



Whole School Attendance Policy

Issued: October 2018

Date of Review: October 2021

Headteacher: Russell Leigh

Chair of Governors: Robin Bennett

Dorchester, St Birinus CE Primary School is committed to providing a full and effective education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

The School will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and reports to parents.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and the Dorchester, St. Birinus CE Primary School's attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or at the afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (/ \), unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) [attendance out of school].

Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.50 am. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes.

Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.

In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at 1.00 pm.
The afternoon registers will close at 1.15 pm

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.

Parents/carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day of absence. This must be followed up in writing to explain the reason for the absence. If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised.

Medical Appointments

When making medical appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible. Medical appointments must be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

First Day Absence

Parents/carers are required to report their child's absence by telephone before 9.15 am. (A message may be left on the school's answerphone). This information will be passed onto the relevant class teacher and it will be entered into the attendance register.

Should a child be absent from the class at the time of registration with no explanation received, the class teacher or class based teaching assistant will inform the office before the end of the registration period.

The School Administrator will telephone the parent/carer for an explanation. If the parent/carer is still unavailable, the office administrator will telephone named contacts from the child's data file.

Third Day Absence

Should a child still be absent from school with no explanation, a standard letter will be sent to the parent/carers asking them to contact the school immediately. A home visit may be organised to check on the welfare of the child if necessary.

Continuing Absence

Should a child still be absent from school with no explanation, a further letter will be sent to the parent/carers asking them to contact the school immediately. In some circumstances, the school will contact the LCSS or MASH team to discuss the welfare of the child.

Ten Day's Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the County Attendance Team. (*This is a legal requirement*).

The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the office administrator to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents/carers

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring, parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward. At this point a parenting contract might be advisable, and will be drawn up in consultation with the County Attendance Team.

Penalty Notices and Legal Action

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

- a) To his age, ability and aptitude and
 - b) To any Special needs he may have.
- Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school is contained within this Act.

Part VI Section 444 contains the detail of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a referral to The County Attendance Team to issue a fine or take further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/ Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period
- they allow their child to take holiday in term time without the school's authorisation
- they fail to return their child to school on an agreed date after an extended holiday
- their child persistently arrives late for school after the registration is closed

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

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absenteeism mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

Persistent absentee (PA) pupils are tracked and monitored carefully and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance Team and could also be referred to them. If, necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including: parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

Leave of Absence

The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence in question.

The Headteacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted. Parents/Carers who remove their children from school without authorisation or do not return their child to school on the agreed date following an authorised period of absence, may face a Penalty Notice Warning which could lead to a fine/prosecution (see Penalty Notices and Legal Action above)

Attendance Awards

The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance/Punctuality.

- Pupils with 100% attendance will be identified and a certificate of attendance will be posted home at the end of Term 3 (February).
- At the end of the school year, pupils achieving the school target or better will be identified and a certificate of attendance will awarded in assembly at the end of Term 6 (July).
- Classes with no late marks each week are recorded in the newsletter

Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year.

The attendance targets for Dorchester, St Birinus CE Primary School are:

2018 - 2019 = 97%

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

Register Security

The registers are securely safely on the schools Integris system.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Categorisation of Absence

Attendance Codes

/\	Present at registration
B	Education off site (not dual registration)
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)
D	Dual registered (i.e. present at another school or at a PRU)
E	Excluded but no alternative provision made
F	Agreed extended family holiday
G	Family holiday (not agreed or sessions in excess of agreement)
H	Agreed family holiday
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late but arrived before registers closed
M	Medical or dental appointment
N	No reason for the absence provided
O	Other unauthorised (not covered by other codes or descriptions)
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work Experience (not work based training)
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age children
Y	Partial and forced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll yet
#	School closed to all pupils

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration