



Ottery St Mary Primary School

# Ottery St Mary Primary School

## Whole School Attendance Policy

**May 2021**



Ottery St Mary Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We 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.

### **Why Attendance Matters**

Regular attendance helps students to make good progress and enjoy learning. We consider pupil attendance to be the joint responsibility of parents/carers and the schools. Being at school is a very important part of any young person's life. It enables them to learn, to make friends and to gain the knowledge and skills that will prepare them for a successful adult life. School and parents/carers are partners in making this happen. As parents/carers it is your responsibility to make sure that your child makes the most of this opportunity by ensuring a high level of attendance is maintained.

The school is required by law to record and publish rates of absence to include unauthorised absence. It is therefore imperative that registers are accurately marked and unexplained absences are investigated.

### **What Constitutes Good Attendance?**

97% is expected attendance. This still equates to six days absence a year.

90% attendance. This equates to six months absence over 5 years.

80% attendance. This equates to one year of absence over 5 years.

### **Persistent Absence/Suspicious Absence**

If attendance is persistent or suspicious, contact will be made with parents/carers outlining the importance of good attendance and offering support. Attendance is monitored and if attendance dips below the following thresholds the necessary protocols will be followed.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Devon 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 afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (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 9am. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence 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 authorized absence code will be entered.

The afternoon registration will be at 1.15pm The registers will close at 1.30pm

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 before registers close.

**First Day Absence** On the first day of a child's absence from school, parent(s)/carer(s) are asked to contact the school on the dedicated absence line (01404-815780) or email [absence@ottery-primary.devon.sch.uk](mailto:absence@ottery-primary.devon.sch.uk) by 9.30am. If nothing is received by that time the School Office will contact the parent(s)/carer(s) to ascertain the reason for the absence. The absence will then be recorded on the class register. If an email or text message is received, the office staff will follow this up with a phone call as part of our safeguarding practice.

**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 Educational Welfare Office. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

**Frequent Absence** It is the responsibility of the class teacher 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. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Health Adviser if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the school's Educational Welfare Officer.

**Absence information** Information received from parents explaining absences will be kept in line with data retention and GDPR requirements.

**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.

**Holidays in term time** The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorize a future avoidable absence. However, before the school can authorize any such requests, we must satisfy ourselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. A cheaper holiday is not seen as an exceptional circumstance as it would apply to everyone and is therefore not exceptional to that request. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to

provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides. In all cases an Absence Request Form S2 must be completed . This form is available to download from the [school website forms page](#).

### Authorised Absences

Absence for the following reasons would normally be authorised but patterns of absence will be monitored and investigated if necessary. If absence drops below certain thresholds then absences may need to be evidenced (eg doctor's note for illness) before it will be authorised.

- Illness Essential Medical Appointment
- Funerals
- Wedding of Parent/Sibling
- Other Circumstances Considered Exceptional

### Unauthorised Absences

Examples of unauthorised absence are shown below:

- Truancy
- Looking after younger children/sick
- Relatives Birthdays (pupil/relative)
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting/visiting relatives
- Attending concerts/events
- Any absence the school has not been informed about and not approved
- Holiday during term time (even if parents consider their line of work to be such that they cannot take holidays during designated school holidays, e.g. owning a hotel, this still would be unauthorised)

**Stage % of attendance School Protocols** The school will use the following thresholds as guidance, along with consideration of each individual case, for implementing attendance protocols

1. < 97% Attendance monitored by class teacher
2. < 95% Attendance letter 1 sent home (See Appendix 2)
3. < 93% Attendance letter 2 sent home (See Appendix 3)
4. < 90% Pastoral Coordinator organises meeting with parent/carer, possible attendance contract, Educational Welfare Officer informed. (See Appendix 4)
5. < 90% no improvement Educational Welfare Officer INTERVENTION/possible legal proceedings

**Attendance Targets** The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and the Headteacher will be responsible for overseeing this work.

**Our schools targets are:**

**2020/2021 97.1%**

**2021/2022 97.1%**

## The registration system

The School will use a computerised system for keeping the school attendance records. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

### CODE DESCRIPTION MEANING

| Code | Description / meaning   | Meaning                       |
|------|---|-------------------------------|
| /    | Present (AM)  | Present                       |
| \    | Present (PM)  | Present                       |
| B    | Educated off site (NOT dual approved educational activity registration)                   | Authorised absence            |
| C    | Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)      | Authorised absence            |
| D    | Dual registration (i.e. pupil approved education activity, attending other establishment) | Approved educational activity |
| E    | Excluded (no alternative provision made)  | Authorised absence            |
| F    | Extended family holiday (agreed)  | Authorised absence            |
| G    | Family holiday (not agreed) or days   | Unauthorised absence          |
| H    | Family holiday (agreed)   | Authorised absence            |
| I    | Illness (not medical or dental etc appointments)  | Authorised absence            |
| J    | Interview. Approved educational activity  | Authorised absence            |
| L    | Late (before registrations closed)  | Present                       |
| M    | Medical/dental appointments.  | Authorised absence            |
| N    | No reason yet provided for absence  | Unauthorised absence          |
| O    | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)                          | Unauthorised absence          |
| P    | Approved sporting activity  | Approved educational activity |
| R    | Religious observance  | Authorised absence            |
| S    | Study leave   | Authorised absence            |
| T    | Traveller absence   | Authorised absence            |
| U    | Late (after registers closed)   | Unauthorised absence          |
| V    | Educational visit or trip.  | Approved educational activity |

