

Attendance Policy	
DATE OF ADOPTION: March 2020	
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW: March 2022	
TO BE REVIEWED BY: Business and Management Committee	

Philosophy

Decoy Community Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils.

- We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be addressed as speedily as possible.
- It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils.
- Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.
- If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

Absences During Term Time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states: Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

Types of Absence

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence. Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness, medical or dental appointments;
- days of religious observance;
- exclusion;
- traveller child travelling;
- family bereavement;
- involvement in a public performance, sporting competition or external examination;
- where one parent is on active duty in the Armed Forces and has leave from duty;
- at the discretion of the Head teacher.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable. Absence will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, etc.);
- family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances).

Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible)
- Days of religious observance
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- When Traveller children go on the road with their parents

Other examples of absence from school that will not be authorised:

- Any type of shopping
- Looking after siblings or unwell parents
- Minding the house
- Birthdays
- Resting after a late night
- Relatives visiting or visiting relatives

Procedures

- The school will work in close partnership with the Educational Welfare Service in all aspects of this attendance policy.
- Morning registration will be between 8.55am and 9.05am. Children arriving between 9.05am and 9.30am will receive a late mark in the register. Children arriving after 9.30am will be registered with an unauthorised absence unless a reason for absence has been received. Registers will be completed and processed following Devon County guidelines using the recommended coding structure.
- Pupils will be reminded of the importance of punctuality and will be praised for arriving at school in good time.
- Parents will be asked to contact the school before 8.55am on the first morning of an absence. The school will make first day contact with anyone who has not informed the school of the absence.
- International Dialling Codes. If our admin team hear an international dialling code when they are chasing an absence, that absence will be recorded as unauthorised, regardless of whether you have reported your child as being unwell.
- Both authorised and unauthorised absence will be recorded in-line with County guidance.
- Attendance will be monitored by the school Attendance Officer, who will advise the Headteacher of any pupils with emerging attendance problems, and subsequently refer them to the Educational Welfare Officer.
- Pupils with good attendance will be rewarded on a regular basis.
- Progress towards targets will be monitored in conjunction with the Educational Welfare service.
- Repeated absence, which may lead to a prosecution and fine, will be referred to the Educational Welfare Service.
- Attendance information is included in the school prospectus and individual information is included on pupil's annual report.
- Everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the importance of promoting regular attendance. This is the responsibility of the whole school community.

Submitting a request for an authorised absence

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. A request for absence in term time can only be made by an adult who has legal Parental Responsibility and be the parent with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in advance and where it is related to a holiday, before the holiday is booked.

When deciding whether to allow term time leave, for any reason, the school will consider:

- Whether the reason/s for the request is exceptional
- Previous absence record
- Any absences for children with attendance levels of below 95% will not be authorised regardless of whether there are exceptional circumstances

No “exceptional circumstance” will be authorised for the following times:

Year 6 pupils during Year 6 SATS week: Dates to be found on www.gov.uk

Year 1 phonics screening week: Dates to be found on www.gov.uk

Absence for religious reasons

The school may authorise leave of absence for religious observance following a request submitted in line with our policy.

All absence requests must be applied for using the school absence request form.

Additional information for parents

If this request is unauthorised by the school, a penalty notice may be issued by **Devon County Council**. A penalty notice offers a parent the opportunity of dealing with a potential offence without going to court, by paying a penalty. If parents can't afford to pay, or for any other reason do not take the offer of paying the notice within a set time, then the case will proceed to a magistrates' court. The provision of penalty notices is set by Regulations and the amount of the penalty, timeframe for payment or payment method are not able to be varied by Devon County Council.

Parents should note that only one penalty notice per parent per child will normally be issued within a two-year period. Any second 'offence' within a two-year period will be referred straight to court.

This information is correct at the time of this policy being written.