



OVERBURY CE FIRST SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND ADMISSIONS POLICY

January 2016

1. Statutory Duty for the Local Authority

Local Authorities have statutory targets to improve pupil attendance and must publish an attendance policy, which should be reflected in each school's policy. Ofsted inspectors are required to draw attention to poor attendance where it impacts on pupil progress.

1.1 Purpose

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. This statutory policy provides a framework and guidance for staff and parents to encourage pupils to attend school regularly and punctually so that they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available, as research shows that pupils who attend school regularly are more likely to succeed than those who have a high level of absence.

2. Aims

- To communicate clearly to parents the school's policy for attendance and good timekeeping, and to make them aware of the school's procedure for authorising absence
- To organise and monitor procedures to encourage positive attendance
- To ensure that non-attendance and poor punctuality is effectively monitored and followed up promptly, so that action may be taken to improve these
- To set realistic and challenging targets for attendance
- To collate attendance and lateness data on a class and whole school basis
- To support pupils who are having difficulties attending and/or arriving on time
- To reward individuals and groups of pupils who have sustained good attendance/punctuality and most improved attendance/punctuality over a given period of time

3. Attendance

3.1 Registration - An entry must be made in the attendance register at the beginning of the morning session and again at the beginning of the afternoon session for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll, using the current codes used in Worcestershire County Council (WCC) schools which are displayed on the school electronic SIMS system.

Our school registration - Registers are taken in the playground for all classes at 8.45 am. Any pupil who is not in the playground by registration or who comes in the main school door is marked as late (unless they have prior permission from the teacher).

3.2 Procedures - After manual registration has been completed in the playground, class sheets are passed to the office to be entered onto the computerised on the SIMS system by the office.

Registers are legal documents and must be completed accurately, In case of legal proceedings or an emergency; registers must be retained and made available if required, for three years. It is the duty of the governing body to inform the LA of the names of those pupils who do not attend regularly or are absent for long periods, and to include information on pupils' absences in the prospectus.

3.3 Absences - Absences are monitored weekly in school. If a pupil is not in school registered for the morning and no message has been received, the office will contact the parents to ascertain the reason. The afternoon register is taken after lunch play. Any absence letters received should be placed in the red box with all other correspondence. These will be entered onto the SIMS system by the Office Administrator and then stored in the loft for 3 years.

The school is required to distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence. Only **the school may authorise absence, not the parents**. From September 2013, the 2006 government regulations make it clear that Head Teachers are only allowed to authorise leave of absences in exceptional circumstances. The governors of Overbury CE First School have agreed that each request will be considered against the following criteria:

- Medical treatment and hospitalisation affecting childcare
- Restricted time for family holidays (ie farming or military)
- Family or close friend bereavement
- Once in a lifetime opportunities - (going on a day trip to a theme park is not acceptable)
- Music or dance exams

Head Teachers should also determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Should there be any concerns, for example average attendance below 95%, it is unlikely that further absence will be authorised in any circumstances since 10 days is equivalent to 5.2%.

Where the school and parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

Planned absence must involve a request for leave using the 'Planned absence request form' (Appendix A) which will be considered and, if exceptional, approved by the Head Teacher.

3.3.1 - Procedure for Persistent Absence - Persistent Absence is defined by the government as below 85% attendance. To minimise persistent absence, our school procedure begins when a pupil's absence is 90% attendance or below.

- School Attendance Leaflet for parents is sent out to all parents at the beginning of each term
- Absence is monitored weekly and considered by the Head Teacher;
- Rewards -
 - *Class Awards - weekly and half termly* - Weekly class race shown on the Challenge Cup Board in entrance - the class with highest attendance jumps over the next hedge, receiving the Challenge Cup for a week. End of half term pupils receive a class reward
 - *Individual Rewards Half Termly* - 100% and most improved - pencils
 - Pupils with the highest attendance are awarded the school trophy at the annual prize giving on Sports Day
 - Rewards are mentioned in the school newsletter
- Persistent Absence Procedure
 - *Trigger* - Absence goes below 90% - Attendance leaflet is sent again together with first letter from Head Teacher and attendance data regarding child's half termly attendance

- *No Improvement* - Attendance continues to be monitored; if no improvement within a fortnight - Second letter is sent setting up a meeting with School Governor for Attendance and Punctuality; at which an improvement plan will be created

3.4 Holidays - A family holiday is not deemed to be an exceptional circumstance by the government and the threshold of authorising 10 days/20 school sessions absence has been removed. However, the governors have decided that in our area families in the farming or military communities may be severely restricted in times available and any requests would be considered.

