

Ursula Taylor Church of England School



Attendance Policy

Attendance Managers:

Mrs V Morrall

Miss D Daley

Attendance

At Ursula Taylor C of E School we encourage our children to attend school for 190 days a year. We believe that regular and committed attendance is essential for our children to achieve the best possible outcomes and to experience a full and rewarding education. At UTS we work within the Government issued guidelines and alongside the Local Authority Educational Welfare Officer. As an academy, we are responsible for procuring our own external services in relation to attendance support. We have taken the decision to buy back the services of the Local Authority Educational Welfare Officer, firstly to ensure our policy and procedures are in line with other local schools and secondly, to ensure we are meeting all expected requirements. Parents/Carers have been made aware of their responsibilities regarding attendance through regular newsletters and our Home School agreement.

Principles

- UTS makes all pupils feel valued and promotes positive attitudes to all children, including those returning to school following a period of absence
- Staff ensure that they understand and follow attendance requirements and guidelines
- The Attendance Managers monitor attendance on a half termly basis or more frequently if required. The Educational Welfare Officer visits termly to review attendance across the school
- If a child has dropped below satisfactory levels the Headteacher will write to the parents requesting a meeting regarding their child's attendance
- A meeting with parents may be requested by the Educational Welfare Officer if a child's attendance is low and does not improve

- The Attendance Managers compile attendance data on a monthly basis for each year group and as a whole school. Targets may be set to ensure the highest possible figures
- Attendance figures are reported to Parents/Carers at the end of the year as part of the reporting to parent's process.
- Children are expected to attend school for 190 days of the year. Absence from school falls into two categories:
 - 1.) Authorised (where the school approves pupil absence) Authorised absence includes: illness, medical/hospital appointments and authorised leave of absence
 - 2.) Unauthorised (where the school does not approve pupil absence)
- If a pupil is absent, parents/carers should call the school on the first day of the absence stating a reason for the absence. This is the required procedure for each day of the child's absence.
- If a child is absent and there has been no contact made by the parents/carers then Miss Daley or Mrs Morrall will contact parents by telephone to determine where the child is and why they are not at school. This will be done during the morning of the child's unexplained absence.
- Any days where absence is unexplained will result in the absence being recorded as 'unauthorised'
- If there is an occurrence of unexplained absence for a period of three days a letter will be sent to parents

All attendance is recorded on our computerised information system by Miss Daley.

Children with either 99% or 100% attendance will be recognised in the Summer Term with a certificate of excellent attendance.

Miss Daley meets regularly with Mrs Morrall, the Headteacher, to analyse and discuss attendance. This meeting will coincide with the Educational Welfare Officer visits and the outcome of the meeting will be reported to the Governing Body in the Head's report.

Completing the daily register

Completing the class registers is of utmost importance. Accurate registers are essential and must be maintained to the highest standard. Registers are legal documents that may be called upon for evidence in a court of law.

Registers must be marked in ink and clearly show if children are present or not.

Codings must be used to demonstrate what type of absence is present if applicable.

The register must be completed as follows:

- Black or blue diagonal line to denote presence
- Red circle to denote absence
- Red circle must be filled with an appropriate code to demonstrate reason for absence

- Tippex must not be used, mistakes must be annotated accordingly and initialled
- Weekly / termly headings must be completed
- Data from the class register to be entered onto the Computerised Information System (SIMs) weekly.

Request for absence during Term time.

At UTS we abide by the guidelines detailed by the DfE regarding Leave of Absence during Term time. Requests for absence will be denied unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. This authorisation of Holiday Leave is entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher. Parents are requested to inform the Headteacher in writing about request for leave, at least 4 weeks in advance of the absence. The Headteacher will consider each case separately and the Attendance Manager, Miss Daley, will inform the parents of the decision in writing.

Holiday absence will only be granted if:

- deemed exceptional
- the child/ren concerned have a high level of attendance generally
- If the request is based around parents working holiday allowance, a letter from the parents' employer is provided as supporting evidence.

The Bedford Borough Website has further details:

http://www.bedford.gov.uk/education_and_learning/education_welfare_service/school_attendance_and_the_law/leave_of_absence_in_term_time.aspx

An important section to note is;

"Each school has a policy on granting leave of absence. A Headteacher can only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Schools will take into account Government guidance when considering what exceptional circumstances are. **Leave of absence requests for the following reasons are not considered to be exceptional circumstances:**

- availability of cheap holidays,
- availability of the desired accommodation,
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods,
- periods overlapping with beginning or end of term."

Fixed Penalty Notices

At UTS we have been advised by the Educational Welfare Officer to impose fixed penalty notices if a child has 5 or more consecutive days out of school due to unauthorised absence. We have taken the decision, at this stage, to introduce a warning letter system to parents/carers taking their children out of school for the purposes of holiday leave. As of January 1st 2015 any parent taking their child/ren out of school for a period of 5 days or more of unauthorised absence will receive a

letter from the Headteacher warning them that if there is a reoccurrence of the unauthorised absence that the school **will** apply to the Local Authority for a fixed penalty notice to be served.

Lateness

At UTS the school day begins at 8:45am when the doors to Foundation Stage and onto the playground are opened. All children are expected to go straight to their classroom and begin the day with the 'Busy' task set up for them by their teacher.

In Foundation Stage, the team is available for parents to talk to and relay messages to. Year 1 to 4 children enter school on their own. Messages can be delivered to class teachers through Mrs Proctor, our Parent Link Staff member or Mrs Morrall, when available on the playground.

The register is taken at 8:55am and children are deemed late if their register has been completed and returned to the school office. This is typically by 9:05am at the latest. Children who are late to school are marked with a 'L' code. The number of late marks is considered at the attendance review meeting and parents are contacted if the lateness is deemed to be an issue or a recurring problem.

Attendance Evaluation

The following will be considered at the Attendance Review Meeting:

- Individual/class/year group and whole school attendance
- Children below 90% attendance
- Children below 85% - Persistent absenteeism
- EWO recommendations - review of progress to date
- Has the attendance / punctuality of the children been maintained or improved?
- Has the attendance / punctuality of the children causing concern improved?
- Has the school met its targets for attendance?
- Has the school maintained the high profile of attendance?
- Do parents understand the importance of systems for regular and prompt attendance?
- Has the school contacted parents regarding issues relating to absence?
- Has a referral been made to the EWO where necessary?

The Attendance Managers meet once a term and report to the Governing Body at least three times yearly.

Children Missing from Education

A child/ren is deemed 'Missing from Education' if they have been absent from school for 10 days and the school has been unable to make contact with the parents/carers. The school will use all contact information available to them and make every effort to determine the whereabouts of the missing child.

If a child/ren has been missing and uncontactable, Miss Daley or Mrs Morrall will contact the Educational Welfare Officer to report the missing child/ren using the 'Missing Child Referral Form'. If there are Child protection concerns, the school will inform the EWO at the earliest opportunity.

This referral invokes the Educational Welfare Officer to begin Missing Child procedures and contact the Child Missing from Education Officer. (More details relating to Children Missing from Education are available on the Bedford Borough Website.

http://www.bedford.gov.uk/education_and_learning/education_welfare_service/children_missing_education.aspx

Removing a Child from Roll

Children may only be removed from the school roll in the following circumstances:

- Child leaves our school and we receive confirmation of attendance at another school. Confirmation is only acceptable from the Headteacher or Office Manager
- Looked after Child is relocated to another Local Authority and we receive confirmation in writing from Social Care to confirm attendance at another school.
- At the request of the Education Welfare Officer; following correct procedure and protocol.

Policy written - January 2016

Review due - January 2018