Uffington
Church of England
Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Latest review July 2022

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1. MISSION STATEMENT:

Uffington Church of England Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. The school believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the School will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

2. IMPLEMENTATION

Teaching and administrative staff have a key role in monitoring attendance and it is their responsibility to ensure attendance registers are correctly completed and to raise any concerns about attendance with the headteacher. The headteacher makes a termly report to the Governing Body on levels of attendance.

3. AIMS:

For example:

It is recognised that

- All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

4. EXPECTATIONS:

Primary schools generally have more day-to-day contact with parents than secondary schools. This can mean that many parents are easily contactable which may help to resolve problems and concerns quickly. Conversely, it may make it more difficult for teachers to question parents about absences or to refer to other agencies when the parent is well

known to the school. Good practice should include inviting parents to meetings about attendance discreetly, perhaps by telephone call or letter and discussing with them the reasons why a referral is being made on to the Education Welfare Service or another agency and the expectation that this is to support and assist the family. If there are Child Protection concerns then the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures should be followed immediately.

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from parents: (cf. Appendix 3)

- To ensure their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the student or their parent).
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.
- A quality education

5. ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH GOOD PRACTICE AND REWARDS

Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 30 minutes of the start of the session.
- Attendance checks at appropriate times.
- Recording of attendance on individual reports.
- A certificate for 100% attendance for any one year presented at the annual Leavers' Service and Prizegiving (Attendance is 100% if there has been no absence).
- Identifying and supporting pupils who have attendance problems in advance of the transition between KS2 and KS3. This should include the sharing of relevant information with the destination school.
- Establishing a mechanism for working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- The efficient use of computerised registration systems can provide valuable, year group, class and pupil level attendance data which enables speedy analysis and timely responses by the school.

6. RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE:

When a pupil does not attend, the school needs to respond effectively.

For example:

- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents, the parents will be contacted on the first day of absence by telephone or by letter if parents are not on the telephone.
- Where there is no response, a second letter will be sent after three days of unexplained absence, or there may be a visit from a member of the school staff or a member of the inclusion team where there the service is already involved.
- Where non-attendance continues, the case will be discussed with the local authority inclusion team and further action planned. This may, in appropriate cases, result in a referral to the inclusion team.
- After 10 days, unless other action is planned, the parents will be invited to attend a meeting in school. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, the LA inclusion team, parent and pupil and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school.

- If there is no improvement, then the case will be discussed again with the local authority with a view to a formal referral being made to the inclusion team, if one has not already been made at an earlier stage. If a referral had already been made, then the case will be reviewed and further action planned.

Reintegration:

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfE Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance (Circular 10/99)
- Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the SEN Co-ordinator may be required

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees via the staff notices / daily briefings.

7. SCHOOL ORGANISATION:

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

Head Teacher:

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence
- To liaise with the local authority
- To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.

- To oversee the work of administrative staff.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.

Class Teacher

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by asking the administrator to contact parents.
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To inform senior staff of concerns in a timely manner.
- Where necessary, maintain a log of persistent late arrival.

Governors:

- Governor(s) may be given a specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies.
- Governors can play a valuable role though representation at school attendance panels.
- Request regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings.

Parents:

- Contact with school on first day of absence or as soon as possible.
- Provide explanation for absence over the telephone or signed and dated absence notes for all absences.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.

Office Staff:

School administrative staff can play a vital role in supporting the school's attendance and absence management strategies.

- Pass on telephone messages regarding absence to class teachers.
- Make telephone calls to establish reasons for unreported absence.

Generate individual, class and school attendance data reports

8. LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school or the local authority. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people.

Other Agencies to be used where appropriate in individual cases.

- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Social Care.
- Local police

ATTENDANCE AND CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

Uffington Church of England Primary School understands that poor attendance can be an indicator of concern for children with welfare and safeguarding concerns, and thus ensures that information is shared between the headteacher and school administrator. Likewise, school understands that a parent failing to inform the school that a child has an authorised absence could be a cause for concern.

