



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Our School Attendance policy supports this vision for the school:

Checkendon Primary School is a dynamic Church of England school in which our Anglican Christian values of respect, courage, integrity, compassion and hope are at the heart of everything we do. We give every pupil the opportunity to develop their particular capabilities in our stimulating and caring environment where creative teaching and an inspiring curriculum lead to high-quality learning and outstanding achievement. We work in partnership with parents and the wider community to help every pupil make excellent progress, develop a lifelong love of learning and broaden their sense of citizenship, as they grow in mind, body and spirit.

A pupil who misses a day of school a week misses an equivalent of two whole school years in their school life. This obviously leads to gaps in their knowledge that become difficult to fill.

Oxfordshire County Council

Pupils of school age must by law attend school regularly. If a child is to be away from school parents or carers need to ask the school to approve the absence. There is a difference between authorised absence from school and unauthorised absence. Unauthorised absence can result in prosecution.

Authorised Absence

If a child is ill, or unable to attend school for some other reason, parents or carers should contact the school by telephone or email by 10am on the same day. If the reason is acceptable, then the school will authorise the absence. Unacceptable reasons for absence include:

- shopping
- birthday treats and trips
- looking after others at home
- non-urgent medical or dental appointments, unless school time is the only time offered by professionals

If parents or carers of absent children have not contacted the school by 10am the school will telephone the parents or carers, then refer to emergency contacts provided if necessary. There is a Health and Safety aspect to 'First Day Calling' as a child missing from school may be injured, or worse, therefore action will be taken by the school until there is an explanation for the child's absence.

Unauthorised Absence

If reasons for absence are unacceptable, or if the school is unable to make contact with the parents or carers, the absence will be unauthorised. Such absences carry with them the risk of prosecution.

Monitoring of Absences

Absences from school are monitored by the head teacher and by the County Attendance Team at Oxfordshire County Council which provides these statutory attendance services:

- Prosecutions for non-attendance under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- Action to ensure enrolment of children at school using School Attendance Orders (SAO).
- Applications for Education Supervision Orders (ESO)
- Issuing Penalty Notices on behalf of schools.
- Monitoring and enforcing the regulations concerning child employment and performance

Holidays in term time

Schools do not have to agree to absence for a holiday, although they have the power to do so. Oxfordshire County Council sets high attendance targets for each school, and is currently concerned about the amount of holidays taken in

school time throughout the county. Approval is at the discretion of the headteacher, and Oxfordshire's guidance is that permission should only be given to parents who are able to make a clear case for their child being treated differently due to 'exceptional circumstances'; such cases may include close family living overseas or a parent's employment dictating holidays at a set time of the year.

When considering taking a child out of school for a holiday, parents should think about the following:

- 10 days taken out for holiday each year (whether in a block, added on to weekends, or added to the beginning or end of school holidays, or just odd days) may seem only a small proportion of the 190 school days in the year. However, if 10 days are taken every year of primary school, this means that 14 weeks of primary education are lost. If this continued throughout secondary school, the total amount of time lost would be equivalent to more than 6 months of the child's statutory education.
- Missed time in school can have a detrimental effect on future learning. Children's learning can be likened to building with blocks, and is built up in small steps. New skills and concepts introduced each day build on those introduced the previous day. When a child misses even one day, their learning is interrupted and their learning on the days when they are in school will be less effective.
- Missed time in school can also have a negative effect on personal and social development. Children whose education is regularly interrupted may have more difficulty in settling into the school routine and in making friends.
- Missed time at the beginning or end of a term can be particularly detrimental. The beginning of a term, or school year, is the time when a child makes new friends (or re-establishes old friendships) and settles into the term's routine. The end of term is the time when children celebrate achievements together and when many of the class and whole school social events occur.

If, after considering all these points, parents still wish to take holiday in term time, they should put this in writing at least two weeks in advance. Each request for leave for a holiday will be considered individually, but the most important consideration is the effect the absence would have on the child's education because absence, due to holidays taken during term time, could hinder academic attainment.

Review Date: **September 2017**

Review Date: **September 2018**

Signed: _____
Headteacher

Signed: _____
Chair of Governors