

Bunny C of E Primary School



Attendance and Lateness Policy

Reviewed: Jan 2026

Next review: Jan 2027

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education (2021)'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance' – updated Sept 2025?

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy

What is our approach to good attendance?

At Bunny C of E Primary School, we strive for excellence in education by providing a safe, secure, caring family environment, where all children are valued and respected as individuals, enabling them to reach their full potential.

Regular and punctual attendance is promoted and praised at our school as an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At Bunny C of E Primary School, we aspire to high standards of attendance for all, which demonstrates to children, parents, carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education, including any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent or carer to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at Bunny C of E Primary School, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

We recognise that there are barriers to some children achieving good attendance. Our school aims to work collaboratively with children, parents, carers and external agencies to identify these barriers as early as possible and to find solutions together. We understand that in order to achieve this effectively, strong, positive working relationships are essential and trust must be built between school, parents, carers and external agency staff. Intervention to improve a child's school attendance at our school will be strength based and solution focused, with all parties committed to achieving better attendance for the child.

What must parents and carers do if their child is unable to attend school?

If pupils are unable to attend school for whatever reason we expect parents to let us know this before the close of registration at 9.05am, by ringing the school office on 0115 9212727.

If a child does not arrive at school by 9.05am, we will make contact with parents and carers via a telephone call to ensure your child is safe. If parents and carers cannot be contacted via a telephone call following further attempts, we will follow best practice guidance and assess whether it is necessary to carry out a home visit, to ensure that the child is safe.

As a safeguarding measure, parents and carers must contact the school on every day of absence, even when the absences are on consecutive days, in order for us to ensure safe arrival to school has taken place for all children.

When will an absence be authorised?

We expect children to attend school every day. However, we understand that there are some occasions where children cannot attend school. Authorised absence is recorded where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence **may** be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness or part of the school day for medical or dental appointments
- days of religious observance
- family bereavement
- 'exceptional' occasions and circumstances

Absence will be authorised for:

- exclusion

Any applications for leave of absence should be made in advance using the relevant forms which are available from the school office. Any request for leave of absence can only be authorised where the school accepts the reason.

When will absences be unauthorised?

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time. Unauthorised absence will be given where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered does not meet the above criteria/is not acceptable.

Absence will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory – here are **some** examples:
 - it is the child's/family member's birthday
 - a shopping trip
 - parent/carer or family member is unwell
 - parent/carer or family member has a medical appointment
 - child has had a late night
 - child/family overslept
 - child is refusing to get ready for school
 - child is upset about an incident that happened at school on the previous day
- family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances). This includes requests to collect children early during the school day to begin a holiday journey
- During a statutory test period e.g. SATS week
- Persistent absence through reported illness that cannot be supported by evidence, following discussions with parents and carers
- when a child's attendance record already includes 10% unauthorised absence.
- Non-engagement with support of plans/interventions which have been agreed by school, parents, carers and external agencies

Holidays during term time

Over recent years there has been a significant increase in the amount of children's education being lost due to parents taking children out of school for holidays during term time. This is both a national issue and a significant issue for our school. Taking children out of school during term time significantly affects the education they receive. They not only miss teaching and learning of particular skills, concepts and topics whilst they are away from school, but often then struggle with subsequent learning when they return as they have missed out on essential building blocks. Missing a week's schooling may result in harming their education for a two- or three-week period.

The school's governing body is required to implement measures to minimize the amount of school time lost to holiday and reminds parents that it is a statutory requirement that children attend school.

What is persistent absence?

Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised). See – 'A Graduated Response to Absence at Bunny C of E Primary School' at the end of this document.

What is an approved educational activity?

Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from the school premises, need not be marked as authorised absent, and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that for statistical purposes activities such as educational visits, or approved sporting activities can be counted as 'present'. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available. All absences will need an authorised legal confirmation letter from an appropriate leader or organisation.

How is attendance recorded at our school?

We are required by law to undertake attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. The school admission register, sometimes known as the 'the school roll', must be kept in accordance with regulation 5 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, including the most recent updates in 2024.

Bunny C of E Primary School expects parents/carers to ensure that children are on the school premises by 8.55am for the morning session and 1pm for the afternoon session.

The school gate is opened each morning at **8.45am** and closes at **8.55am**.

As a vigilant and caring school, we apply first-day response to pupil absence. This means making a determined and sustained effort to respond to unexplained absence on the first morning of absence, via a telephone call.