Uffington Church of England Primary School appreciates that the Local Authority has a Statutory Duty to ensure that all children and young people of compulsory school age receive suitable and appropriate education. Uffington Church of England Primary School will support the Authority in ensuring that this duty is carried out effectively. There are specific duties in respect of Children Missing Education (CME) and Uffington Church of England Primary School follows strict local authority guidelines in relation to these.

HOLIDAYS DURING TERM-TIME

Parents and carers are strongly discouraged from taking their children on holiday during term-time due to the impact upon children's learning. Headteachers are not permitted to authorise holidays during term-time except in exceptional circumstances, in which case parents / carers should put a request to the headteacher in writing.
Where parents and carers choose to remove their children for family holidays during term-time, a fixed penalty notice will be imposed. This includes day trips and where parents and carers choose to start holidays before term has ended, or to return after term has begun.

The General Data Protection Regulation

The General Data Protection Regulation places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Regulation. Each school has a Data Protection Policy which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

Policy reviewed by governors	July 2022
Policy reviewed by governors	July 2023

APPENDIX 1

GUIDANCE FOR CLASS TEACHERS:

SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents to see that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities....

The Importance of Registration:

- An attendance register, electronic or manual, must be kept on which, at the **BEGINNING** of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent.

- Manual registers must be kept in ink and corrections must be made in such a way that the original entry and the correction are both clearly distinguishable.

- Authorised absences should be entered in red initially with the symbol for categorising the absence in blue or black.

- Accurate marking of registers, and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems can have a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures.

- Attendance registers, and bound copies of electronic registration print outs must be kept for a minimum of 3 years from the date that the last entries were made.

Categorising Absence:

Symbols to be used in Registers (Categories)

All schools are required to use a common set of codes to record pupil attendance and absence.

The Department for Education (DfE) believes that these codes are best used within electronic systems for recording attendance and absence of pupils. Such electronic systems are capable of producing the data necessary for absence returns to DfE without time consuming counting up of possible attendances and actual absences.

The use of fixed codes will also assist both LAs and the DfE in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without the permission of the school, but why pupils are absent from school.

- **Only the school,** in the context of the law **can authorise absence,** a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If a class teacher does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason then the matter must be referred to the Head Teacher.

- Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the Head Teacher.
- Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.
- Class teachers who experience difficulty in receiving a parental note should inform the Head Teacher.

Authorised or Unauthorised Absence:

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised.**

The following may be reasons for authorising absences.

- Illness
- Family bereavement
- Wedding of a parent
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

Family Holidays:

Headteachers are not able to authorise absences due to family holidays taken in term time. Headteachers may only authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances.** At Uffington CE Primary School, the governors have decided that exceptional circumstances are as follows:

- Holidays provided for families of children with disabilities by registered children's charities, e.g the Make a Wish Foundation;
- Observation of religious festivals which are fundamental to a family's culture and beliefs.

Requests should be made in writing to the headteacher and will be assessed on an individual basis. The headteacher will make the decision in the first instance but there will be a right of appeal to the Chair of Governors.

The Use of Penalty Warnings and Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Holidays in Term Time

The school retains the right to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for unauthorised holidays during term time. Lincolnshire County Council has a Code of Conduct with clear guidance on the issuing of such notices. The school will follow the correct procedures in instructing the local authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice on its behalf.

Resolving Disagreements

Where there is a lack of agreement between the school and the LA as to the appropriateness of issuing a penalty warning letter or a penalty notice, the matter will be referred to the County Legal Proceedings Panel whose decision shall be final.

Approved Educational Activity

Where pupils are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way but are counted as present for calculating data for the DfE absence return. To avoid confusion in emergency situations pupils who are off site should not be marked as present. The following activities fall within this category.

- Field trips and educational visits both in this country and overseas.

Absences should **not** be authorised under the following circumstances.

