



ATTENDANCE POLICY

April 2017

Aims

- To achieve an attendance target of 96% or above.
- To work closely with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor the attendance of children and respond to concerns about levels of absence promptly.
- To encourage parents not to take their children out of school during the term time.

Purpose

Orchard Park Primary School wants each and every child to have the best possible attendance at school to enable them to reach their full potential. There is a strong link between good school attendance and achieving good results for children. Children who frequently miss school may fall behind in their work which may affect their future prospects. Absence may also have an effect on friendships. Young people who are frequently absent from school are more likely to become involved in, or be a victim of crime and anti-social behaviour. At Orchard Park Community School we work closely with families to support them to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children.

Promoting Good Attendance

Good attendance will be celebrated on a weekly basis. Every Monday, pupils will be presented with a class certificate identifying their attendance percentage for the previous week. Classes will compete for the highest attendance and receive a visit from Lightning Bear as a prize. Every half term we will hold an attendance ceremony. Pupils that have achieved 100% attendance receive a certificate and a small stationery prize. Once a term, the EWO will also attend the ceremony.

For pupils below 96%, the letter will report their attendance figure and asks parents to be mindful of their child's attendance rate. In addition, parents will be offered the opportunity to talk to the Headteacher or SENCo about their child's attendance as a means of support (Appendix 2). At the end of the year, any child achieving 100% attendance wins an attendance cup. If a child achieves two years attendance at 100%, they are rewarded with a £10 book voucher at the end of year service. This prize will be increased each year that the child achieves 100%.

Our Mission Statement

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Monitoring Attendance

The Three Letter System:

Introduction:

The three-letter system is intended to enable schools and colleges continuously and consistently to monitor and address poor school attendance. The system offers schools the opportunity to target non-attendance methodically and progressively up to and including the point at which a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be necessary. The system is based on three model letters which schools can send to parents when there are concerns about any emerging patterns of absenteeism.

It is intended to apply essentially to absence which is unauthorised, but with some modification (and appropriate rewording of the letters) it might in certain circumstances be used to target patterns of absence which are authorised but which are beginning to cause concern. Schools should, however, decline to continue to authorise such absences once doubts arise as to their legitimacy.)

Key Features and Potential Benefits:

- Headteacher/SENCo can focus on the attendance of all pupils at least once a fortnight.

Headteacher/SENCo can quickly and easily identify those pupils whose attendance is becoming a cause of concern.

- In most cases Letter 1 brings about a rapid improvement in attendance and no further action is required.
 - The system provides a clear record of the school's own efforts to improve attendance should it subsequently be necessary to involve the Education Welfare Service.
 - As the Education Welfare Service 'School Attendance' leaflet is sent with Letter 2, parents are made aware of the existence and role of the Education Welfare Service prior to any subsequent involvement should this prove necessary.
 - The school can readily identify emerging attendance problems and therefore target support accordingly.
 - The school builds up a consistent record of their own attendance interventions and is able to ensure that when they do need to involve the Education Welfare Service they do this only when their own efforts have proved unsuccessful.
1. The school produces a record of attendance every fortnight for all pupils whose attendance has fallen beneath 94%.
 2. These pupils are discussed fortnightly with the EWO, looking for emerging trends and patterns. Families are targeted by the SENCo for support. A family worker is made available if lateness and attendance continues to be an issue.

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Letter 1

3. For those pupils who have been identified for the first time, a copy of **Letter 1** (Appendix 3) is sent to the parents and copied to the Education Welfare Officer.
4. Should the pupil's attendance improve but the improvement fail to be sustained, a further copy of **Letter 1** may be sent at a later date.
5. This is recorded by saving a copy of the letter in the absence letters folder on the network. The file name indicating Name, Letter Type and Date. A record of each letter sent is kept in the attendance folder for each class.

Letter 2

6. Following the sending of Letter1, should the pupil's attendance fail to improve or should it fall to a lower level, a copy of **Letter 2** (Appendix 4), together with a copy of the Education Welfare Service 'School Attendance' leaflet is sent to the parent (and copied to the Education Welfare Officer).
7. This is recorded by saving a copy of the letter in the absence letters folder on the network. The file name indicating Name, Letter Type and Date. A record of each letter sent is kept in the attendance folder for each class.

Letter 3

1. Should the pupil's attendance still fail to improve or should it fall to a lower level, then a copy of **Letter 3** (Appendix 5) is sent to the parents (and copied to the Education Welfare Officer). A record of each letter sent is kept in the attendance folder for each class.
2. The case is formally referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Should the pupil have been absent for two continuous weeks without a satisfactory explanation having been received, or should there be child protection or other immediate welfare concerns then the school may of course make an earlier referral to the Education Welfare Officer, Parent Support or Social Care. Should the child be currently involved with Social Care, the child's social worker should be notified immediately.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

Introduction

A minority of parents continue to cause disruption to their children's education by withdrawing them from school during term-time for the purpose of a family holiday. Many of these parents mistakenly believe that they have a 10-day holiday 'entitlement'. This is compounded by holiday companies offering out-of-season (i.e. outside of school holidays) bargains.

Absence during term-time as a result of term-time holidays interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in schools. Orchard Park Primary School therefore aims to discourage parents from arranging family holidays during term time.

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Whilst it is acknowledged that for some parents the issue of choosing when to arrange annual family holidays may be problematic due to particular working patterns and particular restrictions on when leave can be taken in some occupations, Orchard Park Primary School nevertheless believes that the vast and overwhelming majority of parents should be able to arrange for their annual family holiday to take place within the published dates for school holidays.

It is recognised that some parents may persist in taking their children out of school for the purposes of a family holiday regardless of the view and response of their child's school. Orchard Park Primary School intends to make a clear statement regarding the issue of term-time holidays, to positively and proactively ensure that the amount of teaching and learning time lost to term-time holidays is, as a result, minimised.

Guidance for Parents

A child does not have a 'right' or 'entitlement' to term-time leave for the purposes of an annual family holiday and that term-time leave, like all leave, can only be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Parents should understand that any request for leave of absence in term-time leave will be treated on an individual basis. Decisions to authorise absence will be based on individual family circumstances. The school will not, as a rule, agree to leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In all cases, absence will not be authorised unless the authorisation form has been completed (appendix 4) and the Headteacher deems the circumstance to be exceptional. Exceptional circumstances will not include financial restraints and making use of holiday discounts.

Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave of more than 6 consecutive sessions over a 4 week period, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice. Such cases will have to be supported by evidence of previous unauthorised term time leave (more than 6 consecutive sessions over a 4 week period) taken in the last 3 years and evidence of parents being warned about a potential Penalty Notice.

Orchard Park Primary School will communicate the details of leave of absence taken in term time through:

- the school's overall attendance policy;
- the school brochure;
- school newsletters;
- translations into community languages as necessary;
- parent induction evenings/parents' evenings.

Orchard Park Primary School will use an 'Application for Leave of Absence' form (Appendix 6). Occasionally parents take their children on holiday without requesting a leave of absence. If the school suspect that this has happened a suspected holiday letter (Appendix 7) will be sent.

School Response

Orchard Park Primary School will make clear to parents the likely educational impact upon their children if extended leave is taken during term-time. The importance of being at school near and during SATs will also be stressed.

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ORCHARD PARK COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Should absence be agreed we will consider:-

- seeking to establish, and make explicit, if appropriate, the potential educational value of the visit;
- explaining what work the child will miss in school, how it can be made up on return if necessary, and how the parents can help the child;
- asking the pupil to make notes/observations in relation to a class topic or to keep a diary;
- sharing the experience, on return, in a positive way with other children;

Should the school feel unable to comply with the request for leave the reasons for this will be explained to the parents. This explanation should show an understanding of the parents' perspective.

Persistent Lateness

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption. The school gates open at 8.50am and the registers close at 9.20am. If a child arrives at school after 9.20am this will affect their attendance rate as they were absent at registration. This applies in all cases for being late, including travel delays.

The Headteacher will meet with parents of those children who are regularly late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

If there is no improvement in punctuality then a late letter (Appendix 8) will be sent.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices will only be issued in accordance with the terms within the Code of Conduct set out for Cambridgeshire. They will only be issued in relation to absence from school, which is unauthorised. At Orchard Park, Penalty Notices will be issued to parents when their child's attendance falls below 90% over the previous 4-week period. Before issuing a Penalty Notice, the school will deploy other strategies to help the family improve attendance rates. Such strategies might include:

- writing to the child's parents to remind them of their legal responsibilities
- meeting with the child's parents;
- first day absence phone calls;
- setting targets for improvement;
- referral to the Education Welfare Officer;
- involvement of other services/agencies i.e. Red Hen or the CB4 family worker

In the first instance, school would send a warning letter via the EWO (Appendix 9). If a family continue to take leave of absence without authorisation by the Headteacher, then a Penalty Notice Letter will be issued.

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APPENDIX 1

Orchard Park Community Primary School

Headteacher Stacey Harper B Ed Hons

Ring Fort Road Orchard Park Cambridge CB4 2GR

T 01223 438200 F 01223 438209 E office@orchardpark.cambs.sch.uk



Address

Date

Dear Parents

Re: Attendance Information for «First_Name»

We are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly. As you are aware, it is important for your child's friendships and academic progress.

The school target for attendance is 96%. We are pleased to inform you that «First_Name» achieved «Percentage»% attendance for the ??? half of the 201?-201? academic year.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate both you and your child for «MeetExceed» the school target.

Yours sincerely

Stacey Harper

Miss Stacey Harper

Head Teacher



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APPENDIX 2

Orchard Park Community Primary School

Headteacher Stacey Harper B Ed Hons

Ring Fort Road Orchard Park Cambridge CB4 2GR

T 01223 438200 F 01223 438209 E office@orchardpark.cambs.sch.uk



Address

Date

Dear Parents

Re: Attendance Information for «First_Name»

We are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly. As you are aware, it is important for your child's friendships and academic progress. In addition, it is proven that good attendance is linked with academic success.

The school target for attendance is 96%. For the ??? half of the 201?-201? academic year.....'s attendance was ??% we understand that their absence maybe for a range of reasons including illness but as their attendance is below school target we feel it is important to share it with you.

If you are having difficulties in getting to school, please do not hesitate to contact the office and make an appointment to see me. We are very happy to help.

Yours sincerely

Stacey Harper

Miss Stacey Harper

Head Teacher

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APPENDIX 3

Letter 1

Orchard Park Community Primary School

Headteacher Stacey Harper B Ed Hons

Ring Fort Road Orchard Park Cambridge CB4 2GR

T 01223 438200 F 01223 438209 E office@orchardpark.cambs.sch.uk



LETTER 1 - STANDARD

DATE

NAME

ADDRESS

Dear SALUTATION,

The Education Welfare Officer, Michelle McCormick, reviewed our attendance records yesterday for the current academic year. She noted that <PREFERREDFORENAME>'S attendance is currently only X%. Please find attached a copy of <PREFERREDFORENAME>'S attendance record for your information. If the absence is due to medical reasons, please ensure we have relevant doctor's notes and appointment details.

I am sure you are aware that it is important that <PREFERREDFORENAME> maintains regular attendance, as any absence may interrupt HIS/HER academic progress and may have an effect on friendships. You should also be aware that regular attendance is a legal requirement.

Please note that the Education Welfare Officer comes into school on a fortnightly basis to look at our attendance. She will challenge the school to improve the attendance of any pupil who falls below 96%.

If there are any particular circumstances that we may not be aware of which are having an influence on <PREFERREDFORENAME> attending school regularly, or if you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to speak to Mrs Bridges or myself.

We will continue to monitor <PREFERREDFORENAME>'S attendance and we look forward to seeing an improvement. Please find attached a leaflet to explain the importance of school attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Stacey Harper

Headteacher

cc Education Welfare Officer

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APPENDIX 4

Letter 2

Orchard Park Community Primary School

Headteacher Stacey Harper B Ed Hons

Ring Fort Road Orchard Park Cambridge CB4 2GR

T 01223 438200 F 01223 438209 E office@orchardpark.cambs.sch.uk

LETTER 2 (EWO Mtg)



DATE

Dear SALUTATION,

I am writing to inform you that <PreferredForename>'s attendance is still causing concern. We are very worried that continued poor attendance is affecting <PreferredForename>'s progress and we would like to meet with you.

Should <PreferredForename>'s attendance remain irregular; the Local Authority may be requested to take more formal action. This could result in a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under **Section 444 Education Act 1996, and a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.**

The Education Welfare Officer, Michelle McCormick, has requested that you attend a meeting to discuss <PreferredForename>'s attendance. She will be visiting Orchard Park on **DATE** and wishes to meet with you at **TIME**.

During the meeting, we will discuss any concerns you may have, so we can continue to support <PreferredForename> in making good progress and I hope that you will work with us to improve HIS/HER attendance. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Stacey Harper

Headteacher

cc Education Welfare Officer

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APPENDIX 5

Letter 3 - Referral to EWO

Orchard Park Community Primary School

Headteacher Stacey Harper B Ed Hons

Ring Fort Road Orchard Park Cambridge CB4 2GR

T 01223 438200 F 01223 438209 E office@orchardpark.cambs.sch.uk



Address

Date

Dear Parent

I note that there has been no significant improvement in <pupil's name> attendance since <date>. <Pupil's name> attendance for this academic year has fallen to...%. Furthermore I have not received any satisfactory explanation for <pupil's name> absences.

It has now become necessary to refer <pupil's name> and the concerns around his/her attendance to the Education Welfare Service. An Education Welfare Officer will contact you in due course.

Should you have anything you wish to discuss concerning this matter, I will continue to be available. Please contact me on the above number should you require an appointment.