- Morning registration starts at **8.55 a.m.** and the registers are closed at **9.05 a.m.** Pupils arriving during this time will be marked as present.
- Pupils arriving between 9.05am and 9.15am will be marked late in the register with an L indicating they are late for school showing they are present in school but were late enough to affect their learning. Parents and carers will be contacted to identify barriers and offered support, if children are arriving persistently late during these times.
- Pupils arriving later than **9.15 am** without a prior explanation will receive a 'Late after the register is closed' **U** mark, which counts as an **unauthorised absence**.
- Any child arriving to school after **8.55am** will need to be let in via the school main entrance so they can be signed in by office staff.
- Afternoon registration starts at **1.00 p.m.** and the registers are closed at **1.05 p.m.** Pupils arriving during this period are marked as present.
- Pupils arriving later than **1.05 p.m.** will receive a late mark **L**.

- Parents whose children regularly arrive late will receive a warning letter from school. Letter L1 Extreme cases may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer / Family Services.

All late arrivals must enter via the front door and report to the school office.

Mid-Session Arrivals/Departures

It is recognised that children may arrive or depart mid-session for a variety of reasons which may be authorised:

- illness or accident in school resulting in a child going home
- medical or dental appointments
- unavoidable delays or reasons to leave early
- exceptional family circumstances where adequate justification has been provided to the satisfaction of the Head teacher
- Pupils present for registration who leave early, or for part of a session, should be noted on the *Mid-Session Arrivals/Departures Log* in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation. The register itself is not altered.
- Pupils not present for registration who return from an appointment should be noted on the *Mid-Session Arrivals/Departures Log* in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation.
- The register is subsequently amended to authorise the absence or record an unauthorised absence according to the circumstances.

End of day pick- up arrangements

The end of the school day is 3.25pm. The school gate will be opened at 3.20pm allowing for parents to wait outside the classrooms.

Pupils should be collected promptly and the school gate will be locked at 3.30pm.

Any children not collected between these times will be escorted by the class teacher to wait on the blue sofas by the school reception. A child will never be left unattended and will not be released until handed over to a parent/carer.

Procedure for late/ non-collection of children

If parents/carers know they will be late in picking up their child, then they should phone the school office immediately to let us know. We do understand that there may be a genuine/ exceptional reason for the delay.

If there are any changes to the end of day arrangements, we ask that parents inform the school office or class teacher.

If children are not collected at the end of the school day we follow the following procedure:

- If a child is not collected within 15 minutes of the end of the school day, staff will telephone parents to arrange for someone to collect the child. If parents cannot be reached we will telephone the emergency contacts.

- Any child not collected after this time will be placed in Burrows club and parents will be charged for the full session.

Charges for late / non-collection of children

Under Section 457 of the Education Act 1996 and relevant Regulations, the school governing body has the power to impose a charge on parents or carers who fail to collect their child from school within a reasonable time after the close of the school day or after school activity.

The governing body accepts that it is the responsibility of the school to ensure parents and carers are notified of the timing of the school day or after school activity and also when those times are varied for a specific event or date.

The governing body has decided that, except in emergency situations, where children are not collected from the school within fifteen minutes after the school day or after school activity ending, then a charge will be made to the child's parent or carer. The school accepts that a variety of emergency situations can arise due to unforeseen circumstances and will ensure that the charge is not imposed on the parent where there is a genuine unforeseen emergency. Notification must be given to the school as soon as the situation arises or when collecting the child.

Charging arrangements

On the first late collection within a term, without reasonable excuse, the parent/carer will be sent a letter reminding them to collect their child from school at 3.25pm.

If the child is collected late a second time (more than 15 minutes after the end of the school day or after a club has finished), an invoice will be issued onto schoolmoney to cover the cost of a Burrows session. Currently this is £10.45.

The purpose of the charge imposed is to meet the additional costs in salary and resources that the school incurs from the late collection.

See Appendix 2 for Letter for late collection.

How will the school monitor attendance?

The data which is extracted from accurate and up-to-date attendance registers will be monitored each week and used to support effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

- support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, year groups, identified cohorts, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence on a half-termly and annual basis;

- identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees;
- facilitate and encourage early intervention;
- identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism (for example, time lost to term time holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc);
- match attendance trends with attainment trends;
- identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy
- report attendance matters to parents/carers, governors, external agencies

It is the responsibility of school leaders to monitor attendance and punctuality regularly. The governing body are kept informed on a termly basis and monitor attendance figures, trends and the impact of interventions. If attendance becomes an area of concern for a specific cohort or the whole school, more frequent monitoring may be undertaken.

When will the school issue penalty notices?