If a holiday is taken without the school's permission or if a child fails to return by the agreed date, this should be recorded as unauthorised absence and noted on the child's records.

3.5 Children Missing Education (CME)

A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Schools should follow their procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of going missing in future.

All schools should inform the LA of any pupil who is going to be deleted from their admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the state school system - eg home education, private education;
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance from the school at which they are registered;
- Have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither the pupil, nor their parent, has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or
- Have been permanently excluded.

All schools must inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the LA (or in default of such agreement, at intervals determined by the Secretary of State).

3.6 Lateness - Punctuality is important to ensure that all pupils are settled and ready to learn every day. Lateness can also affect other pupils and disrupt their learning. Therefore, punctuality is encouraged and persistent lateness is treated seriously under our lateness procedure:

- Lateness is monitored weekly and passed to the Head Teacher for considered by the Head Teacher;
- Rewards for punctuality
 - *Class Half Termly* - % Class score at the end of the week shown on the entrance powerpoints as an average percentage for each class - leading a half termly class reward - film (short) and popcorn for highest % Class
 - *Individual Rewards Half Termly* for most improved timeliness award - badge
 - *Termly awards* for never late - pencil

- Rewards are mentioned in the school newsletter
- Lateness Procedure
 - *Trigger* - twice in a week or once a week for 2 weeks or 3 times in a half term - School targeted Punctuality Leaflet is sent together with first letter from Head Teacher and lateness data regarding their child
 - *No improvement* - Punctuality continues to be monitored; if punctuality is triggered again in that term (if late twice again) - Second letter is sent setting up a meeting with School Governor for Attendance and Punctuality at which an improvement plan will be created
- If a parent is persistently late in picking their child up after school, without prior permission for special circumstances, the procedure above will be followed (see Appendix B (iii)).

4. Roles and responsibilities of Head Teacher, other staff, governors

The **Head Teacher** will ensure that:

- Parents are aware of the school's attendance policy and procedures
- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Attendance targets are set for individual pupils, classes and the whole school
- Parents or carers are contacted by the office when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised
- School attendance statistics are reported to the LA and governing body
- The EWO is provided with the registration data as requested
- Pupils absent for long periods because of ill-health receive appropriate learning support (see Policy for Pupils with Medical Needs).

All **Teachers** are expected to:

- Register pupils accurately and efficiently - appearing on the playground on time and passing the register to the office on the way back to class
- Encourage pupils to attend school regularly and inform colleagues if there is a problem that may lead to absences.

All **Teaching Assistants** are expected to:

- Deputise for Class Teachers in times of need or staff absence, as required by the Head Teacher.

The **Office Administrator** is expected to:

- Correctly enter daily attendance data into SIMS
- Pass messages regarding absence to the Class Teachers (when applicable)
- Mark absence reasons on SIMS and store absence letters for 3 years
- Mark any lateness with the time on SIMS from the 'Children's Absence Register' in reception
- Chase any unknown absences on the morning of the first day of absence and daily after that if the pupil is still away and parents have not called in
- Send a letter requesting an explanation for unexplained absences the Monday following the absence (if not resolved)
- Ensure latecomers or early departers sign the 'Children's Absence Register' before going to class
- Keep paperwork relevant to attendance ie requests for leave of absence forms

- Mark children absent (with request for leave of absence forms) on the appropriate dates on SIMS and noted on the on-line requested absence diary
- Store absences letters for 3 years
- Ensure that school reports contain attendance details
- Liaise with the EWO
- Liaise with outside agencies regarding attendance ie Welfare Call for Looked after Children

Pupils will be encouraged to:

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences or lateness

Parents and carers will be asked to:

- Ensure their child attends school punctually daily
- Bring their child to school on time and collect them promptly at the end of the day
- If late (or leaving early), sign the 'Children's Absence Register' giving reason for lateness/departure
- Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance either in writing, by phoning or in person - call in each day to report if the child is still unwell (for safeguarding reasons)
- Whenever possible, make non-emergency medical and dental appointments outside of school hours; if during school hours, the child should attend school before and after the appointment to miss as little school time as possible
- Not book leave of absence during school time unless it meets the Governor's Exceptional Circumstances
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance - filling out the Request for Leave of Absence form. (Appendix A)
- Under the Attendance/Lateness procedures improve their child's attendance/punctuality within a fortnight of receiving the letter from the Head Teacher. If this is not done, they must attend a meeting with the School Governor for Attendance and Punctuality to devise an improvement plan.

The **Governing Body** will:

- Ensure that the Governors, through the School Governor for Attendance and Punctuality, work closely with the school to improve attendance and punctuality
- Represent the school, through the School Governor for Attendance and Punctuality, at parental meetings at stage two of the Attendance and Lateness Procedures to create an individual improvement plan
- Discuss any persistent absence and attendance issues, agreeing how to resolve any issues
- Ensure that the LA is informed about the long-term absence of any pupils.

5. Responsibilities of the EWO

When an **EWO** is linked to a school they will:

- On a termly basis, discuss attendance issues with the school - by telephone, email or in person
- Offer advice and support to improve attendance
- Deal with specific cases which are causing concern, including 'condoned' absences and 'truanting'
- Follow up any further actions, including working with the family to improve attendance at school

6. Arrangements for regular monitoring and evaluation

The Office Administrative Assistant will, on a weekly basis, consider data on pupil attendance against the number of sessions taught, and consider if a particular child's attendance or lateness needs to be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher.

Specific Pupils - If a child's attendance is below 90%, the reasons for absence will be considered and subsequently the first attendance letter will be sent to alert the parent to their child's attendance - this letter can be modified if the absence has been caused by a specific bout of sickness but should still be sent. If there are specific arrangements in place for specific children regarding attendance or punctuality than these will be known by the Head Teacher, Class Teacher, Teaching Assistant and office staff.

General attendance trends - The Head Teacher and the governing body will evaluate the data, annually (last undertaken in November 2014) and decide what, if any, further action is required.

7. Admissions

7.1 General Admissions - Applications for a place at school are made on the required PA1 form (new to any school) or CA1 form (transferring from another school). All admissions are now on-line and parents deal direct with WCC. Places at the school are allocated by WCC - since Spring 2014, the school has the final say if there is space in the school. If a place is required in Reception Class, this should be applied for before the due date in the January before the September intake (see annual guidance). Parents/carers will be informed by WCC direct if they have been allocated a place. All parents have the right of appeal.

WCC will keep a waiting list for the school but this will be closed down at the end of each term and parents must reapply each term if they wish to stay on the waiting list. Parents have the right of appeal if they are refused a place in school.

Pupils are admitted into school full-time from the Autumn term following their fourth birthday. Although pupils do start full time, it is feasible to negotiate the time spent in school so that the pupil can get used to attending full time but every child must attend for a minimum of 5 mornings and 2 afternoons. In the first instance, this should be discussed with the Class Teacher and then agreed with the Head Teacher. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, we would expect all Reception pupils to be in school full-time from the Spring term. Currently our pupil admission number is 12 per year group.

If there are more applications than places available the following criteria for admitting a child will be used: -

- i. Relevant* 'Looked after children'
- ii. A child living in the school's catchment area (Overbury, Conderton, Kinsham and Kemerton).
- iii. A child who has a brother or sister attending the school at the time of admission.
- iv. A child who has a special reason for admission. This reason will probably be of medical, physical or social nature, and the production of a medical certificate or other appropriate information is required. Parents claiming such special reasons should inform the County Education office in writing at the time of application.
- v. A child who lives nearest to the school by the shortest available walking route.

*Relevant is all those in the care of the County Council or provided with accommodation by the County Council under the terms of the Children Act 1989, 'looked after' at the time of the application for admission and who will still be 'looked after' at the time of admission.

Admissions at other times will be at a mutually convenient and appropriate time for all parties. Some parents may request a taster day to enable their child to know the school before joining. This is appropriate so long as the child has already been allocated a place at the school but inappropriate if they are 'trailing'. This agreement is throughout the Cluster school group.

7.2 Procedure for in-year admissions (as published in the Information for Parents' Admissions Procedure booklet only available on line) is as follows:

Worcestershire Residents - The Parents/Carers apply on line on a CA1 form from www.worcestershire.gov.uk. Assistance can be obtained through the Worcestershire Hub Centre (Tel 01905 822700).

Non-Worcestershire Residents - The Parent/Carer should follow the Home Authority application process, liaising directly with their Home Local Authority Admissions Team to be processed. The Home LA will liaise with Worcestershire. The Home LA will write to parents, normally within 10 school days of form being received, to notify them of the decision. Where it is not possible to offer a place, parents will be notified of the right to appeal, and in most cases an alternative school will be offered.

In-year admissions of Worcestershire Residents - The Parent/Carer must again apply on-line through www.worcestershire.gov.uk.

If we have any concerns over the admission of a particular child, these individual circumstances will be discussed with WCC. There may be some instances where a child's circumstances fit in with the Code of Practice guidelines on Fair Access and a separate path will be followed for those children.

8. Monitoring and review

All teaching and office staff in our school are responsible for ensuring this policy is maintained from day to day. This policy will be reviewed on the 3 yearly cycle or earlier if required.

Appendix A - Planned absence request form

Appendix B - (i) First attendance letter from Head Teacher

(ii) Second attendance letter from School Governor for Attendance and Punctuality

(iii) First lateness letter from Head Teacher

(iv) Second lateness letter from School Governor for Attendance and Punctuality



Appendix A - Request for Planned Leave of Absence form

(The Governors of Overbury CE First School remind parents that they have no automatic right for their children to be absent from school and that absence is only granted under exceptional circumstances - which are determined by the Head Teacher. From September 2013 there is no right to 10 days annual absence as previously.)

Part 1 - School to complete before sending form		
Child's name:	Year group	
Percentage attendance during last academic year	Current academic year	
(School target is 96.0%)		
Absence sessions:	Holiday	Holiday
	Illness	Illness
	Medical	Medical
	Other	Other

To the Head Teacher of Overbury C E First School		
Full name of child(ren)		
Total number of days absent	Proposed date(s) of absence	To (last day)
.....	From (first day)
Please give exceptional circumstances for absence during term time		
Please give the reasons which prevent this absence being taken during a school holiday period		
Date	Signed(Parent/Guardian)	
FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY - The following points will be taken into consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels of attendance in the past two years Medical treatment and hospitalisation affecting childcare Family or close friend bereavement Once in a lifetime opportunities - (going on a day trip to a theme park is not acceptable) Music or dance exams 		
Leave of absence approved/not approved.		
Date	Signed(Head Teacher)	

Notes

Parents contemplating absences during school time should first discuss the implications with the Head Teacher before making any commitments as the regulations have changed and parents can be fined for taking children out of school during term times.

The 2006 government regulations, in force from September 2013, make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances, as decided by the Head Teacher. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. A family holiday is not deemed to be an exceptional circumstance by the government and the threshold of 10 days/20 school sessions absence allowed for holidays has been removed and is no longer allowed.

1. This form should be completed by the parent (or carer) and forwarded to the Head Teacher not less than two weeks before the planned absence is due to begin - unless the circumstances prohibit this.
2. The reason for the request must be an exceptional circumstance and not just a family holiday.
3. The school will not authorise any type of absences during May and June when final year assessments are taking place.
4. Should there be any concerns, for example average attendance below 95%, it is unlikely that further absence will be authorised in any circumstances since 10 days is equivalent to 5.2%.
5. Where the school and parents fail to reach an agreement and the child is then absent from school, the absence will be marked as **unauthorised**.

Where parents keep a child away for longer than the agreed extra time, this is marked as unauthorised absence. If parents take a child on holiday without prior permission, this is marked as unauthorised absence.

Appendix B - (i) First attendance letter from Head Teacher

(ii) Second attendance letter from School Governor for Attendance and Punctuality

(iii) First lateness letter from Head Teacher

(iv) Second lateness letter from School Governor for Attendance and Punctuality