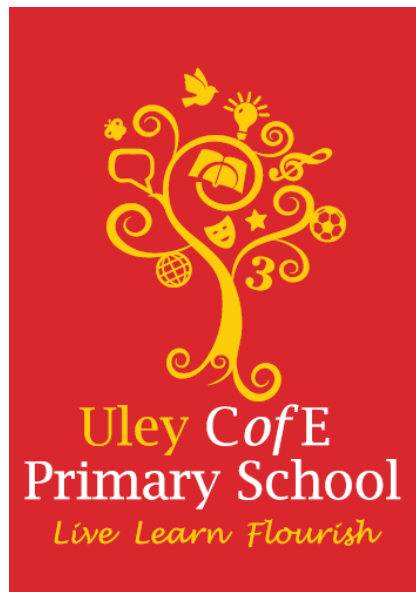


ULEY  
C. OF E.  
PRIMARY SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE  
POLICY

# Attendance Matters

## LIVE, LEARN FLOURISH

Uley C. of E. Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all pupils. Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late. At Uley C. of E. Primary School we expect the best attendance possible for every child throughout their school life in order for them to have the best possible future life opportunities.

This policy has been written with guidance from the following documents:

- The DFE's Advice on School Attendance, September 2018.
- The DFE Statutory guidance for School attendance parental responsibility measures, January 2015
- Local authority guidance on Children Missing Education and missing Children, January 2017
- Local Authority guidance on Attendance September 2017

### **Why is Good Attendance Important?**

All pupils of compulsory school age are, by law, entitled to a full-time education and attendance has a major impact on a child's future life opportunities. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that it is understood how important good attendance is in enabling children to achieve their best and the procedures in place to support this.

### **We aim to:**

- Achieve school attendance data in line with or above national data.
- Create a culture in which good attendance and punctuality is accepted as the norm.
- Demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- Monitor and reduce authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Monitor and improve punctuality.
- Maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance and punctuality between home and school.
- Work with families to improve attendance and punctuality of those pupils with high levels of absence and lateness.
- Improve awareness of parental requests for leave of absence for their child during term time.

## **What the law says about School Attendance:**

Full-time education is compulsory for all children aged between 5 and 18, either at school or otherwise, with a child beginning primary education during the school year he or she turns 5. Children are required to attend school for 190 days (380 sessions) in any single academic year (September-July).

Absence from school is a legal matter. By law, all children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at a school must attend full-time and be punctual. Only schools can authorise pupil absence from school, if they are satisfied with the reason provided by the parent, in writing. The role of the local education department is to encourage and enforce the law on school attendance. Ultimately, the local authority can instigate legal action.

### **In this document the advice refers to:**

The Education Act 1996;  
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended;  
The Education Act 2002;  
The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;  
The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011;  
Crime and Disorder Act 1998;  
The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;  
The Education Act 2005;  
The Education and Inspections Act 2006;  
The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;  
Magistrates' Courts (Parenting Orders) (Amendment) Rules 2007;  
The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 as amended;  
The Education and Skills Act 2008.

## **Registration Procedures**

**The school day starts at 9am for all children.** We expect children to arrive in good time to start the day therefore staff are on the playground from 8-50am to take responsibility for them as they arrive. Registers opens at 9am and close at 9.05am. Children arriving between 9.05am and 9.10am will be marked as late. Any child arriving after registers close at 9.10am, without a valid reason, will be marked as unauthorised.

Arrival after registration without a reasonable reason will be recorded with an unauthorised absence for the morning session and this will affect his/her attendance figure. If children arrive late they need to sign in so we know they are on site and we are able to check their dinner arrangements. If attendance, including lateness, is a problem we will notify and work with the parents in the first instance. The registers are taken again at 1.00pm. It is recognised that there may be circumstances when a child may arrive late because of transport difficulties etc. In these instances school should be informed as soon as possible.

### **Absence Procedures**

If a child is unfit for school; parents should contact the school by 9.00am on the first day, in person, by email or by telephone and repeat this each consecutive day until they return. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. It is school procedure to contact parents of children who are absent that have not notified school by 9.15am.