- Shopping trips
- Holidays in term time where the permission of the school has not been given
- Minding the house or looking after siblings.
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation.
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified.
- No reason given.
- School staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid.

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a young person being absent from school. It is for the Head teacher to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered. Further advice is available in DfE Circular No. 10/99.

Lateness:

Schools should actively discourage late arrival by challenging young people who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation.

Schools should have a policy on how long registers remain open. At Uffington School, registers remain open until 9:15am (30 minutes after the beginning of the school day). In the event of bad weather this period may be extended.

Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open they may be marked present.

Where a pupil arrives after register closure without good reason, they should be marked with an unauthorised absence in red and the letter L in blue or black to indicate that they are on site.

Removal from the school roll

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended 1997) and the Schools Administration Handbook (section A2). **Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.**

- Where a school has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school

- Where a pupil has ceased to attend the school and the parent(s) have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school.

- Where the school has been notified by the School Medical Officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend school.

- Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the Head Teacher of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with the Education Welfare Service to obtain information on the cause of the absence.

- Where the Head Teacher has been notified that the pupil has died.

- Where a pupil in the nursery class has not transferred to a reception class at the school.

- Except in the case of a boarder, the pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school.

- If a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time.

- Where a pupil will cease to be of compulsory schools age before the school next meets and has been notified an intention to discontinue in attendance.

- Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee.

Ensuring Pupil Information is up to date

We ensure, as far as possible, that the information we hold on pupils and parents is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states 'Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date'. Parents and carers are asked to confirm their contact details on an annual basis.

Pupils who are missing

Where it is believed that a pupil has left the area and enquiries have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil, the Common Transfer File should be completed and uploaded to the DfE National Missing Pupils Database.

APPENDIX 2

GOOD PRACTICE:

Research suggests that good practice is associated with:

1. A senior teacher being charged with specific responsibility for pupil attendance.

2. A list of absentees being produced quickly, ideally by morning break, for use by appropriate teaching and office staff.

3. The school devising a sensitive scheme for the immediate follow-up of absentees - e.g. either by telephoning home or sending out letters to parents or guardians.

4. Class Teachers ensuring that records of attendance are as accurate as possible and explanations for absence are produced when pupils return to school.

5. Senior member of staff monitoring the attendance records of classes.

6. Staff with responsibility for pupil attendance having regular meetings with EWO on an agreed basis.

7. Regular spot-checks for specific lesson truancy and for pupils leaving school before the end of the day, being enacted at intervals.

8. Rewards introduced for individual pupils or classes with an excellent attendance record in the form or praise or prizes.

9. Penalties being introduced for pupils who are persistently late.

10. Absentees and truants being quietly welcomed back to school upon their return and efforts made to reintegrate them socially and academically.

11. First day of absence contact. Where the schools is able to resource this, a phone call to the homes of all, or a targeted group of absentees on their first day of absence has proved to be effective in addressing casual and opportunistic absence. Even short-term use of the strategy can produce long-term benefits.

12. Targeting identified pupils or groups of pupils with unsatisfactory levels of attendance, for example through school attendance panels, can have significant benefits.

APPENDIX 3

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS:

Our school is committed to providing a quality education for all pupils. We believe that pupils can only benefit from the education in our school through regular school attendance. We will, therefore, strive to achieve the maximum possible attendance for all pupils and we

will make sure that any problems are identified and resolved quickly. Wherever possible, we will make contact with parents where a pupil is absent from school without good reason.

How parents can help us:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time.
- Contact the school whenever their child is absent, giving details of the reason or the absence and the length of time the child will be away.
- Help their child prepare for the school day by ensuring that homework has been done and the child has everything he/she needs for the day ahead.
- Attend Parents' Consultation Evenings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the staff if there are problems or changes in family circumstances which may affect the child.
- Contact the school if problems arise which may keep their child away from school, so that the school can help.
- To avoid, wherever possible, taking family holidays in term-time. Term time absences, especially during SATs and examination periods, may seriously affect the progress of your child.