



Attendance & Holidays in Term Time Policy 2016

As a school we aim to:

- Achieve an overall attendance rate of at least 96%
- Maintain parents' and pupils' awareness of the importance of regular attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance
- Pupils make better progress, both socially and academically
- Pupils find school routines and school work easier to cope with
- Pupils find learning more satisfying
- Pupils have an easier transfer to secondary school

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ringing on the first morning of all absences with the reason and saying when the child will return.
- Arranging dental and doctors' appointments out of school hours or during school breaks
- Sending in a note explaining the reason for absence on your child's return to school after an illness.
- Keeping us updated by telephone or email if your child has an extended period of absence due to illness.

If a child is regularly absent from school due to illness, other services may be involved to support the child's wellbeing.

If a child's absence persists and becomes excessive, schools have a duty to seek medical evidence for the absence.

We shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences on the first day of absence by call, visit or text.
- Remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in newsletters.
- Acknowledge and reward good attendance.
- Publish your child's attendance rate on her/his annual school report
- Let you know if we have concerns regarding your child's attendance.
- If we continue to have concerns make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

Authorised Absence

Some absences are allowed and are known as "authorised absences". For example: if a child is ill, a family bereavement, or a religious observance.

We realise that there are *rare* occasions when there might be a particular problem that causes your child to be absent. Please let us know and we shall try to deal with it sympathetically.

Unauthorised Absence

There are times when children are absent for reasons which are not permitted. These are known as "unauthorised absences". Examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going for a family day out
- Sleeping in after a late night
- Going shopping
- Because it is your child's birthday
- Unapproved holidays

- Where there is no explanation for the absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory.

Unauthorised absences have to be reported to the Local Authority. The Education Welfare Officer may contact you and consider taking legal action against you if your child has unauthorised absences.

Punctuality

- Morning registration is at 8.55am and this is the time your child must be in the classroom. Ensure your child is coming through the school gate by 8.50am ready to meet the class teacher on the playground.
- It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise schoolwork for the rest of the day.
- If your child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child.
- Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with the DfE guidance.
- **Abingdon Primary's registers will close at 9.10am. Any child arriving after that time will have an unauthorised mark for the morning session.**
- We will let you know if we have concerns about your child's punctuality.
- Children who remain uncollected at the end of school time will be referred to a place of safety if not collected or the school contacted by school closing time.

Term Time Leave of Absence

We are always concerned about the amount of school time pupils miss as a result of family holidays. There is no entitlement to time off in term time. Leave of absence is only allowed at the discretion of the head teacher in accordance with the school policy as agreed by the Governing Body.

It is our policy:

- Requests for holidays in term time **will not** be authorised once children reach statutory school age. Absence taken and not authorised could be liable for a Fixed Penalty fine.
- That only in **exceptional** circumstances will holidays be allowed and then only up to a maximum of 10 school days. (The cheaper cost of holidays in term time is not an acceptable reason for an application)
- Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence for term-time holidays need to write to the Headteacher well in advance and before booking (at least 4 weeks before); the head teacher will consider your request and advise you of his/her decision, (possibly asking to meet with you to discuss)
- If the school does not agree and you take your child on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised.
- Please remember that the more time your child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). The Education Welfare Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue.

We value your support in helping us to maintain high standards for all our children.