If the school has exhausted all relevant support, has made sustained reasonable adjustments and/or attempts to meet with parents and carers have been unsuccessful, a referral to the local authority attendance enforcement team will be considered in line with their thresholds. The attendance enforcement team will subsequently issue warnings and/or penalty notices once a referral has been accepted.

The law gives powers to the local authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child attends school. Penalty amounts are set by the Local authority and are subject to change.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and if those absences are classed as unauthorised. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, as it does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days. Full payment of the Penalty Notice means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted.

How does our school safeguard children who are missing from education?

When a child goes missing, they are at potential risk and therefore safeguarding children arrangements includes preventing or protecting them from going missing from their home or local authority care. Our school ensures that we follow robust processes to respond when children are missing from education or missing from home or care.

The protocol defines the roles and responsibilities of all those concerned with the processes around children who go missing. It is derived from the Department for Education '*Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools*'- updated Sept 2025, and incorporates key elements of the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP) guidance, as described in Section E which introduces the new definitions of 'missing' and 'missing no apparent risk' (absent). The

protocol responds to the concept of the 'hidden' missing as outlined within the DfE guidance.

The Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership (NCSCP) and the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) expect all agencies working, or in contact with children, to implement this protocol and to ensure all relevant staff are aware of it and how to use it. The protocol depends on good communication and a willingness by agencies to work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of those children who have gone missing or are at risk of going missing.

Both Safeguarding Children Partnerships will be responsible for ensuring an annual review of the effectiveness of this aspect of the protocol.

School leaders and designated safeguarding leads follow Nottinghamshire County Council guidance (appendix 1) when children are at risk of missing education.

See also the school's child protection policy
<https://www.bunnyprimaryschool.com/policies/>

A Graduated Response to Concerning Absence at Bunny C of E Primary School:

At our school we aim to identify barriers to good attendance as early as possible and to offer early intervention and support for our children and families when attendance.

The school will carry out the first attendance review for all pupils at the end of the autumn half term period. However, if weekly monitoring suggests that intervention is needed before this point, school staff will contact parents and carers to inform them and offer support.

	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
School procedures	Once attendance falls below 95% a text message and/or letter will be sent to parents informing them of this. School will work together with children, parents and carers to work together to identify barriers, patterns and offer relevant support. Weekly internal monitoring will begin. Stage 2, 3 or 4 can be implemented as a next step if there is a further decline in attendance.	If attendance rates fall further after 6 weeks, or fall below 90%, a call or letter will be made to parents and carers informing them of this. * School staff will arrange a meeting with children, parents and carers to review barriers, previous actions and agree a plan to support improved attendance over a further 6 week period. (This support may also include the introduction of the ATTEND framework intervention or an EHAF referral for external agency support with parent/carers consent) Stage 3 or 4 can be implemented as a next step if there is a further decline in attendance.	If under close weekly monitoring, attendance rates do not show signs of improvement or decline further or reach 85% or lower, parents and carers will be notified in writing and offered a further meeting with school staff * where support from external agencies will be offered (including to support wider home issues) If parents and carers are unwilling to accept input from external agencies but are engaging with support offered from school, an extension of the school's attendance support plan may be reviewed and extended. A referral to the attendance enforcement team/penalty notice may also be considered.	At this stage attendance will be monitored closely by school and usually external agencies. If attendance rates do not show signs of improvements or parents and carers are unwilling to fully support the agreed actions to improve their child's attendance a referral to the attendance enforcement team/penalty notice will be made.

*In order to promote positive working relationships and to build trust, these meetings will take place with a member of staff most suitable to supporting improved attendance for the child e.g. SENCO, class teacher, school leader, teaching assistant, trusted adult.

Appendix 1

Notts CC School Attendance Flowchart

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

Relevant government guidance

Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Appendix 2: Letter for late collection

Dear Parent/Carer of

I am writing to you regarding the late collection of your child on_____.

It is the parents' responsibility to ensure children are collected on time and being late is often very distressing for the child/ren concerned. If your child continues to be collected late at the end of the school day, the Governing Body has agreed that charges will be incurred.

In cases where a child is not collected within fifteen minutes of the end of the school day or after school activity a charge of £10.45 will be made to cover the cost of Burrows Club provision.

This charge will be automatically added to your online schoolmoney parent account for payment.

This letter is intended only to make you aware of the problem so you can begin to address it.

Yours sincerely

V.White

Headteacher

Ratified by Bunny C of E FGB: 27 Jan 2025, 26 Jan 2026

Annual Review Date: Jan 2027