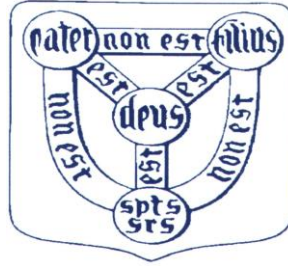


Shellingford CE (A) Primary School

Headteacher: Miss Judith Terrell



"Inspiring hearts and minds"

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays a part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be in school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Children are best safeguarded from exploitation and other risks in the wider community by attending school regularly where they are supervised by qualified and caring professionals.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

This policy works to meet the mandatory requirements laid out in [Working together to improve school attendance](#) – GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence must be classified by the school (not by parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or

other unavoidable cause. If this occurs, school will require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absence are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school late after the register has closed and are therefore given an unauthorised absence mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, never cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Absence due to Sickness:

If your child is feverish, vomiting or has diarrhoea they must remain at home for 48 hours after these symptoms have subsided, to prevent the risk of infection spreading to others. Refer to the separate leaflet 'Every Day Counts: a parent's guide to managing sickness absence from schools.' After a one-week period of absence the Headteacher will contact the parents directly to further enquire into the nature of the prolonged absence.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

Pupils with long-term medical conditions will not be penalised for their attendance record where the absences relate to their condition (Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy).

Absence due to Dental and Medical Treatment:

Parents should not be making dental or GP appointments for their child/ren within the school day unless emergency attention is required. Where hospital appointments or clinic times are such that absence from school is necessary in order to attend, parents are required to let the School Office know in advance and in writing the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected from and/or returned to school. The school may request a copy of the appointment details to verify the appointment.

Severe Absenteeism (SA):

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing significant damage to any child's academic and social progress and can have lifelong consequences. All SA pupils at our school will have an Individual Attendance Plan which will incorporate multi-agency input. You will be expected to engage with all partners to improve your child's attendance to 96+%. SA pupils are our highest priority at our school.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of schooling across the school year for any 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.

If a child misses 10% of school, she/he misses 4 weeks of lessons a year.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any child that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include individual incentive programmes and participation in activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance Team. If your child becomes a PA pupil, we will seek your consent to complete a Strengths and Needs form with you and consider convening a Team Around the Family.

Absence Procedures:

*If your child is absent **you must:***

- Contact the School Office by 9.25am on the first day of absence with the reason for the non-attendance. Be honest about the reason for the absence including if you are on holiday.

*If your child is absent **we will:***

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9.25am.
- Follow School Attendance processes including inviting the parent to a meeting in the school to identify the barriers to attendance and ensure support is put in place.
- Offer a Strengths and Needs form.
- Gain the voice of the child to ensure we are taking a child centred approach.
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90%.

Contact details:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your current contact numbers and email addresses at all times. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date telephone number and email address – if we don't something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on contact details throughout the year. Please ensure we have both parents and at least a third emergency contact person's contact details.

The County Attendance Team:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at Oxfordshire County Council for consideration of legal proceedings.

At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, or take action via a Non-Attendance referral, the legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1a).

The County Attendance Team, with the school, will encourage you to engage with a Strengths and Needs form. Education Supervision Orders may be discussed with you to support rapidly improved attendance.

Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323515 attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage time keeping:

The school opens at 8.45am. Lessons start at 8.55am and we expect your child to be in class at that time. If your child arrives to school and registration as expected, they will receive a present mark (/).

Registers are marked by 8.55am and your child will receive a late mark (L) if they are not in by that time.

At 9.25am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark (U) that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Whilst there is no mandatory time for the pm registration, the school will seek to take the register directly following the lunchtime period at 1.00pm in order to support safeguarding. If your child is present for this registration they will be marked (\).

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the School Leadership Team and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Exceptional Leave:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

1. It is widely known that the link between a pupil's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
2. Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment.
3. All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising requests for holidays.
4. The Headteacher will meet personally with every family applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance and attainment.
5. Exceptional Leave is most unlikely to be authorised when a pupil's attendance is less than 96%.
6. Exceptional Leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
7. Exceptional Leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
8. Reasons for Exceptional Leave will be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process between school.

The Penalty is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, increasing to £160 if paid between day 21 and day 28. This amount is prescribed by the Education Penalty Notices (England) Regulations 2007. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice within the prescribed period may result in prosecution for the underlying offence of failure to secure regular school attendance.

Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period will be charged at a higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80. (The three-year period begins from the date of the first penalty notice issued on or after 19 August 2024)

Please note: Penalty Notices are issued per parent/per child.

School targets, projects and special initiatives:

The minimum level of attendance for Shellingford CE (A) Primary School is 95%. However good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Oxfordshire.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

We analyse all absence carefully and draw trends based on pupils' characteristics, vulnerabilities, days of the week, subjects missed and repeat illnesses. We focus our attention on addressing these trends of absence.

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to report and publish its absence figures and its Attendance Policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) and the Department for Education (DfE). Our school is obliged to share all attendance data with Oxfordshire County Council and the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure their children attend regularly and on time.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment, mental health and social wellbeing.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Miss Judith Terrell (Headteacher)
Mrs Kirsty Ashdown (School Administrator)

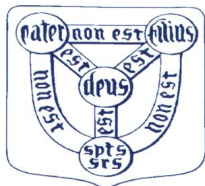
Date written: September 2024

Review Date: September 2027

Policy Agreed by the Governing Body on 12th September 2024

Signed Chair of Governing Body

Signed Headteacher



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REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DUE TO EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

I request leave of absence to be granted to (child/ren name/s):

from: _____ to: _____ (insert dates)

Please give reason for exceptional circumstance: _____

I confirm that the information given on this form is correct.

Signature of parent: _____ Date: _____

PLEASE NOTE:

1. Under the amended School Attendance Regulations 2006, absence for purpose of holiday is not an exceptional circumstance and will not be authorised.
2. Failure to request leave or refusal to grant leave will mean that the absence is unauthorised. This may result in a Penalty Notice being issued.
3. When considering granting leave of absence in term time, the Headteacher will consider:
 - The nature of the situation
 - Family circumstances
 - Pupil's attendance figures
 - Impact on the pupil's education
 - The duration of the request

LEAVE OF ABSENCE: GRANTED / REFUSED

FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY – ATTENDANCE CODE:

Pupil Name	Attendance Data

Signature of the Headteacher _____ Date: _____