### **Understanding types of absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

#### **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

#### **Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

The school need not accept a parental explanation for a child's absence, whether written, telephoned or given in person, if they doubt the explanation. It is for the school to judge whether the explanation given is satisfactory justification for the absence. Any further investigation needs to be handled sensitively but if, after this, questions remain (or where no satisfactory explanation is forthcoming), the absence must be treated as unauthorised.

Where possible, parents will be informed when an absence is unauthorised. The children's attendance data is reported to parents in the children's end of year school report.

## Time off School during Term Time

**School Attendance - Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, September 2018 says:**

### **Can a parent take their child on holiday during term time?**

Head teachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a head teacher grants a leave request, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.

### **What does the Department for Education say?**

Amendments to the 2006 regulations were made by the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#) and came into force on 1 September 2013.

*Amendments to the Education Regulations 2006 remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless **exceptional** circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted*

There is no formal definition offered for exceptional leave at present by the Department for Education. However, from discussion with the DfE and professional associations it is suggested that exceptional leave would be:

- Rare
- Significant
- Unavoidable
- Short

(NAHT, 2014)

There is an expectation that parents should not take pupils out of school during term time. Schools are required to ensure that children only miss school if it is absolutely unavoidable, because of the detrimental effect that this has on pupils' attainment and therefore their future life chances.

For all absence during term time, a formal written request must be made from a person with Parental Responsibility at **least two weeks** before the planned absence. Requests made at a shorter notice period may be refused.

Each request will be considered individually taking account of factors, such as:

- Personal circumstances for the request
- Age of pupil
- Overall attendance of pupil

- The time of year for the proposed absence and whether it impacts on specific curricular issues e.g. tests/exams
- The child's stage of education and their progress
- An assessment of the impact that missing out on learning will have on the individual child

The LA recommends that time off taken for the following reasons are not exceptional and should not be authorised:

- availability of cheap holidays
- availability of desired accommodation
- overlap with beginning of term.

There is no automatic right to any time off school at all for a holiday.

Absence from school which has not been approved by the school in writing is unauthorised absence and as such may result in a penalty notice or prosecution for non-attendance – see below.

If a child is withdrawn during term time, disruption to the learning process happens. There is sometimes a belief that this can be made up by the school providing 'work' for the child to complete during the absence. However this cannot replace the quality teaching time and experiences s/he has missed. It is not our policy to provide work for such absences and it will be impossible for your child to revisit these experiences when they return.

### **Persistent Absence**

The Department for Education defines a persistent absentee as a pupil who misses more than 10% of sessions in an academic year. Attendance below 90% is labelled as "**a Persistent Absentee**".

As a matter of school policy, each term parents will be contacted if a child's attendance falls below 90%. It is the Head teacher's legal responsibility to decide whether he/she agrees or disagrees with the reason for an absence. If, in his/her opinion, the reason for the child is not acceptable, he/she will "unauthorised" the absence. Significant unauthorised absences may lead to further action including a formal warning, involvement from the local authority and a fine.

### **Pupils recorded with 10+ days of continuous unauthorised absence**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that schools must:

"... make to the local education authority ... a return giving the full name and address of every registered pupil of compulsory school age who ...

... (b) has been absent from school, where the absence has not been treated as authorised in accordance with regulation 6(2) for a continuous period of not less than ten school days, and specifying the cause of absence if known to the proprietor ..."

What will we do with this information?

The Local Education Authority collates the returns and offers advice about strategies to deal with the absence (if required). Upon receipt of the returns, the Data Officer ensures there is a central record of all pupils in the county who have 10+ days of continuous unauthorised absence and an Inclusion Adviser (IA) is informed. If it is indicated that further advice is required on managing the absence an IA will make contact with the school to discuss the case(s).

## **Penalty notice or prosecution for non-attendance**

### **What is a Fixed Penalty Notice?**

Penalty notices are fines that can be issued to parents by the Local Authority for their child's irregular school attendance. They can be issued in cases of leave taken during term time, without school's permission or delays in returning to school from a period of authorised leave.

The notice will state the fine payable and the timescales for doing so. The charge is £120 per parent, per child and is payable within 28 days (The fine is payable at a reduced rate of £60, if paid within 21 days). All payments are made to the Local Authority.

Penalty notices provide an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for an offence by paying the penalty.

### **When can a penalty notice be issued?**

Parents of a registered pupil whose child fails to attend school regularly are committing an offence under section 444(1) Education Act 1996

A pupil must have had a minimum of 5 school days (10 sessions) lost to unauthorised absence during the current term or 10 school days (20 sessions) in 2 consecutive terms before a Penalty Notice is considered.