|          |  |   |
|----------|--|---|
| <b>W</b> | Work experience.   | Approved educational activity             |
| <b>X</b> | Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils | Not counted in possible pupil attendances |
| <b>Y</b> | Enforced closure   | Not counted in possible pupil attendances |
| <b>Z</b> | Pupil not yet on roll                                      | Not counted in possible pupil attendances |
| <b>#</b> | School closed to pupils                                    | Not counted in possible pupil attendances |

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes. Entries in paper registers must be in ink. All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

**Register Security** The registers must be safely stored. Registers are completed and held on the school management information system with is password protected. In the event of a fire or drill, these registers are collected by the office staff and distributed to the class teachers.

## **Appendix 1 - The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states: The parent of every child of compulsory school 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 the day to day care of the child. The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act. Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school. Register and Admission Roll keeping. The legal requirements are found in: The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Dear Parent/Carer

**Attendance Monitoring**

**Re:**

Following routine monitoring of all students attendance at school, it has been identified that your child's attendance is below 95%.

Your child's percentage attendance up to and including ##/##/## is ##%.

Please find attached a copy of your child's attendance record for your information.

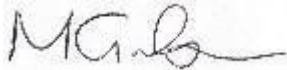
We understand that there may be obvious reasons for absence, such as illness, but we have a duty to inform you that your child's attendance is now below average.

We hope that by bringing this to your attention, you can support your child, and the school, to ensure your child gains the greatest benefit that they can from their education by regular school attendance.

If there are any particular circumstances that we may not be aware of which are having an influence on attending school regularly, or if you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

We will continue to monitor your child's attendance until this reaches 95%.

Yours sincerely



Mark Gilronan  
Head Teacher



**Attendance Letter 1**

**Please return to the School Office**

I confirm that I have received the attendance letter 1 for:

Parent/Carer Name:

Signature:

Date:



Dear Parent/Carer

**Attendance Monitoring**

**Re :**

I am writing to express concern over the continuing pattern of absence at school this year for your child.

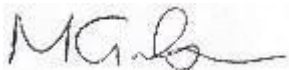
Your child's attendance is ##% and there have been ## sessions of illness and # Unauthorised Absences

As a school we have an attendance target of 97% as it is widely held that a child's education is affected if their attendance drops below 95%. Indeed the attendance figure at which a child is classified as a persistent absentee is 90%.

We always aim to work closely with all our parents and to support them, however, if absences continue and reasonable explanation has not been provided, further action may need to be taken which could include the school requesting, for example; medical evidence to be provided for every absence due to illness, or referral to the Educational Welfare Service who may take further action. Therefore if there is an ongoing medical issue that we are not aware of, or there is anything that you would like to discuss with me or another member of staff, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

I enclose a copy of ..... attendance this year up to ##/##/## for your information.

Yours sincerely



Mark Gilronan  
Head Teacher

✂-----

**Attendance Letter 2**

**Please return to the School Office**

I confirm that I have received the attendance letter 2 for:

Parent/Carer Name:

Signature:

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer

**Attendance Monitoring**

Re :

I am sending this letter to bring to your attention to our concerns over ..... attendance at school this year.

As a school we have an attendance target of 97% as it is widely held that a child's education is affected if their attendance drops below 95%. The attendance figure at which a child is classified as a persistent absentee is 90%. We always try to encourage the children to attend as much as possible and have reward systems in place for particularly good attendance.

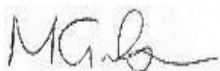
Regular and punctual attendance at school is vital, so that pupils are able to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them and while it is a parent's responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually, we are always keen to work with and support families when absence becomes an issue.

Currently ..... attendance is recorded as ##%; these attendance percentages are liable to affect your child's overall education. Therefore any future absence due to illness or medical appointments will only be authorised when evidence\* is provided. Evidence will be required each time that your child is absent from school for medical or illness reasons. If we do not receive confirmation then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. As the level of absence is so concerning at the moment, the matter could potentially be referred to the Education Welfare Service, who will monitor attendance and will be looking for immediate and significant improvement.

\* Many GPs will not write a letter to support absence from school and therefore a signed medical appointment card or copy of a prescription will be accepted.

I hope that we can work together to address this important issue as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely



Mark Gilronan  
Head Teacher



**Medical Attendance Letter**

**Please return to the School Office**

I confirm that I have received the attendance concern (medical) letter for:

Parent/Carer Name:

Signature:

Date: