

Attendance Policy

Swanbourne CE School

Mursley CE School

Drayton Parslow Village School

Kingfishers Pre-School (Mursley)

(In this policy known as the Three Schools)



This policy was adopted on – **September 2018**

This policy was revised – **April 2026**

The policy is to be reviewed by – **September 2027**

(Copies of this policy are available for staff, parents, visitors and volunteers on request from the school office).

Contents

1. Introduction
2. Aims
3. Legislation and guidance
4. Expectations
5. Examples of authorised & unauthorised Absences
6. Holiday in Term Time

7. Special Occasions
8. Lateness
9. Medical appointments

Our Ethos

Our Schools are at the heart of their village communities, providing happy, safe and stimulating environments rooted in Christian values. We encourage our children to become independent, resilient and self-motivated learners to enable them to grow in self-esteem, achieve success and flourish as confident, well-rounded individuals in the rapidly changing world. Working together with our parents, we nurture each child's potential. Promote a lifelong love of learning and we value the impact of emotional health and wellbeing. We recognise the role of all pupils, staff, parents and stakeholders for promoting emotional health and well-being. We strive for excellence and enjoyment in all that we do.

We use the World Health Organisation's definition of mental health and wellbeing " a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community". We implement the Attendance policy with the emotional health and well-being of children and staff at the core of what we are working towards

1. Introduction

The Three Schools seek to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All staff at The Three Schools will work with pupils, their families and the local authority, to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time.

The schools have established an effective system of incentives which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives, The Three Schools have established an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

2.Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- promote good attendance
- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the schools;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- ensure that they contact the school by 9.15am on the day of each absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- Work with the school to ensure high levels of attendance.

In line with our Child Protection Policy, we have a robust system for monitoring attendance and will act to address absenteeism with parents/carers and pupils promptly and identify any safeguarding issues arising;

- All children attending our schools are required to have a minimum of two identified emergency contacts, this is to support prompt communication in the event of a serious incident or a child missing from school.
- We have a 'first day alert' call system to establish reasons for non-attendance.
- Any pupil absent for ten school days, where it has not been possible to contact a parent/carer, will be reported as a Child Missing in Education using the CME Protocol. (Children Missing from Education Policy)
- Any absence of two consecutive school days, without satisfactory explanation, of a pupil currently subject to a child protection plan will be referred to their social worker on the second day of absence at the latest.

Parents must inform the schools if there are any changes to where a pupil will be living. The Three Schools have a mandatory duty to inform the local authority Via the First Response Team, if a child under the age of 16 years, '...lives with someone other than their parent, stepparent, aunt, uncle or grandparent for a period of more than 28 days.' This is defined as being a private fostering arrangement.

What you can expect from the Three Schools:

- To make attendance and punctuality procedures a priority for all those associated with the schools including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- To develop an understanding for parents and pupils that high rates of attendance lead to sustained and therefore successful learning.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils, through letters, meetings and specific contracts.

- To discourage holiday absence by making parents clear that holiday absence in term time is unauthorised **and may lead to fines/prosecution.**
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To implement suitable rewards to promote high levels of attendance for each child e.g. inter-class competition
- To promote effective partnerships with the Children's Services Welfare Department of the LAs who work with the Three Schools.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning return to school following significant periods of absence.
- To inform parents of attendance rates in annual reports to parents and at parent consultations.
- To clarify the times for the beginning of each session, school term dates and training days.
- To clarify the procedure for parents with regards lateness or absence.
- To ensure clearly defined late registration procedures for parents and pupils.
- To respond swiftly to lateness (in respect of both pupils and parents).
- To review attendance regularly.
- To highlight the importance of attendance for children through:
 - PSHE lessons
 - Assemblies/Worships
 - and for parents: in Parents' meetings
- To report to Governors termly:
 - Attendance Rate %
 - Authorised Absence rate %
 - Unauthorised Absence rate %
 - Actions taken to improve attendance
- To promote expectation of absence letters/phone calls from parents

5. Examples of authorised & unauthorised absences

Authorised absences:

- Genuine illness of the pupil
- Hospital/dental/doctor appointment for the pupil
- Major religious observances
- Visits to prospective new schools
- External exams or educational assessments
- Exclusion

Unauthorised absences:

- Family holiday
- Shopping / day trip / visit to a theme park
- A birthday treat
- Oversleeping
- Looking after other children / other family member
- Appointments for other family members.