Penalty Notices can be issued where with the governing body approval; the school attendance policy contains reference to the school's use of PN's with regards to unauthorised absences and unauthorised holidays.

Penalty notices can be issued where parents have been given an opportunity to improve their child's attendance but failed to do so.

Penalty notices can be issued in cases of leave taken during term time without school permission or delayed return from a period of authorised leave without prior school permission.

**Q. Why are Penalty Notices used?**

Missing school damages children's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others. Children who miss school are vulnerable to anti-social behaviour and youth crime. Above all, missing school seriously affects children's longer-term life opportunities.

If your child fails to attend school regularly and punctually and the absence is recorded by the school as unauthorised, you are guilty of a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.

**Q. What is a Penalty Notice?**

A Penalty Notice is a fine which may be issued as an alternative to prosecution. It does not require a court appearance and does not result in a criminal record. Payment of a Penalty Notice means you avoid the potential danger of prosecution and subsequent conviction.

**Q. When might a Penalty Notice be issued?**

If your child is absent from school, without authorisation from the Headteacher, you may be sent a warning letter by the school or in the case of unauthorised holiday, warnings will have already been made clear to you by the school. This includes sessions where your child has arrived after the school's registration period without an acceptable reason.

The school will continue to monitor your child's attendance and if there are further unauthorised absences there will be no further warning and a Penalty Notice may be issued by the Local Authority.

*\*Each school day contains two sessions.*

**Q. How is a Penalty Notice issued?**

You will receive the Penalty Notice by post to your home. Fines are issued to each parent (as defined in Education Law) for each child.

**Q. What is the cost of the fine?**

The penalty notice allows you 21 days to pay a £60 fine. If you pay after the 21-day period but within 28 days, the fine increases to £120. If the fine remains unpaid at this stage, we would initiate legal proceedings against you for your child's non-attendance.

**Q. How can a Penalty Notice be paid?**

Your Penalty Notice will include clear instructions on how to pay. There are two main ways - by cheque or over the phone using your debit or credit card. We cannot accept payment in part or by instalment for a Penalty Notice.

**Q. What happens if I do not pay?**

You will have up to 28 days from receipt to pay the Penalty Notice in full. If you fail to do so, the Local Authority is required, by law, to consider proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the original offence of poor school attendance and/or punctuality.

If you are convicted of this offence there are a number of possible sentences, including a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a period of up to 3 months' imprisonment.

**Q. Is there an appeal process?**

No. When you receive your Penalty Notice all investigations will have taken place, so once a Penalty Notice has been issued, we cannot withdraw it unless it has been issued in error. It must be paid.

**Q. What happens if the Penalty Notice is paid but my child still misses school?**

Parents/carers are not liable for prosecution for their child's school attendance for the period in question once the Penalty Notice is paid. However, prosecution may be considered for further periods of absence not covered by the Notice. Prosecution will be considered if two Penalty Notices have been served in any single year.

**Q. Who can I contact about a Penalty Notice that has been issued?**

In the first instance you should contact the Attendance Officer at the school your child attends.

**Q. Where can I find more information?**

For more information about the issuing of Penalty Notices you can contact the Education Performance and Inclusion Team at:

Gloucestershire County Council  
Education Performance and Inclusion Team  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
Block 4  
Shire Hall  
Westgate Street  
Gloucester  
GL1 2TP

Phone: 01452 427274

Email: [Attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:Attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk)

## Children Missing Education

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to 'any child of compulsory school age who is not registered at any formally approved education activity eg school, alternative provision, elective home education, and has been out of education provision for a substantial period of time (usually agreed as 4 weeks)'. 'Suitable and efficient' education refers to an education that achieves what it sets out to achieve and is suitable to a child's age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs that child may have.

### Identifying CME

A child is classed as CME if they are

- of compulsory school age and
- not on a school roll and
- not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being at school, for example, at home, privately or in alternative provision.

