



# BUGLAWTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

## *Be the Best We Can*

### Attendance Policy

<b>Members of staff responsible:</b>	<b>Alison Kennerley/Gaynor Lynch</b>
<b>Governor Committee:</b>	<b>FGB</b>
<b>Date approved by the full Governing body:</b>	<b>Summer 2024</b>
<b>Date to be reviewed:</b>	<b>Summer 2025</b>

Buglawton Primary School believes that, to ensure our pupils gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend school regularly and on time every day that the school is open, unless their absence is unavoidable. We encourage all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to achieve excellent attendance and punctuality so that each and every pupil has the opportunity to “be the best we can”.

The following information shows the impact of reduced attendance on education:

Annual Attendance	Equivalent Days Lost	Equivalent Weeks Lost	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9.5	2	50
90%	19	3.8	100
85%	28.5	5.7	150
80%	38	7.6	200

#### As a school, we aim to:

- Maintain a whole school attendance rate of a minimum of 96%.
- Raise and maintain awareness to parents/carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child’s education.
- Work in partnership with pupils and parents/carers so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Maintain our attendance registers in accordance with Local Authority policy.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognizing achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Target the attendance monitoring of identified, vulnerable children.
- Reward children for 100% attendance through termly certificates and annual trophies. Efforts are also made to recognise pupils whose attendance has improved or has been as good as it possibly could be.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

#### What school expects from parents:

- To telephone the absence line (01260 633080) or email the school office, [admin@buglawton.cheshire.sch.uk](mailto:admin@buglawton.cheshire.sch.uk) on the first morning of any absence, by 9:00am, with the reason for absence and when you think the child will return. Staff may carry out spot check home visits.
- Arranging dental and doctor’s appointments out of school hours or during school breaks.
- Keeping the school updated by telephone or email if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.

#### Actions school will take:

- If the school has not received notification from the parent regarding an absence, they will endeavour, where possible, to contact the parent by email or telephone by 9:30am.

- If the parent does not answer and does not provide a reasonable explanation for the absence within 24 hours, the absence will be unauthorised. An attendance letter (see Appendix 3) noting the absence will be sent, where appropriate.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in our newsletters, our Charter for Schools, and in attendance bulletins.
- Acknowledge and reward both good and improved attendance, celebrating them as a whole school and individual classes.
- Let parents know if school has concerns regarding their child's attendance. If the school continues to have concerns, make a referral to the Attendance and Children Out of School Team (ACOOS) for advice/action.

### **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence on the first day of absence **before 9:00am**.

We realise that there are rare occasions when there might be other circumstances or difficulties that cause your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

The Education Act 1996 states that "If a child of compulsory school age is a registered pupil at a school and fails to attend regularly, his parent is guilty of an offence". Furthermore, the 2013 amendment to the Act, stated that "leave of absence shall not be granted by schools unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'". The school must adhere to this amendment and will not authorise any absence, unless it is deemed, by the Headteacher, to be exceptional. For clarity, the following reasons for absence will NOT be authorised:

- No explanation has been given for the absence.
- The school is not satisfied with the explanation for absence.
- Because the parent/carer or the person who normally brings the child to school is ill.
- Waiting at home for a delivery.
- Going shopping or for a haircut.
- Going for a family day out.
- Because it is your child's or any other family member's birthday.
- Sleeping in for any reason.
- Treating headlice.
- Inadequate school uniform.
- Problems with transport.
- Unauthorised term time holidays.

When considering absence from school, it should be noted that there are 190 school days per year, leaving 175 non-school days (including weekends) for activities such as holidays, visiting family, friends, appointments, etc.

There is an expectation to report all unauthorised absences to the Local Authority. If a child has 6-8 unauthorised absences during 2 consecutive half terms, a warning letter will be issued (see Appendix 4) to advise that if there are 10 unauthorised absences, an Attendance and Children Out of School (ACOOS) referral for a 15-day warning period will be made, resulting in a penalty notice if there is an unauthorised absence in the advised period.