6. Holiday in Term-Time

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents of a child of compulsory school age are under a legal duty to ensure the regular attendance of that child at the school where he/ she is a registered pupil. Failure to fulfil this duty may result in the Local Authority prosecuting the parents. **If found guilty of the offence, each parent could be fined up to £2500, and/or sentenced to three months imprisonment. The parent may alternatively be subject to a fixed penalty fine of £80 per child per parent.**

Absence during term time because of term time holidays, interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in The

Three Schools. We actively discourage parents from arranging holidays during term time and will only authorise absence for such holidays in exceptional circumstances.

Parents do not have any right or entitlement to expect term time leave to be granted and all leave is granted at the discretion of the Headteacher. Leave for the purpose of a family holiday will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**. If leave is taken without authorisation, it will be recorded in the school attendance register as unauthorised absence, which is as truancy, and the matter may be referred to the **local authority**.

The Headteacher reserves the right to make individual judgements as to what constitutes exceptional circumstances, which might include the following:

- A parent or grandparent is seriously/terminally ill and the holiday proposed is likely to be the last such holiday;
- There has recently been a death or other significant trauma in the family and it is felt that an immediate holiday might help the child concerned better deal with the situation;
- The holiday is a unique one-off never to be repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested.

As a rule, the financial factor when a parent claims that they are unable to afford a holiday during school holidays when prices may be significantly higher than in term time, should not constitute an exceptional circumstance. It is acknowledged that individual head teachers may have their own views and perspectives on this and may choose to respond according to these views and perspectives.

Similarly, the nature of the proposed holiday should not be taken as exceptional circumstances, although again, it is acknowledged that individual head teachers may have their own view and perspectives on this and may choose to respond in the light of those.

We will not grant leave if:

- A child's attendance record over the previous 20-week period is less than 95% - even if any previous absence was due to unavoidable causes such as illness;
- The period of leave coincides with the start of term, or is near to or coincides with tests, SATs, exams or other significant events in the school calendar.

How do I apply for 'Exceptional circumstances' absence?

'Exceptional circumstances', means that the parent must make out the case as to why their child should be treated differently to the norm.

The circumstances of each case should be taken into account. In any case, if a parent is planning holiday absence for a child, a letter to the Headteacher requesting a holiday absence must be completed prior to the absence taking place.

The parent must make the case for the period of absence (e.g. Booking holidays because it is cheaper in term time is not an acceptable reason for holiday absence.)

In an exceptional case, where the Headteacher has agreed holiday absence, this will be authorised. Unauthorised absences will be recorded where this has not been the case. There is no appeal process, but parents can choose to follow our Complaints Policy.

7. Special Occasions

Only exceptional occasions warrant authorised absence e.g. attending the wedding of a family member would be acceptable, but a day's absence for a birthday or shopping trip would not. The birth of another baby within the family can be seen as a special occasion, though each case must be considered individually.

8. Lateness

Swanbourne

Pupils arriving after **9.00am** but before **9:30am** are recorded as L (late before the register is closed), with minutes late recorded. This code still counts as attending.

Registers should remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes after the start of the session; therefore, any pupil arriving after **9:30am** should be recorded as U (late after registration closed), which is classed as an unauthorised absence.

Drayton Parslow and Mursley

Pupils arriving after **8:45am** but before **9:15am** are recorded as L (late before the register is closed), with minutes late recorded. This code still counts as attending.

Registers should remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes after the start of the session; therefore, any pupil arriving after **9:15am** should be recorded as U (late after registration closed), which is classed as an unauthorised absence.

9. Medical appointments

A child who is out of school for medical/dental appointments will be marked as having an authorised absence. Permission must be sought beforehand.

Policy agreed by governing body – September 2018

Policy was revised – April 2026

Policy to be reviewed – September 2027

Chair of governors (Swanbourne), Chair of governors (Mursley & Drayton Parslow) & Executive Co-Headteachers