



**Deddington C.E. (A) Primary School**

**WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

At Deddington Primary school we believe in the concept of lifelong learning and the concept that both adults and children learn new things every day. We maintain that learning should be engaging and inclusive and an enjoyable experience for everyone; it should be fun. Through our teaching we equip children with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to be able to make informed choices about the important things in their future lives. We believe that appropriate teaching and learning experiences help children to lead happy and rewarding lives.

Our Christian values we hold as a school permeate throughout all areas of school life.

**Perseverance      Respect      Honesty      Kindness**

**Faith   Friendship   Forgiveness   Responsibility**

**This revised policy is based on the Oxfordshire County Council model policy guidelines.**

**Introduction**

Deddington Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

## **School Procedures**

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (C), unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of school).

Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

## **Lateness**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at **8.50 am**. The registers will remain open for **15 minutes**.

Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.

In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at **1.15 pm**. The registers will close at **1.20 pm**.

Parents/Carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day. This must be followed up in writing to explain the reason for the absence. If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised.

When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical/Dental appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

## **Absence from School**

### **First Day Absence**

- Parents should phone the school before 9.00am on the first day of absence.
- If a message has not been received, the class Teaching Assistant or office staff will phone the parent by 10.30am.
- If no contact is made by phone, then contact will be attempted by text or email.
- Any letters from parents regarding absences will be dated on receipt and put in the relevant registers.

### **Third Day Absence**

- Phone missing student's named contact
- If no response, phone all other named contacts
- Contact involved professionals
- School can do home visit if appropriate

### **Ten Day Absence**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council, Attendance and Engagement Team. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

## **Absence Notes**

Absence notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

## **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

The Headteacher monitors rates of attendance on a regular basis. Current percentage rates of attendance are looked at as are the frequency of and reasons for absence. Rates of attendance from previous academic years can also be referred to within this process. Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s. The Headteacher will liaise with the appropriate agency to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

- An initial letter is sent home if a child has a current percentage rate of less than 90% and appears to be falling. The Headteacher may invite the parents to a meeting.
- A further letter is sent home if further absences take place which lead to the rate of absence falling. At this point, school may request a note from a Doctor before authorising any further absences due to illness.
- The Oxfordshire Attendance and Engagement team will be contacted if school has any concerns regarding the attendance of a child. They may then work with a family to support improvements in attendance.

## **Penalty Notices and Legal Action**

### **The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the Attendance and Engagement Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the Attendance and Engagement Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions (6 half days / 3 whole days) over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 15% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases will be referred to the Attendance and Engagement Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

### **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils.

### **Promoting Attendance**

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

The Home/School agreement can be used in this way.

### **Leave of Absence**

The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are ***exceptional circumstances***. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school ***if*** the leave is granted. Parents/carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of leave of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above).

## **Attendance Awards**

Children with 100% attendance will be rewarded at the end of the Summer term. Children who have 100% attendance for the whole year will also be presented with a special certificate.

## **Attendance Targets**

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

## **Register and Admission Roll keeping.**

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found in The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

## **Categorisation of Absence**

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

- [1] Unauthorised Absence;
- [2] Authorised Absence;
- [3] Approved Educational Activity.

### **1. Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as 'unauthorised' when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without a good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Some examples of 'unauthorised absences' are:

- Family holidays
- Family day visits
- Shopping
- Keeping a hairdressing appointment
- A birthday treat

### **2. Authorised Absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

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 guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Some examples of 'authorised' absences are:

- when a child is ill or receiving medical attention (appointment cards should be available)
- when a close family member has died
- when prior consent has been obtained from the Headteacher, for example for a music examination

### 3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

Field trips and educational visits;  
Sporting activities;  
Link courses or approved education off site;  
Most types of dual registration.

**Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.**

#### POLICY

Headteacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Governor: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date to be reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_