

# Uppingham Church of England Primary School

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## Attendance and Punctuality Policy September 2016

### School attendance and the law

In accordance with Government guidelines, children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from the school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Parents of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 as amended 2013 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 amended, to make sure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents may be reported to the Local Authority.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either Authorised or Unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness. Parents must inform the school of the symptoms their child has as 'unwell' or 'ill' cannot be authorised.

Unauthorised absence is when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher. They are absences which the school does not consider reasonable, for which no explanation has been given or has never been properly explained.

From 1st September 2013, the amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended 2013

**“removes references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days”**

The amendments set out that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances". Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. The government has not defined 'exceptional circumstances' other than to say it is a one off life time event – this would not normally include family holidays.

It is up to each school to consider each request individually and we would consider factors such as:

- . The nature of the request and why it could not be taken in holiday time
- . General welfare of the pupil and family circumstances
- . Pupil's educational needs and ability to catch up on work missed
- . Proximity to national tests such as SATS
- . Frequency of requests from pupil's parents

Exceptional circumstances will be regarded as one-off situations due to trauma or bereavement. The following will generally not be considered as 'exceptional':

- . Relatives coming to visit

- . Family holidays in UK or abroad
- . Family day trips
- . Taking holiday to coincide with family who have different term times or holidays

## **Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures**

### **Governing Body**

It will be the responsibility of the Governors to oversee and monitor the working of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy.

### **Headteacher**

It will be the responsibility of the Headteacher to:

- Initiate and monitor procedures for monitoring attendance and lateness.
- Ensure all unexplained absences are investigated on the day they occur, or as soon as possible after the absence.
- Monitor attendance and lateness on a regular basis and report to Governors on the progress,
- Keep staff and children informed of the progress of policy and practice.

### **Class teacher**

It will be the responsibility of the Class teacher to:

- Encourage attendance/punctuality by creating a welcoming and stimulating atmosphere.
- Keep daily registers and ensure that parents' letters/messages are passed onto the office staff as soon as possible.

### **School Office Staff**

It is the responsibility of the office staff to:

- Follow up all unexplained absence/lateness
- Inform the Headteacher of unexplained absence/lateness
- Enter attendance details onto the school system and produce reports as necessary

### **Parents/Carers**

It is the responsibility of Parents/Carers to:

- Ensure full and punctual attendance at school when the child is fit to attend
- Follow the school procedures for reporting absence/lateness
- Inform the school of reasons for non-attendance on the first day of absence
- If a child is to arrive late notify the school office as soon as possible
- When a child does arrive late, the Parents/Carer must accompany them to the school office to sign their child in
- Where a child appears to be having an unacceptable level of absence due to medical reasons, the school may request that medical evidence (such as appointment cards) be provided to cover all absences.

Sometimes children may be reluctant to attend school and any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out together between the school, the parents and the child. If the child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to 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 may make things worse.

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 Social Inclusion Development Officer/Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. The Social Inclusion Development Officer (SIDO) will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, this Officer can use court proceedings to prosecute parents and fixed penalty notices can be applied.

### **Pupils**

- Children are expected to attend regularly and be on time for registration and lessons.
- Children are expected to arrive at school no later than 9am when the bell rings for school to start.

## **Procedures**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

### **1. Illness and Other Legitimate Reasons**

If a pupil is unfit for school, parents are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence by 9.05 a.m. either by telephone or by sending an absence note in to school stating the symptoms. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness, such as a doctor's note, may be requested. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time; telephone calls or notes will not necessarily be accepted as providing valid reasons. It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after younger children, day trips, hairdresser's appointments, etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which take place during school time. Parents and pupils should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours wherever possible.

### **2. Absence without Notification**

If a pupil is absent at morning registration and the school has not received an explanation for the absence by 9.15 a.m. the school will contact the parent/carer by telephone to ascertain the reason for absence.

### **3. Lateness**

Pupils must attend on time to be given a mark for that session unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents are expected to ensure that pupils are present at registration. A late mark is awarded if arrival is after 9.00am but the register is still open. If the pupil arrives at school late when the register has already closed, an unauthorised mark is awarded.

### **4. Attendance**

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

98-100	Excellent
96-98	Good attendance at this level will ensure your child is enjoying and achieving along with their peers
92 – 95%	This level of attendance will now be impacting your child's learning. You should now be working with the school to improve this attendance.
90 – 92%	Poor – The cumulative effect of this level of absence will now impact on your child's overall levels at SATS and up to GCSE.
87 – 90% or below	Unacceptable – Your child is now falling into 'Persistent absence'. This is of serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and may lead to your prosecution for failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. The school will start not to authorise all absence and you may have to provide medical evidence for absence due to illness.

Children's attendance will be monitored and any patterns of absence will be monitored. The school will always work closely with parents/carers and children to support attendance at school. If attendance drops below 96% or 7 sessions a term an initial first letter will be sent to the parents.

If attendance does not improve then a second letter will be sent, warning of the impact more absence will affect learning and achievement. Parents will be asked if there is an ongoing medical condition as it may be appropriate to involve the school nurse.