Following a series of 10 unauthorised absences in 2 consecutive half terms, schools may make a Penalty Notice Warning Period request to ACOOS, alongside evidence of the contact made and support offered to family to increase attendance. Please see below for penalties:

<b>Current Penalties for Unauthorised Absence</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>One Child</b>	<b>Two Children</b>
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent as per the definition in the Education Act Section 576.	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	A summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance.	A summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance.
<b>Penalties for Unauthorised Absence from Autumn 2024 in a 3 year rolling period</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>One Child</b>	<b>Two Children</b>
Paid within 28 days	First penalty notice = £160 per parent, per child (reduced to £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days)	£160 per child = £320 per parent (reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days = £160 per parent)
Paid within 28 days	Second penalty notice = £160	£160 per child = £320 per parent
	Third penalty notice cannot be issued to same parent for same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first notice. If threshold is met for a third time, prosecution will be considered under the Single Justice Procedure along with other attendance legal interventions, which could result in fines of up to £2,500.	

Please note – it is the responsibility of the parent to check the school's holiday timetable prior to booking any holiday. If holiday dates are not published on the school website, clarification should be sought with the school before booking.

In the exceptional circumstance where holiday is approved, the Headteacher can determine the length of the authorised absence.

If leave of absence is authorised, this does not set precedent for future absence requests; each application is made on a case-by-case basis.

If a parent wishes to apply for term time leave of absence, they should contact the school office for the relevant form. If a form is not completed, the school still has a right to refer for a Fixed Penalty Notice.

### **Punctuality**

If a child is late for 5 minutes each day, they miss 3 days of school each year. If they are 15 minutes late each day, they miss 2 weeks each school year.

When children arrive on time:

- Registration takes place quickly and smoothly
- The children are engaged in a classroom activity
- The day gets off to a good start for everyone
- Everyone hears the information given and is included in important explanations and discussions. This ensures that everyone knows what to do and what is expected from them
- The children have an opportunity to mix socially before learning begins

When children arrive late:

- It interrupts everyone's concentration
- It wastes valuable learning time for the whole class
- The teacher has to repeat information/instructions whilst others have to wait
- The late child is at an immediate disadvantage because they may have missed important teaching points, missed discussions where ideas are shared and will be generally unsettled
- Children are not ready to start their learning in the same way as their peers.

Morning registration is at 8:45am. Classroom doors are all open at 8:35am to enable children to access their classrooms and settle for the day. If children arrive after 8:45am, parents must accompany their children to the school office to sign them in.

Registers close at 9:05am. **If a child arrives after the close of registers, their absence will be recorded as unauthorised** unless school is absolutely satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the child being late. Such reasons will not include sleeping in, alarm clock not going off, missing a bus, bad traffic, clothes in washing machine/not dry, another member of the family is ill, lost shoes or treatment for head lice.

Upon signing in late children at the office, school staff will address their concerns with parents as and when necessary.

Children who are persistently late for school, but before the registers close, will be monitored closely. Parents will be asked to supply adequate reasons for the lateness. If persistent lateness continues for a period of one month after the parents have been alerted of concerns, school will contact the Education Welfare Service.

Early collection of pupils will not be authorised without a valid reason that is sent in writing, in advance.

All children must be collected at 3.15pm (or 4pm if attending an extra-curricular club); our staff have a variety of commitments after school – running clubs, staff meetings and courses, and it should not be assumed that they are available to supervise children after this time. If a child is not collected by 3.30pm, they will be taken to the After School Club and parents will be charged accordingly.

### Monitoring of Attendance

The school assesses individual and whole school attendance on a weekly basis. In the case of persistent absences or lates, the school will contact the parent concerned and discuss how they can work together to improve attendance. If no improvement is seen, the school will contact the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and arrange a meeting with the parent, the EWO and the school. If no improvement is made, the Education Welfare Service may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

### Monitoring of Absence

Absence will be monitored in the following way:

Event	Timing	Action	Responsibility
Absence	Day 1	Parent phones in before 9:00am.	Parent
Absence	Day 1	School phones home if no report of absence.	School (Office)
Absence	Day 1	School phones all contacts if residing parent is not contactable	School (Office)
Absence	Day 1	In certain circumstances, and at the discretion of the Headteacher, a door knock will be carried out by a member of the Senior Leadership Team	School (Senior Leadership Team)

Attendance will be monitored weekly and if absence due to illness totals 7 days in 2 consecutive half terms, a letter will be sent asking for medical evidence of illness and inviting the parent to attend a meeting (see Appendix 5). If no medical evidence is provided, absences may be marked as unauthorised and 10 unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice.