This might be:

- A child who has left a custodial establishment or private schooling or has arrived into Gloucestershire and whose parent has been unable to secure a school place
- A child who is deemed not to be receiving a suitable education whilst EHE CME also includes those children who are missing (family whereabouts unknown), and are usually children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision

This might be:

A child who is not at their last known address and either

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or



- has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or
- left school suddenly and the destination is unknown

The school follows the Local Authority and/or Missing Children Protocol, Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Board

Anyone concerned that a child is missing education (CME) can make a referral to the Access to Education Team at Gloucestershire County Council.

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/your-pupils/children-missing-education/>

## Children Missing from Education

Children and young people who run away and go missing from home Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Board (GSCB) has issued a protocol on partnership working when children and young people run away and go missing from home or care. The protocol is available at: [www.GSCB.org.uk](http://www.GSCB.org.uk).

## Flexi-Schooling

### What are parents' duties regarding education

- The responsibility to ensure that a child receives full-time education whilst he or she is of statutory school age lies with the parent/carer with parental responsibility.
- 1.2 The 1996 Education Act states that the parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him or her to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his or her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational needs he or she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 1.3 Some parents/carers may decide to provide a suitable education by educating their children at home, rather than seeking to enroll their child at a school. This is known as Home Schooling or Elective Home Education and is where the parent/carer takes full responsibility for the education of the child. Guidance for parents and carers may be found at <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/home-education/>

### What is flexi-schooling?

- Flexi-schooling is not the same as Elective Home Education. Parents/carers who request flexible attendance are asking for a pattern of provision which will involve *both* attendance at school as well as times when the child will receive educational provision at home. Flexi-schooling is also different to children below compulsory school age attending part time as per Section 2.16 of the Admissions Code 2014.
- In November 2007 the DCSF issued "Elective Home Education - Guidelines for Local Authorities" which contained the following paragraph (5.6):

*Flexi-schooling" or "flexible school attendance" is an arrangement between the parent and the school where the child is registered at school and attends the school only part time; the*

*rest of the time the child is home educated (on authorised absence from school). This can be a long-term arrangement or a short-term measure for a particular reason. "Flexi-schooling" is a legal option provided that the Headteacher at the school concerned agrees to the arrangement. The child will be required to follow the National Curriculum whilst at school but not whilst he or she is being educated at home.*

- Arrangements for Flexi-schooling can only be made at the request of a parent or carer with parental responsibility. This is not an arrangement which can be initiated by a school.
- Whilst there is an absolute right both to school placement and to Elective Home Education, there is not the same right to flexi-schooling; Headteachers may refuse to agree to such requests. There is no specific appeal against the decision of a Headteacher not to agree to a flexi- schooling request.
- Ultimately it will be the decision of the Headteacher as to whether he or she is agreeable to enter into a flexi-school agreement with the parent/carers.

## **School Closures**

The academic year is 190 days. Schools also have to have an additional 5 days that they can use for staff training; often called INSET (In Service Training) Days. These days are not part of the 190 days which is every child's entitlement.

The Head Teacher will make every effort to ensure that the school remains open for 190 days. However, in some circumstances, the school may have to close. The Head Teacher must always consider the health, safety and welfare of every person who uses the school site, pupils, staff, parents, volunteers and visitors. If at any point, to use the school building would be detrimental to a person or persons' health, safety and welfare, then the Head Teacher must close part or all of the school. Such events may be:

- Not enough staff to safely supervise the pupils and ensure the safe running of the school
- Lack of fresh running water and/or toilet facilities
- Lack of appropriate lighting and/or heating
- Damage to the structure of the building e.g. fire, water or weather damage.
- Instruction to close due to a local emergency incident
- Emergency at the school (See Emergency Plan)
- Severe weather - In the event that severe weather is forecast, or is developing, the Head Teacher, will consider either closing the school in advance of the school day, closing the school early, or opening the school later than usual. The action taken will always result from consideration of pupils, parents and staff facing 'significant risk of serious injury' in school or whilst travelling to or from school

Once a decision is made, the Head Teacher will endeavour to inform parents of that decision and the details of any arrangements that have been put in place.

Parents should always assume that the school will remain open during term time unless they hear otherwise.

If the Head Teacher decides to close the school, then the register is closed for the day and coded as an enforced school closure. This does not affect a child's attendance record.

### **Promoting Regular Attendance and Punctuality**

- Discussing attendance at parent/teacher consultation meetings.
- Individual attendance and punctuality information detailed in end of year report.
- Reporting progress about attendance and reiterating expectations in Head Teacher's start of term letters.
- By publishing and displaying attendance statistics in the school newsletter.
- By celebrating good and improved attendance.
- Attendance and punctuality posters.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

The school has a duty to monitor the attendance of all children.

- Every term the Headteacher will look at the attendance of all children in the school and report this to Governors.
- If we are concerned about attendance we will talk with the family. If there is no improvement in the child's attendance we will seek advice from the local authority.
- We speak to the local authority about all pupils that are under 90% attendance and agree any action plan of support.
- Supplementary to the register checks we analyse attendance data to identify and challenge persistent absence.
- Analyse registration data termly to identify any other factors that may be preventing the achievement of good attendance across the whole school.
- Regularly review attendance and punctuality policy and procedures.

### **Summary**

#### **Uley Primary School therefore request that:**

- Pupils attend school regularly.
- Pupils arrive on time – arrive at 8.40am for the morning session with registration at 9am every day and 1.00pm to begin the afternoon session).
- Parents/carers ensure their child arrives in school prepared for the school day.
- Parents/carers inform a member of staff or the school office by 9.00am if their child is unable to attend school or a reason that the child may be late.
- Parents/carers contact the school before 9.00am on the first day of the child's absence and repeat this each consecutive day until they return.
- Parents/carers encourage a positive attitude towards school and their child by showing an interest in the life of the school.
- Parents/carers make every effort NOT to fix dental or similar appointments for school hours
- Parents/carers avoid taking their child on holidays during term-time.
- Parents/carers notify the school immediately of any change of address or contact details, especially mobile telephone.

- Parents/carers notify the school of any family circumstances that might have an adverse affect on the child.
- School staff complete registers accurately and punctually morning and afternoon.
- School staff follow up any unexplained non-attendance.
- School staff record accurately all absences in the register.
- School staff inform the designated person in charge of overall attendance of concerns.

## **Lateness Letter 1**

Date

Dear

RE: Lateness

During a recent register check I noticed that your child is frequently late for school, please see enclosed report.

I will therefore, be monitoring your child's punctuality over the next 15 school days. If there is no improvement during this time I will be requesting a meeting with you to discuss the matter further.

I appreciate that there are some situations where lateness may be unavoidable, however, when your child is late he/she misses important instructions at the beginning of the session. Not only is their education disadvantaged by this, but other pupils are affected by the disruption a pupil arriving late causes.

I look forward to noting an improvement in your child's punctuality over the course of the next two weeks.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss the matter.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

## **Lateness Letter 2**

Date:

Dear

RE: Lateness

Further to my previous letter on <insert date of Letter 1> there has been little or no improvement in your child's punctuality. Please find enclosed your child's attendance record.

I would be grateful if you could arrange an appointment to discuss your child's punctuality with me where we should be able to identify and plan ways together of making improvements to your child's punctuality at school.

I look forward to meeting with you.

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Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

## **Attendance Letter 1**

Dear <Parents Name>

### **RE: Attendance of < Pupil's Name>**

From our regular monitoring of the attendance registers I notice that your child's attendance is reported as ----%. Please find attached a copy of your child's current attendance record. As I am sure you are aware, it is important that < pupil's name > maintains regular school attendance, as any absence may interrupt his/her academic progress and may have an effect on maintaining friendships. Regular attendance is a legal requirement.

If you require any advice or support to ensure that your child attends school regularly then please do not hesitate to make an appointment to speak to myself.

I look forward to noting an improvement in your child's attendance over the course of the next 15 school days.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher

## Attendance Letter 2

Date:

Dear <Parents Name>

### **RE: Attendance of < Pupil's Name>**

Further to my previous letter on <insert date of Letter 1> I am concerned at the continuing number of absences that <child's name> has had from school. Please find enclosed your child's attendance record. Unfortunately there has been no improvement in your child's attendance at school since this letter and your child's attendance is currently <....%>. This is significantly below the national average of attendance at 95% for a primary school pupil.

I would be grateful if you could arrange an appointment to discuss your child's attendance at school with me where we should be able to identify and plan ways together of making improvements to your child's attendance at school.

I am keen to address these attendance concerns with you promptly to minimise the loss of learning for your child in school. I look forward to meeting with you to begin this improvement to your child's attendance at school.

Yours sincerely,

Head Teacher