

Worlingham CEVC Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

*Like a tree firmly planted by streams of living water we will grow
in knowledge, love, faith and wisdom. Based on Psalm 1:3*



At Worlingham CEVC Primary School we acknowledge the clear links between:

- Attendance and attainment and
- Attendance and Safeguarding children.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with Suffolk County Council document 'Guidance for Schools on the law relating to school attendance and pupil registration'.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is:

- To promote good attendance of pupils at our school.
- To make explicit our registration procedures.
- To clarify absence which can be authorised and that which cannot and remains unauthorised.

School Register

Worlingham CEVC Primary School maintains an Online SIMS.NET electronic register and a hard copy printed on a weekly basis by the Office Administrator.

Marking the Register

Registration is an important part of the school day. We acknowledge attendance registers are legal documents and all staff undertake to mark them accurately. Staff recognise the potential that they could have to be produced as evidence in court.

Morning registration is viewed as a time to welcome the children and help prepare them for the day ahead, as well as an opportunity to explain any changes to the day's usual routines.

Registers at Worlingham CEVC Primary School are called at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions (8.50am and 1.00pm & 1.30pm respectively). Registers are closed 10 minutes after the start of each session and recorded electronically by the Class Teacher.

Office staff enter electronically (SIMS.NET) any reasons for absence that have been notified by parents. If the school has not been notified, then office staff will phone the parents after 10.00am the same day.

The attendance register shows a record of each session, of whether pupils are present, absent or attending an approved educational activity.

The register shows whether or not absence is authorised. Absence is unauthorised unless or until a satisfactory reason is given.

Categorisation of Absence

Parents are reminded, at the new intake meetings and in the school's prospectus, to let the school know as soon as possible if their child will be absent from school. We prefer parents to phone the school as soon as possible if their child is ill so staff are aware of the reason for absence. We also welcome a letter confirming absence when the child returns to school. All registers are monitored daily and The Office Administrator will contact parents through a phone call on the first morning of an absence to ascertain why their child is not in attendance at school.

As previously stated we recognise the clear links between attendance and both attainment and safeguarding.

Authorised Absence

Absence is authorised where the school has either given approval in advance or where it has subsequently accepted the reason for a child's absence.

Nationally, schools are expected to authorise term-time absence only in the most exceptional circumstances. Headteacher discretion relates to exceptional circumstances. These are defined as:

- ✚ Illness.
- ✚ A specific event of religious observance.
- ✚ Attendance at a medical or dental appointment.
- ✚ A child who is excluded from school.
- ✚ The funeral of a parent, grandparent or sibling.
- ✚ Sudden Loss of housing (up to a maximum of 3 days).
- ✚ Wedding day of a parent or sibling.
- ✚ Serious illness of a close relative.
- ✚ Seasonal farm work.
- ✚ Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting or about to go on active deployment abroad.

Absence through illness is authorised by the Headteacher at his discretion. In our school we will monitor absence through illness of individual pupils assisted by statistics provided to the school by the Education Welfare Service. In cases of frequent or continuous absence the Headteacher will maintain close partnership with the child's family, as a feature of our school's ethos and positive partnership with parents.

If the school is of the opinion that sickness does not justify the absence, a doctor's note may be requested as evidence. Any absence which the school feels may need investigation by the Education Welfare Officers, would be unauthorised absence.

In the instances of children being absent due to their cultural beliefs, such as travellers' children, the school will follow the guidance set out by Suffolk County Council and the DfE attendance regulations.

Unauthorised Absence

If a parent provides no explanation, or the school is not satisfied with the explanation given, then the absence is not authorised. This would include pupil absence for unexceptional reasons.

Approved Educational Activity

In such cases pupils may be counted as present if attending another educational establishment for a session. For example, a child attending a Pupil Referral Unit one day a week.

Registration Codes

The school uses the LA recommended codes. All staff with responsibility for marking registers are fully conversant with the codes. The same codes are used consistently in each of our classes.

Registering Part-time Attendance

Part-time children in our Reception class are marked for the sessions they attend.

Registering Lateness

Registers remain open for 10 minutes after the beginning of registration time. Children arriving late have to enter our school by the office. They are recorded on SIMS.NET as late arrivals.

Family Holidays

Family holidays will be marked as an unauthorised absence. After 6 cumulative sessions (from September 2015) of unauthorised absence in any academic year, a penalty notice referral is submitted to the Head of the Education Service for further action.

Second and subsequent unauthorised term time holidays/absences may be referred to the Local Authority for legal action. In these cases an Education Welfare Officer will be asked to investigate and will decide with the school what the best course of action should be.

All requests for absence are looked at on an individual basis. Any other authorised absence would be at the Headteacher's discretion.

Should a parent wish to take their child out of school in term time, a leave of absence request form should be completed and directed to the Headteacher.

Parents are advised that 'Leave of Absence' during key assessment periods will not be authorised.

If the Headteacher does not grant absence and the pupil has time away from school, the absence will be unauthorised.

Corrections to the Register

Where a register has to be corrected to authorise an absence which was originally unauthorised, the correction should be made by the person with responsibility for completing the register or by the school office.

Removal from the School Roll

Procedures are followed in accordance with the instructions within 'Guidance for Schools'.

The Headteacher will make immediate contact with the Education Welfare Officer if:

- A parent says his/her child will be transferring schools but fails to name the new school.
- A Pupil 'disappears' from the area without explanation.
- A pupil fails to return to school after the agreed date for a holiday taken in term time.

Dual Registration

Worlingham CEVC Primary School notes the advice given in the 'Guidance for Schools' regarding pupils registered at two or more schools.

Returns

We will notify the Education Welfare Service of any child who:

- Fails to attend school regularly (unless a medical certificate confirming sickness is received).
- Is absent for more than 15% of sessions during the preceding four week period.

When a pupil's name has been deleted from the register, the school will notify the LA within 10 days.

Inspection of Registers

The attendance registers are available for inspection by authorised personnel during school hours.

(V6) JUNE 2020