When there are concerns over punctuality and attendance, parents/carers will be contacted to attend a meeting in school.

### **Children Missing in Education**

When pupils leave and we have not been given information regarding their new school, and we cannot contact parents/carers, then the child is considered to be a Child Missing Education. This means that the Local Authority has a legal duty to carry out investigations, which may include liaising with Children's Services the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate your child.

By giving us the above information, unnecessary investigations can be avoided.

**Miss A Kennerley (Headteacher)**

**Mr G Hayes (Chair of Governors)**

Appendix 1 - Attendance flow chart – Irregular attendance

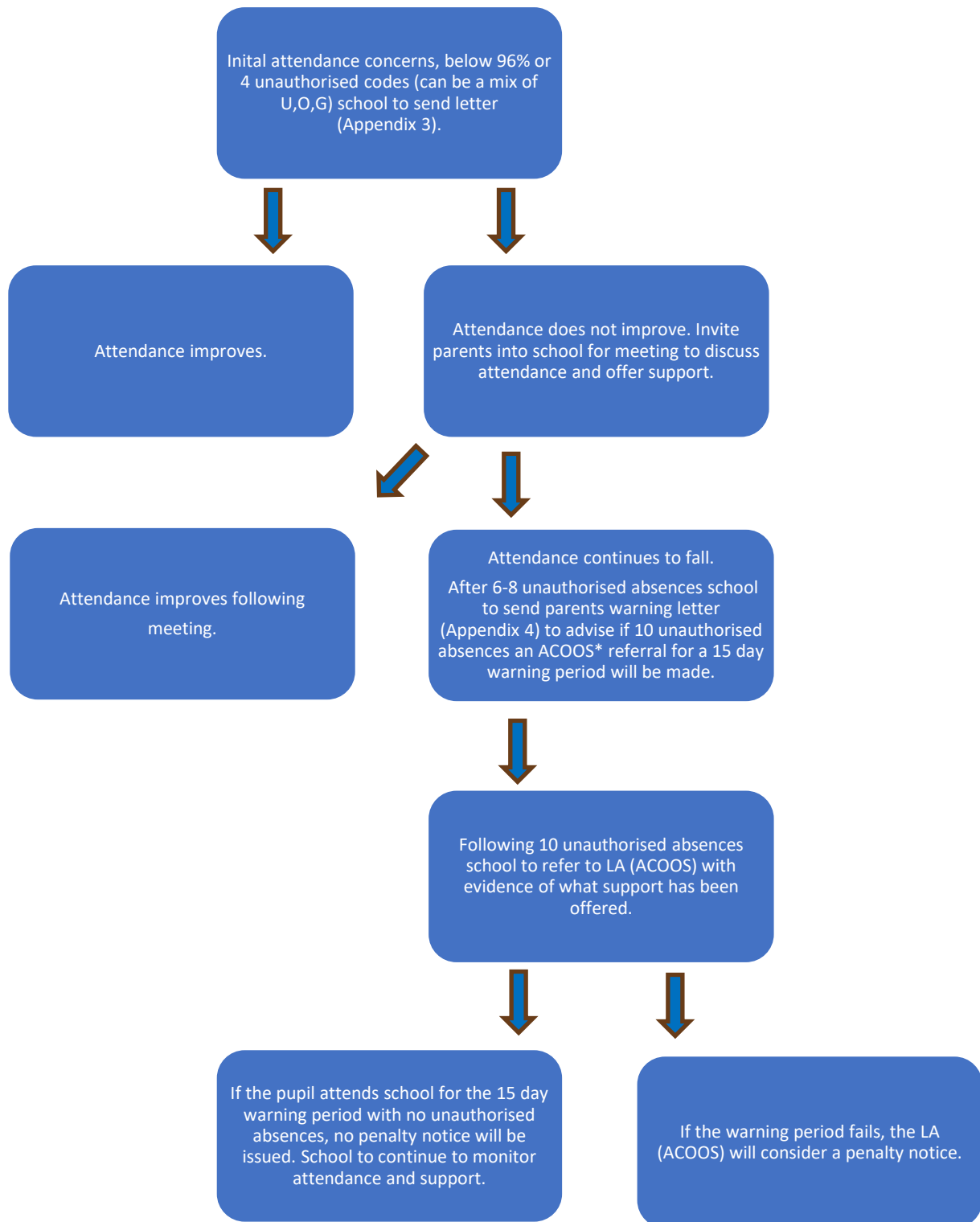
Appendix 2 - Attendance flow chart - Illness

