is not possible, for example for hospital consultant appointments, medical emergencies, orthodontic treatment, pupils should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Holidays during term time

Holidays are not authorised by school unless it can be demonstrated that an absence during term time is as a result of exceptional circumstances and only if requested in advance by the parent the child normally lives with. Exceptional circumstances are, by nature, rare occurrences. The expectation is that family holidays will take place in the 13 weeks of school holiday time within an academic year.

Local Authority Fines

The key changes are:

- There has been an increase to the rate of a local authority penalty notice from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days, and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will now be charged at a higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.
- There is a national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another tool will have to be considered by school which includes prosecution. Please note that the 3 year rolling period can cross school phases, i.e., from Primary School to High School. Parents should not plan for their child to be absent from



school without gaining prior agreement. Requests for a planned leave of absence under exceptional circumstances should be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the start date of the requested absence, by completing a Leave of Absence Request Form which a copy can be requested from the school office. The Leave of Absence Request Form should be returned to the School Office and can only be authorised by the Principal.

If you require any support or guidance with regard to your child's attendance at school, please contact Mrs Badger or Ms Charlesworth our Pastoral Lead.

Our school website contains further details of school absence.

<https://www.bunburyaldersey.cheshire.sch.uk/page/attendance/10872>

Please see the link below from Cheshire East on school attendance.

<https://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/schools/school-attendance/attendance-and-children-out-of-education.aspx>

Attendance at school enables us all to build a strong team and to strengthen our learning powers. Our overall attendance for whole school during the last academic year was 96.66% which is 1.86% above the national figure currently at 94.8% and above other North West schools.

Having good attendance also means being on time and not being late to school. Children who arrive late can feel embarrassed, left out and miss out on important introductions to lessons. Punctuality is an essential life skill that needs to be taught from the very beginning.

| Attendance during one school year | Equivalent Days | Equivalent Sessions | Equivalent weeks | Equivalent lessons missed |
|--|------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 95% | 9 | 18 | 1.4 | 45 |
| 90% | 19 | 38 | 3.4 | 95 |
| 85% | 29 | 58 | 5.4 | 145 |
| 80% | 36 | 72 | 7.1 | 180 |
| 75% | 48 | 96 | 9.3 | 240 |

Many thanks for your continued support

Kind regards



Nic Badger

Principal of Bunbury Aldersey CE Primary School
EHT for Rural Church Schools Academy Trust