



OCKLYNGE SCHOOL POLICY COVER SHEET

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Lead Governor if applicable	
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Chair of Governing Body signature	
Purpose	
Supporting documents if applicable	

OCKLYNGE COUNTY JUNIOR SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Principles

This policy has been prepared with reference to the East Sussex County Council's Model Policy Circular 099/2010, Guidance on Term Holidays Circular 2013 and the Education Act 1996 Section 4441 - failing to ensure regular attendance and 4441a knowingly failing to ensure regular attendance at school.

Good levels of attendance are a priority at Ocklynge Junior School. We consider good attendance to be 96% or above. It is vital that children attend regularly if they are to have access to the curriculum and achieve their full potential. The school has a legal duty to promote attendance and to publish its absence figures.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Any issues regarding regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is unacceptable 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. It is recognised that children who do not attend school regularly are liable to become disaffected and may be drawn in to anti-social activities.

We record morning and afternoon attendance. Non-attendance is classified as authorised or unauthorised. We will follow up any cases of concern and attempt to resolve any issues with the co-operation of the parents.

Parental Responsibility

The responsibilities for ensuring children attend school regularly and punctually rest with parents.

Parents are asked to ensure their children arrive at school from 8.40 a.m. ready to begin school at 8.50 a.m. If a child arrives after 8.50am they must report to reception and pick up a registration card. If a child

arrives late this is recorded. If they arrive before 9.10am it is recorded as late (L). If they arrive after 9.10 it is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U). If the lateness becomes persistent the circumstances are investigated and followed up with parents as appropriate. If the lateness still continues, the school may choose to begin recording 'late' arrival as an 'unauthorised absence' at an earlier time than 9.10am. Parents would be informed at this stage. After 10 such unauthorised absences the matter would be referred to the East Sussex, Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS).

Initial Response to Absenteeism

It is expected that parents will contact the school before the start of the first day of absence by leaving a message on the absence phone line clearly stating the child's name, class and reason for the absence. When a pupil does not arrive at school and there has been no message from the parents, concern about the welfare of the pupil will necessitate immediate contact with the home. In the first instance a text message will be sent to the parent informing of their child's absence and requesting parent's contact the school by 10.00am. If we get no response to this text within a reasonable time frame, manual telephone calls will be made in order to ascertain the reason for absence and to ensure the safety of the child. If contact fails to be made the attendance administrator will discuss the next steps with senior management. This may result in a letter being sent or a home visit.

Procedures The School will take in the event of Attendance Concerns

If we are concerned about a child's attendance we will initiate one or more of the following actions.

- Send letter of concern stating attendance statistics
- Discuss situation with parents, which may involve an initial informal meeting with the school and ESBAS.
- Ask for medical evidence regarding certain absences.eg letter from doctor/medical certificate.
- If no improvement is seen the school will make a referral to ESBAS at the Local Education Authority, who will also attempt to resolve the situation but may also seek to use court proceedings to prosecute parents, or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty is a fine of £2500, 3 months imprisonment and a criminal record.

Withdrawal from learning in term time

There is not an entitlement for parents to remove their child from school during term time. However, in exceptional circumstances parents can request to remove their child for a special event or other reasons. All such requests must be made on the school's official 'Withdrawal from learning request' at least 14 days before the proposed departure date.

The 'exceptional circumstances' must be clearly stated on the form. Governors have agreed that lower costs/cheaper fares etc. for holidays will **not** be accepted as an 'exceptional circumstance'.

The form must be returned to the school office at least ten days before the start date of the requested withdrawal from learning. Returning the form does not guarantee that a request will be approved.

The Head Teacher or his representative have the authority (through current legislation) to decide whether or not to authorise the absence.

The following will be taken into account when making a decision:-

- The reasons given for the absence.
- Whether the child will miss any preparations for tests and exams.
- The child's previous attendance record, including any patterns of absence.

By signing the form, parents are confirming they understand the following:-

- If a child is removed for a family holiday, the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised' in the register. The school are required to report this absence to ESBAS who will issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school. A penalty notice is a fine of £60 increasing to £120 if not paid within 28 days. If this penalty remains unpaid this may result in legal action.
- A child who is removed for a prolonged period in term time, other than for sickness, will miss a large amount of school work and will be unprepared for the work on returning to school.
- The school cannot guarantee that staff will be able to spend time helping the child to catch up on work missed during the absence.
- Asking for extra work to do at home may not be appropriate as the child may have missed the initial teaching.

S.Knights

June 2016

ATTENDANCE POLICY - NOTES FOR PARENTS

The regular attendance of a child at school is the responsibility of the parents or guardians.

1. Children are expected to arrive at school between 8.40 a.m. and 8.50 a.m. Children arriving after that time will be marked as late.
2. Notification of the reason for a child's absence is expected before the start of the first day and should be followed by a further call to the school on subsequent days unless the length of absence is clear to the school.
3. If the school does not receive any notification regarding a child's absence, parents will receive a text message or phone call that morning to seek clarification.
4. When a child is absent for longer than a week it is expected that the parents will notify the school regularly by letter of the continuing reasons for an absence and provide medical evidence if appropriate.
5. Any level of absence falling below 90% is considered to be persistent absence and the school must complete a weekly return to East Sussex County Council highlighting those pupils. For persistent absentees, the school may request a doctor's certificate or letter before any absence is authorised.
6. When Senior Leaders have concerns about a child's attendance they may refer the child to the East Sussex Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS) contact.
7. There is an absence form which should be used when parents wish to request 'authorised withdrawal from learning'. Please note that absence in term time is only authorised in very exceptional cases, and all other cases will receive a fine.

If you have any other queries about registration and attendance please contact the school office.

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