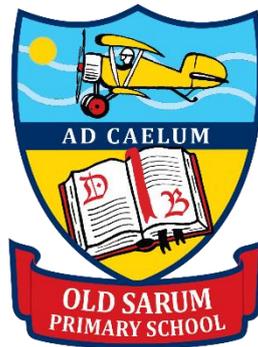


OLD SARUM PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Policy status:	Statutory	Advisory
Approval authority:	FGB	CTE:
Date of approval:		
Date of review:		

Key linked policies / documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admissions Policy• Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy• Behaviour Policy
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Old Sarum Primary School

Attendance Policy 2018



Excellent education is vital to the lives of all children and to our society as a whole. Whilst it is known that the life chances of children may not be equal from the outset of their lives for various reasons, education can help to redress this imbalance and help to ensure that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential.

Regular attendance is an essential foundation of raising pupil attainment. Absence from school can seriously disrupt pupils' continuity of learning. Not only do they miss out on taught lessons, but many children find it difficult to catch up when they return to school. Poor or irregular attendance places children at risk and in some cases can result in safeguarding and wellbeing concerns.

1 Aims and objectives

- 1.1 Old Sarum Primary school supports the principles, practice and procedures outlined in the DfE School attendance document; Departmental advice for maintained schools and local authorities.
- 1.2 We believe pupils can only take full advantage of their education by regular and punctual attendance at school or otherwise to ensure continuity of learning.
- 1.3 Old Sarum Primary School will work collaboratively with the Education Welfare Service, for the Local Authority, to implement the statutory duties in relation to school attendance. We acknowledge that in doing so we must apply these powers fairly and consistently. (The Education Welfare Service has a key function in working closely with schools, families and teams within the Children's Services and other agencies, both statutory and voluntary, in order to promote excellent levels of attendance and punctuality at school or otherwise.)

2 Responsibilities

- 2.1 Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs which they may have. Most parents choose to fulfil this responsibility by registering children at a school.
- 2.2 Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance.
- 2.3 Parental Responsibilities:
 - Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, appropriately dressed and in a 'condition to learn'. (I.e. not too tired, distressed or too hungry to learn.)
 - Work in partnership with the school to help their child/children gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly and punctually.
 - Work in partnership with the school to take an active interest in their child's school career, to reinforce school policies/arrangements on home learning, behaviour and approach to learning, to attend parents' evenings and other meetings where necessary.
 - Work in partnership with the school and other agencies (as and when appropriate) to resolve issues relating to non-attendance.

- Notify the school if their child is absent. Contact with the school needs to be made on the first day of absence, ideally first thing in the morning. Parents should provide an explanation for the absence which should be confirmed in writing, when the child returns to school. If parents are unable to write due to a language barrier then the school will accept a verbal declaration by agreement with the Headteacher.
- Parents are advised to avoid arranging medical or dental appointments during school hours.
- Parents must seek permission from their child's head teacher (or authorised representative) by submitting a written application in advance of any request for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Each request should be considered individually and should meet the circumstance of being 'exceptional' if authorisation is being considered. *NB. It is the head teacher's decision to register an absence as either authorised or unauthorised.*

3 The responsibilities of the school

3.1 Old Sarum Primary School is responsible for supporting the attendance of pupils and for managing concerns or issues which may lead to non-attendance.

3.2 The school therefore aims:

- To maximise attendance rates as one of its key tasks.
- Support parents in ensuring regular and punctual attendance by informing parents if their child's attendance is causing concern.
- To respond promptly to any issue which may lead to non-attendance or irregular attendance and to seek a meeting with parents to discuss the issue.
- At the outset of intervention by the school, the parent should be given a formal written notification explaining the actions that may be taken. It is good practice to make sure parents understand the consequences of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance, in particular that the case could result in a penalty notice and/or court proceedings.
- Be sensitive to the needs of the individual parent. This should be reflected in the ways in which attendance issues are addressed. For example, we recognise that some parents have difficulty understanding written communications.
- Produce a whole School Attendance Policy which is consistently applied and clearly communicated to all parents.
- Ensure that parents/carers are made aware that any authorisation for a leave of absence in term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, in line with the law, and where a leave of absence in term time is not agreed or no application has been made or the pupil does not return on the agreed date, then this will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Lateness

3.3 Children arriving late at Old Sarum Primary School (after 9:00am in the morning and 1pm in the afternoon) will be marked with an "L" if they arrive after the start of school but before the registers have closed, and with a "U" if they arrive after registers have closed. A "U" absence will be classed as unauthorised unless approved reasons are given by parents for the absence.

Marking Registers

- 3.4 Schools are required to take an attendance register at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The Education (Pupils' Attendance Records) Regulations 1991 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 stipulate that schools should maintain an attendance register for each class containing the names of all pupils in the class. Attendance registers are legal documents which may be required as evidence in court. Daily registers are marked electronically. Paper copies of all registers are also held at the office to use if electronic registration is not possible, or in case of an emergency (e.g. fire evacuation). If the school has received a valid explanation from the parent/carer, the appropriate absence mark should be entered on the register. A list of codes is available on the electronic register.

Unexplained Absences

- 3.5 Registers close formally at 9.20am in the morning and 1.20pm in the afternoon. If a child has not arrived in school by close of registers, and no notification has been received, the school will contact the parent to ascertain the situation. Parents should telephone the school on the first day of their child's absence to confirm their illness or email the school. Teachers who have not received a valid reason for absence will mark the pupil with an N code and the Admin Officer will phone parents to check the reason for absence. If the school is unable to contact parents or has concerns about reasons for absence then they will notify the Educational Welfare Officer/MASH team.
- 3.6 The designated safeguarding lead (head teacher) or deputy designated safeguarding lead will check the absence record each day to allocated codes and review any safeguarding concern.
- 3.7 The school sets a target for attendance of 96%+.
- 3.8 Therefore, parents are informed when attendance falls below 95% in writing. If attendance falls below 90% then parents will be asked to attend a School Attendance Meeting (SAM) to review support and discuss the concern. Targets to improve attendance are set at the meeting.
- 3.9 A review will be held by the school after two school weeks, following a SAM, to check if there is an improvement in attendance. If there is no significant improvement, then a Local Authority Attendance Meeting (LAM) is held with the Education Welfare Service and parent/s to set targets for improvement and consider support/or possible legal proceedings.
- 4 **To promote good attendance Old Sarum Primary School will:**
- 4.1 Reward excellent attendance regularly:
- Reward class attendance (with a prize for the winning class three times a year)
 - A class attendance league table (scores updated weekly in the newsletter as a percentage)
 - Certificates for excellent attendance –class (99%+)
 - Certificates for excellent attendance – pupil (99%+)
 - Certificates for least lateness – by class three times a year

- Identify staff roles and responsibilities with regard to attendance and punctuality and ensure rigorous procedures are in place to ensure excellent attendance
- Promote use of data software such as SIMs as a tool to identify and monitor attendance and punctuality so that Governors are informed about attendance at every Full Governing Body Meeting (FGB)
- Establish a coherent meeting structure which identifies attendance and lateness issues and communicates to key personnel internally and externally actions to be taken
- Ensure all staff and pupils understand how attendance fits into the normal rewards and sanctions structure
- Ensure key staff work collaboratively with outside agencies, e.g. The Police, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) or Social Services in tackling attendance and lateness
- Ensure that whole school attendance and punctuality figures are available when required by The Local Authority, DFE, and OFSTED etc.
- Monitor the attendance of different groups (FSM, Ethnicity, SEND etc.) and compare these figures with national and Wiltshire averages. Then plan to improve attendance in groups if a concern is identified.

5 New Pupils Joining a School - Expected First Day of Attendance:
Pupils join the school roll from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or has been notified, that the pupil will attend and must be listed in both the admission and attendance registers from that day. If a pupil has accepted a place at the school and fails to attend on the agreed date, the school will follow up the absence to ensure that the pupil does not lose their place and that any safeguarding and missing from education concerns are addressed.

6 The Local Authority:

- 6.1. The Local Authority discharges its statutory duty to ensure regular school attendance through Education Welfare Officers within the Education Welfare Service. In doing so it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities
- 6.2. The primary responsibility of the Education Welfare Service is to promote the excellent attendance of all pupils in Wiltshire, thereby contributing to raising pupil attainment.
- 6.3. The Education Welfare Service will work in close partnership with all maintained schools in Wiltshire and other statutory and voluntary agencies to promote regular school attendance
- 6.4. Whilst each school will have access to a link Education Welfare Officer, the allocation of that resource will be targeted according to identified need.
- 6.5. The link Education Welfare Officer will offer consultation visits to schools and Academies to meet with the designated member of staff in order to:
 - Identify pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties by reviewing the attendance data of individual pupils or groups.
 - Agree on actions that need to be taken either by the school and/or the Education Welfare Service.

- Feedback and exchange information in relation to work which has been undertaken by the Education Welfare Officer and/or the school and recording this in writing, a copy of which is given to the school.
- Identify areas of concern and of good practice in relation to attendance matters.
- Offer advice on strategies for improving attendance.

Intervention

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will consider the most appropriate action. In the first instance this will involve arranging, by letter, a formal meeting to explain the actions that may be taken. It is good practice to make sure parents understand the consequences of failing to:

- Ensure their child's regular attendance, in particular that the case could result in a penalty notice and/or court.
- Intervention will be based on an assessment of needs, this could be through the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), and action planned appropriate to the individual circumstances of each case, but may include:
 - Holding formal Local Authority Attendance meetings and reviews between the school, parents and pupil in school or elsewhere
 - Offering specific support to parents and individual pupils, either at school or elsewhere.
 - Visiting the parent or pupil at home (where this is deemed appropriate or necessary).
 - Helping the pupil and parents to access appropriate support from other services and agencies

(The Education Welfare Officer may also signpost how pupils and families may receive additional support dependent upon need.)

7. In exceptional circumstances a child may attend school using a reduced timetable. This is a voluntary agreement between the head teacher and parents/carers of a child, which authorises the child to attend the school site at specific times. The agreement is made in consultation with the Local Authority. The agreement is regularly reviewed and is not intended to last longer than one short term. (A reduced timetable can be ended by agreement, or by the school or parent separately, so that the child returns to school full time.)