



Attendance Policy

Reviewed by	Curriculum and Learning Committee
Agreed on	January 2020
Signed	Ian Wallace

Our Core Values: Honesty, Loyalty, Caring, Sharing and Forgiveness



Aims of this policy

In striving to enable each child to reach their full potential Offwell CofE Primary School stresses the importance to both children and parents of the need for maximum attendance and punctuality.

Rights and Responsibilities

Offwell CofE Primary School:

- expects pupils to attend school regularly and to arrive in a fit condition to learn.
- will encourage good attendance and will investigate all absenteeism.
- staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.
- will work closely with parents should attendance / punctuality give cause for concern.

Pupils:

- Pupils will ensure that they attend regularly and on time.
- Pupils will have individual records of attendance / punctuality acknowledged by the school.

Parents:

- Parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly, punctually and are properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents are responsible for informing the school as early as possible of the reason for any absence (by letter, phone call or personal visit).
- Parents are required to complete a Request for Authorised Absence before a holiday. *Authorisation of holidays within term time are not automatic.*
- Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance.

Authorising absence

All absences must be explained by a parental note or message. The headteacher will then decide whether or not the absence will be authorised. All absence-related messages received by any member of staff will be conveyed to the school office. If no information from home is forthcoming, the school office will contact the child's parents. The school office will pay particular attention to the possibility of unauthorised absence and take speedy action if this is suspected.

Absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents



Offwell C of E Primary School

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- For any type of shopping
- Looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents (an exception to this might be where a child is looking after a disabled parent)
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives

Parents should not expect, as a right, that the school will agree to authorised absence in term time. Each application will be considered on its merits.

Parental requests for authorised absence in term time

A parent must complete an **Absence Request Form** from the school office or school website when asking for absence to be authorised. Such absences from school are discouraged, but the Head teacher is allowed to give permission for a child to be out of school up to a maximum of 10 days per school year (September to September).

School will always put the education of the child first when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. In doing so, school will also take into account the child's age, stage of education, internal assessment weeks and educational progress when making a decision. It is not the school's decision to fine parents for unauthorised absences, but is at the discretion of Devon's Educational Social Welfare Service.

The Governing Body has agreed that the school **will not authorise any requests** for holidays:

- If your child has an attendance level below 96% calculated over the previous twelve months (this equates to 7.5 days). The headteacher is able to make exceptions where a child's attendance is between 93 and 96% where there is good reason, eg regular appointments out of school or periods of longer illness eg chickenpox (% figures due to Government defining persistent absence at 85% attendance)
- In the **first two weeks of the school year** (this is a crucial time when all children should be settling in to their new classroom routines and missing this time is detrimental to forming new relationships and routines in a new class)
- **For any time in May before or during assessments such as SATs** (this is a time when it is important that all Year 6 children are in school as it is a week of examinations organised by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and these tests cannot be taken at any other time).

Fines for unauthorised absence

It is now Devon County Council policy to issue Penalty Notices or fines for unauthorised absence. Details of the implementation of fines can be found in Devon County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, of which the following is an extract: *"Following the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 it is possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way of a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices will require the parent of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay a fine, currently £60.00 if paid within 21 days or £120.00 if paid within 28 days."*

These Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised holidays within term time and unauthorised absence from school when the circumstances appear to have been avoidable, (e.g. child too tired after a late night, a birthday treat, family friends/relatives visiting).



Offwell C of E Primary School

Strategies for promoting attendance / punctuality

- Parents, pupils and staff are to be made aware of the importance of good attendance including distribution of Local Authority generated information where appropriate. Pupils are to be constantly reminded of the importance and value of good attendance.
- The school will award certificates through its usual policy to pupils whose attendance / punctuality is much improved or high.
- Parents of pupils whose attendance falls below 93% may be invited in to school by the Head teacher to discuss strategies to improve their child's attendance.
- Structured meetings will be held at appropriate times with the school's Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils whose attendance / punctuality is a source of concern [persistent absence].
- Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Equal Opportunities

We aim to offer an education and working environment appropriate to each individual pupil's needs regardless of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, gender, sexuality, disability or religious beliefs.

Attendance Target Data: Offwell C of E Primary School agrees to the Headteacher setting Attendance Targets annually with the Education Welfare Officer, these will be brought to the Full Governing Body Annually as a part of their cycle of work. Governing Body will amend or agree the suggested targets.

Opening and closing of Registers: Morning and Afternoon Registers will close 15 minutes after the start of the morning/afternoon. After a further ten minutes, children will be marked as absent for the session.

In the morning, register is at 8.50am. If a child arrives before 9.15am they will be marked as late. After 9.15am a child will be marked as absent for the session.

In the afternoon, register opens at 1.00pm, closes at 1.10. If a child arrives between 1.10 and 1.20pm they will be marked as late. After 1.20pm they will be marked as absent for the session.