Appendix 3 - Letter noting child's absence

Appendix 4 - Letter after 6-8 unauthorised absences

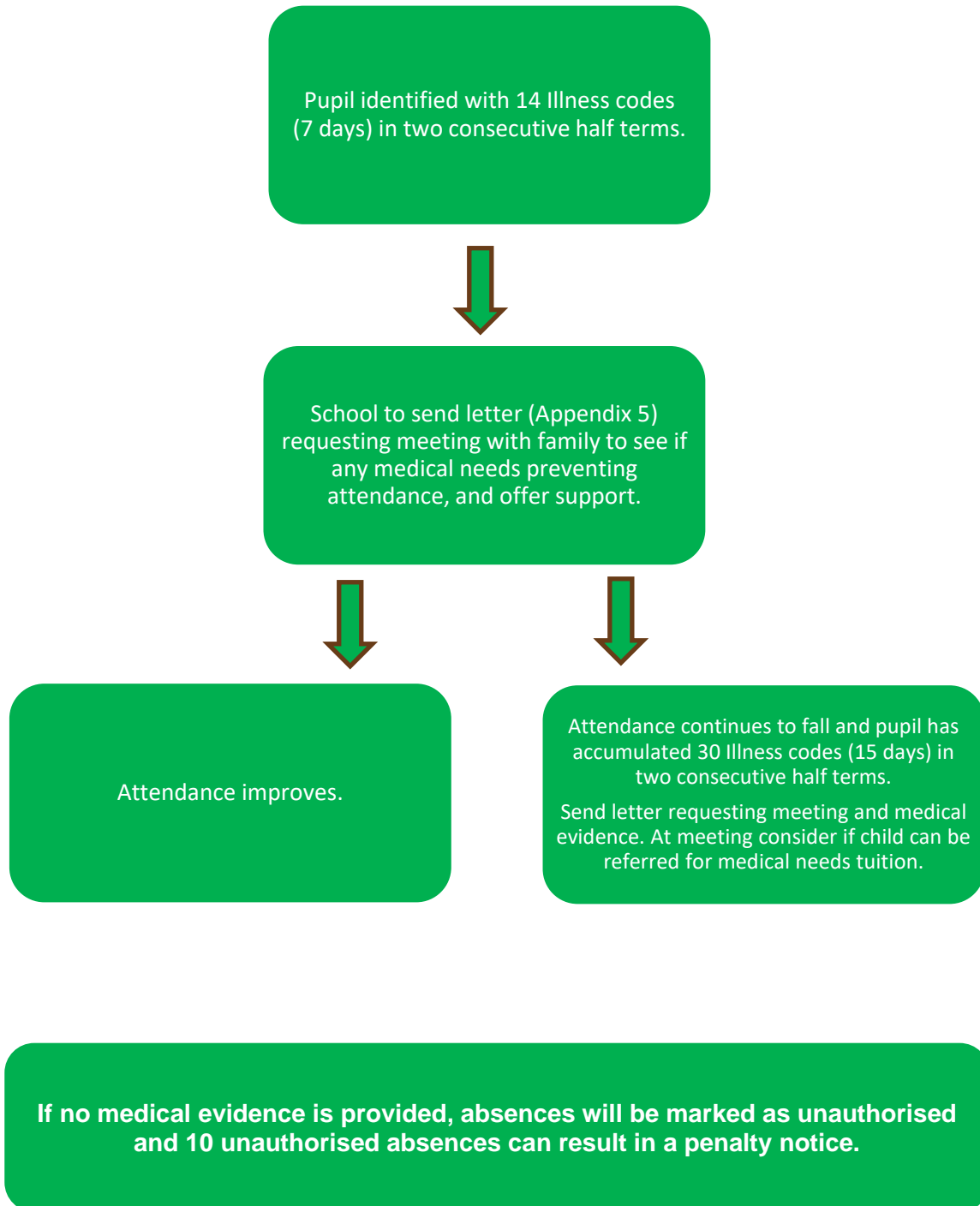
Appendix 5 - Letter after 7 days illness absence