If there is a third the school will not authorise absence without further medical evidence we will refer it to the Local authority.

**From 1 September 2013** these charges will be:

- . £60 fine (per parent, per child) if paid within 21 days
- . £120 fine (per parent, per child) if paid after the 21 days but before 28 days

Parents may wish to contact the SIDO themselves to ask for help or information. The SIDO is independent of the school and will give impartial advice. The telephone number is available from the school or by contacting the LA.

***Inclusion and Equality Statement***

Our school values of inspire, nurture, celebrate and dream reflect our ethos of valuing individuality and diversity. We are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of gender, race, cultural background, ability, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or any physical or sensory disability. We believe that all pupils have a right to experience a real environment in which they can learn that people are not all the same. We believe that inclusion and equality is about the school fitting in around the child.

Signed .....

Dated .....

Review date .....

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## TERM TIME ABSENCE AUTHORISATION – PARENTAL REQUEST FORM

The regulations concerning authorised absences during term time have been tightened significantly through 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. The purpose of the new regulation is to 'clarify that leave of absence shall not be granted by schools unless there are "exceptional circumstance".'

### **In practice the changes mean that:**

- Head teachers are not allowed to authorise absences during term time for family holidays in any circumstances.
- The 10 day per annum discretionary guidance for absence has been withdrawn.
- Head teachers may only authorise term time absence for an exceptional, once in a lifetime event and any application must be received 10 days prior to the event. Such an event could be for example a parent's wedding or a close family funeral. It cannot, however, be anything that could be viewed as recreational or a holiday.

### **I am requesting a leave of absence for my child/ren**

Name of child/children..... Class.....

For the following reasons:

Dates of Absence from ..... to ..... Total number of days or part days.....

I have read the information above. Signed.....

Please PRINT name..... Date.....

### **SCHOOL RESPONSE**

The school has authorised/ not authorised your request.....Date:.....

### **Warning:**

A fixed penalty notice may be issued by the Local Authority if you choose to take unauthorised term time leave of absence.

Each parent may be liable to a penalty of £60 (per child) if paid within 21 days and £120 (per child) if paid after 21 days but before 28 days.



## **LETTER 1**

Dear Parents,

The local authority have recently visited school and completed an audit of children's attendance. We have been advised to write to you to make you aware that ..... attendance is .....

Attendance that falls below 96% starts to have an impact on children's education and research shows that children who attend school regularly are likely to be more successful. A pupil who misses a day of school a week misses an equivalent of almost a whole year in their compulsory school life. This obviously leads to gaps in their knowledge that become difficult to fill.

As stated in our Attendance and Punctuality policy we will continue to monitor ....'s attendance. I understand that illness and family circumstances can lead to absence from school and we want to work with families to ensure that the children are only absent from school when really necessary.

If you wish to come and discuss this matter further then please book an appointment through the office.

Yours sincerely,

J. Exton  
Headteacher

# Uppingham Church of England Primary School



Mrs J Exton Headteacher, Uppingham C.E. Primary School, Uppingham, Rutland, LE15 9RT  
Tel and Fax: 01572 823245 email: [office@uppingham.rutland.sch.uk](mailto:office@uppingham.rutland.sch.uk) [www.uppinghamprimary.co.uk](http://www.uppinghamprimary.co.uk)

## **LETTER 2**

To the parents of .....

Dear Parents

According to our records ..... attendance is .....%

The school attendance policy explains that:

98% - 100%	Excellent
96% - 98%	Good
92% - 95%	This level of attendance will now be impacting on your child's learning.
90%- 92%	Poor - attendance at this level has a significant impact on learning.
Below 90%	This is termed 'persistent absence' which is a serious concern.

We will be monitoring ..... attendance and I must point out if attendance does not improve we will start to not authorise absence and you may have to provide medical evidence for absence due to illness. We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are difference and we work in partnership with parents.

Pupil's wellbeing is very important to us and we believe that regular attendance through the year is essential. Failure to attend school has a real impact on a child's education.

If you wish to come and discuss this matter more fully then please book an appointment through the office.

Mrs Exton  
Head Teacher

# Uppingham Church of England Primary School



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## LETTER 3

To the parents of .....

Dear Parents,

We have previously written to you regarding ..... attendance and I am concerned that records show attendance levels are now ..... We hope that by bringing this to your attention you can support your child and the school to ensure increased school attendance.

The school attendance policy explains that:

98% - 100%	Excellent
96% - 98%	Good
92% - 95%	This level of attendance will now be impacting on your child's learning.
90%- 92%	Poor - attendance at this level has a significant impact on learning.
Below 90%	This is termed 'persistent absence' which is a serious concern.

As explained in our previous letter we are unable to authorise any more absence for ..... If they are ill we ask that you provide medical evidence for why they are unable to attend school and this will be authorised. Medical evidence can include prescription medicine, copies of doctor appointments on paper or screen shots However if there is no evidence then it will be an unauthorised absence.

If you wish to come and discuss this matter more fully then please book an appointment through the office.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Exton  
Head Teacher