Yours sincerely

Stacey Harper

Stacey Harper
Headteacher

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APPENDIX 6

Orchard Park Community Primary School

Headteacher Stacey Harper B Ed Hons

Ring Fort Road Orchard Park Cambridge CB4 2GR

T 01223 438200 F 01223 438209 E office@orchardpark.cambs.sch.uk



Application for Leave of Absence from School During Term Time

Please read the following information very carefully

You are strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have any right or entitlement to take their child out of school for a term time holiday. Following government guidelines, we can only grant leave for exceptional circumstances. Please note that unauthorised leave of absence could result in legal action and a Penalty Notice being issued.

A Penalty Notice involves a fine of £60, per parent/carer, per child if paid with 21 days, rising to £120, per child, per parent/carer if paid within 28 days. Parents/carers who fail to pay the fine will be liable to prosecution in a Magistrates Court where upon conviction, a fine of up to £2,500 or three month sentence may be served.

Please note that all unauthorised absences are monitored by the school and the Education Welfare Officer. Persistent unauthorised absence will result in the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer and possible legal proceedings.

Applications to the Headteacher for term time holiday will be considered individually using criteria as detailed in our Attendance policy.

Requests for leave of absence in term time will be returned to you by the Headteacher and if your request is not authorised you shall be informed of the reasons why.

I hereby request that (name of pupil) be granted leave of absence from school.

From (date) to (date) inclusive.

For the purpose of

Signed

Please state relationship to child

Address

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APPENDIX 7

Suspected Holiday Letter

Orchard Park Community Primary School

Headteacher Stacey Harper B Ed Hons

Ring Fort Road Orchard Park Cambridge CB4 2GR

T 01223 438200 F 01223 438209 E office@orchardpark.cambs.sch.uk



Date
Address

Dear Parent/Carer

I am writing with regards to <pupil's name> absence from school from <date> to <date>.

From information received from other sources, we believe that the absence was due to a family holiday. This means that you have not followed the correct procedure for requesting leave of absence during term time. Please note that we understand that for a range of reasons, families are compelled to book a holiday in term time. However, Government guidelines indicate that leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. We urge that families are truthful regarding their intentions.

We would be grateful if you could confirm the reason for the absence within 7 days of the date of this letter so this period can be recorded appropriately on the attendance register. However, if the absence was not due to a family holiday and it was due to illness, please provide medical evidence to support this.

If we do not hear from you within the next 7 days, <pupil's name> absence will be recorded as 'G' denoting an unauthorised family holiday.

If unauthorised absences are recorded a Penalty Notice can be issued by the Local Authority to each parent/carers in respect of each child who is absent from school. However, if a Penalty Notice is not issued, your child's attendance will be monitored and this, along with any further unauthorised absences, would be discussed with you which may lead to legal action being taken under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 if the attendance fails to improve.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Stacey Harper'.

Stacey Harper
Headteacher

cc Education Welfare Officer

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APPENDIX 8

Late Letter

Orchard Park Community Primary School

Headteacher Stacey Harper B Ed Hons

Ring Fort Road Orchard Park Cambridge CB4 2GR
T 01223 438200 F 01223 438209 E office@orchardpark.cambs.sch.uk



Date
Address

Dear Parent/Carer

Re: Child Name: xxx **DOB:** xxx

I have noted during a recent attendance review that your child continues to show a pattern of persistent lateness.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

If you are experiencing any difficulties regarding your child's education, I would welcome the opportunity of meeting with you to discuss this.

Please note that if your child arrives after registers close this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being considered.

Yours sincerely

Stacey Harper
Headteacher

Cc Education Welfare Officer

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APPENDIX 9
Penalty Warning Letter

My ref:
Your ref:

Date: ???? r 2014

Contact: Michelle McCormick
Direct dial: 01223729073
E Mail:



Children, Families and Adult Services
Executive Director: Adrian Loades

Education Welfare Officer
North Locality Team
Res1402
Babbage House,
Castle Hill
Cambridge
CB3 0AT

Tel: 01223 728580

Re: dob: School: Orchard Park Primary School

As the Attendance Officer for Orchard Park Primary School, it has been brought to my attention that ?????????? has been absent from school for ? sessions this school year/over the previous ??? weeks. I enclose a record of ???'s attendance.

As parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under **Section 444 of the Education Act 1996**, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually.

With effect from September 2015 schools have been advised by the government's Department for Education (DfE) that the Persistent Absence (PA) threshold will be reduced to 10%. Until this date it has been 15%.

This means that if a child/young person has an overall attendance of 90% or less over a given period, they will be classified as a persistent absentee pupil.

I am therefore writing to inform you that if attendance fails to improve during the next (4) weeks, the case may be referred to Cambridgeshire County Council for a Penalty Notice fine to be issued.

Yours sincerely

Michelle McCormick
Education Welfare Officer

Enc. Record of Attendance
 School Attendance Leaflet

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