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Europa Attendance Policy

Version and Date		Action/Notes
V1	June 2015	
V2	10 June 2018	Updated for Secondary School
V3	20 July 2020	Updated for new academic year
V4	20 July V4	Updated following COVID-19 lockdown with UK government guidance on a return to school
Review Date June 2022		

School Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818204/School_attendance_July_2019.pdf

Children on roll should normally attend school every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. The Europa School promotes good attendance through appropriate procedures and the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

This policy has been updated in the context of the reopening of schools following the COVID-19 lockdown where a significant number of children have not had in-school provision since March 2019. Guidance on attendance from September is provided in the link below.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 the governing body is responsible for

making sure the school keeps an attendance register to record which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Expectations

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. They miss teaching and learning, leaving them less prepared for future lessons and disrupting the learning of the group of which they are a part. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which we seek to avoid. Staff take the register at the start of morning and afternoon school and this is a good time for pupils to be welcomed, and to understand that school has now started for that part of the day. Parents are asked to assist in seeing that pupils are punctual.

There are two types of absence:

- *An absence is classified as authorised when a child is 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 and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.*
- *An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.*

Parents may see their own child's attendance record on request at the school office. School reports summarise attendance data for the individual child. Parents also have access to the School Base parents' portal where they can access the attendance data for their child.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, absence for the purpose of holiday is only authorised if permission is requested at least 14 days in advance of the holiday. No retrospective approval can be granted. Failure to request permission for leave, or refusal to grant leave, will mean that the absence is unauthorised. Schools are required to notify the DfE and the LEA of all unauthorised absences. By law, there is no "entitlement" or "allowance" as of right. Any absence from school is authorised in exceptional circumstances only and solely at the discretion of the Headteacher, within the framework of current legislation and LEA policy. Parents must make a case for leave of absence, and each case will be considered on its individual merits. When considering granting leave for holiday during term time, the school will consider: the pupil's attendance record, family circumstances, duration of the proposed trip, whether the trip/event is rare, educational merit of trip, clashes with periods of formal assessment.

Under the above regulation, a maximum of 10 school days may be authorised in any one school year unless in exceptional circumstances. All such cases should be discussed with the Headteacher as a child who is absent longer than 10 days after an agreed return date can legally be removed from the school roll.

Implementation of Policy

Procedure to follow if a child is absent

1. If a child cannot come to school, parents must get in touch with the school on the first day of the absence, explaining why the child will not be coming on that day. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence.
2. The class/subject teacher will record any absence in the register. Registered absences are reported to the school office. If no message has been received from parents, the office will endeavour to contact the parents. The school will take necessary measures if the whereabouts of a child cannot be clearly established.
3. The school will follow up lateness and unexplained absence with a request for an explanation from parents. If there is a persistent problem, the principal/ heads of School will request a meeting with parents.
4. When the child returns to school, a note/email should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
5. Foreseeable absence (for example a medical appointment) should be notified by parents to the school in advance.

Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. In circumstances which give rise to a legitimate request for absence, parents should normally contact the school at least a week in advance to seek permission. A form is available at reception to request a leave of absence.

Holiday Requests

Family holidays should be arranged during the normal school holiday periods, but if this is not possible, parents should submit a request to the principal. The principal may authorise the holiday (up to a maximum of 10 days) where the judgment is that it will not be too detrimental to the child's education and if the absence will not push the child's attendance below 94%. If the principal is concerned about the holiday and feels that it could have possible long term harmful effects on the child he/she may refer it to the Governing Body for approval.

Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work. If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then refer it to the County attendance team (<http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/county-attendance-team>) . Excellent attendance will be formally recognised by the school.

Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior management team and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA link inspector as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets. A minimum of 95% has been set.

Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the principal. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be. The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The rates of attendance will be reported in the annual governor's report.

Disability Equality Impact Assessment

This policy has been written with reference to and in consideration of the school's Disability Equality Plan. Assessment will include consideration of issues identified by the involvement of disabled children, staff and parents and any information the school holds on disabled children, staff and parents.