## Attendance flow chart - irregular attendance



\*ACOOS – Attendance and Children Out of School team

## Attendance flow chart - illness





Headteacher: Miss A Kennerley  
Buxton Old Road, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 2EL  
01260 633080  
admin@buglawton.cheshire.sch.uk

Date:

Dear [Parents name]

We noticed that your child [Child's name] has been off this week. They have been missed ... sessions.

Cheshire East Council are working with schools to try and improve school attendance because we know that school attendance makes such a big difference to children's futures. The Department for Education tell us 'school is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. Evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.' (DFE 2023).

We also want to remind you that the Education Act 1996 Section 444, requires you to make sure that your child attends school, on time, every time the school is open.

If there are any issues that may be impacting your child's attendance, please contact the school admin team to discuss further.

Further Information can be found on the websites below:

**Attendance information**

[School attendance and absence: Overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

[Attendance and children out of education \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](http://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

**Early help support**

[Early Help Assessment \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](http://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

**Mental health support**

[Emotionally Healthy Children and Young People \(cheshireeast.gov.uk\)](http://cheshireeast.gov.uk)

[Anna Freud on my mind](#)

Yours sincerely

Alison Kennerley  
Headteacher

Deborah Woodcock  
Executive Director of Children's Services





Date:

Dear [Parents name]

It has been brought to my attention that your child has not been attending regularly at school. According to the Attendance Register, [Child's name's] attendance is currently insert ...%, this is below the school's expected attendance.

In the last two half terms [Child's name's] had xx unauthorised sessions (this includes lates after the register closes). If a child's attendance reaches 10 unauthorised sessions within 2 consecutive half terms then school can apply to the Local Authority to issue you with a Penalty Notice warning period, which could result in each parent receiving a £160 fine. We will be monitoring [Child's name's] attendance and punctuality over the next half term. He/she currently has x unauthorised sessions since Easter and if this reaches 10 before xxxxxxxxxxxx this may result in a referral to the local authority.

I must remind you that Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 requires you to make sure that your child comes to school, on time, every time the school is open. I am writing this letter to give you an opportunity to make sure that from now on and in future, your child attends school regularly.

If your child continues to not attend regularly, I will have to refer you to the Local Authority and they may decide to pursue further action. These interventions may include:

- (a) Issuing you with a Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 444A of the Education Act 1996 which will make you liable to a penalty of up to £160 (as above).
- (b) Initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. If convicted under this section, you may be fined up to £1,000.
- (c) Initiating legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996. If convicted of this offence you may be fined up to £2,500 or be sent to prison for up to 3 months, or both.

To avoid Local Authority intervention, please ensure your child attends school regularly and on time.

Please note this is a warning letter and the expectation is that [Child's name] will significantly improve their attendance and it will be maintained. If there are any issues that may be impacting your child's attendance, please contact the school admin team who will direct your query accordingly.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'A Kennerley'.

Alison Kennerley  
Headteacher



Date:

Dear [Parents name]

Re: [Child's Name]

At Buglawton Primary School we consider attendance to be of utmost importance and are currently working in partnership with Cheshire East Local Authority to strengthen student attendance. I am therefore bringing the following information to your attention.

Our monitoring process has shown that [Child's name] has been absent from school for a total of ... sessions due to illness on the following dates over the last two consecutive half terms:

• **INSERT DATES**

All students have a minimum attendance target of 95%, which equates to 10 days absent across the full academic year. [Child's name's] current attendance percentage is ...% which equates to ... days absent.

There is specific guidance regarding illness and absence for school age children on the NHS website <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

We would like you to attend a meeting at school to discuss [Child's name's] absence with our attendance team on the following [insert date]. In preparation for this meeting please collate any medical evidence relating to [Child's name's] absence. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes if this is not available.

The most important thing is that schools and families work together to get students in school and learning.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'A Kennerley'.

Alison Kennerley  
**Headteacher**