



The Street, Ewelme, Oxfordshire,
OX10 6HU

Head Teacher: Mr J. Ottaway
01491 839240

Office.3752@ewelme.oxon.sch.uk

Dear Parents and Carers,

The Importance of Good Attendance

We are writing to all families to remind you of the importance of regular school attendance and to explain the steps the school may take where children are absent from school without authorisation, including for term-time holidays.

At Ewelme C.E. Primary School, we know that **regular attendance is essential to children's education, wellbeing and progress**. Every school day matters. Being in school enables children to benefit from teaching, develop their knowledge and skills, take part in school life and maintain strong relationships with their friends and teachers.

Even a small number of days missed can have an impact. For example, a child who regularly misses individual days or takes holidays during term time can miss important teaching that is difficult to fully replace.

We therefore ask all parents and carers to make school attendance a priority and to arrange family holidays during the school holidays wherever possible.

Requesting planned school absence for your child/children

We have amended our system for requesting periods of planned school absence. If you wish to request a planned school absence for your child/children, please fill in this [online form](#).

Please note, in the case of medical appointments **IT IS NOT NECESSARY** to complete this form - please inform your child's class teacher of the time and date of the appointment.

Making this request does not automatically mean the planned absence will be agreed to/authorised by the school. Term-time absences will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Term-time holidays

Government guidance is clear that parents and carers should not normally take their children out of school during term time. **Headteachers may only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances**. A family holiday, a visit to see family or a holiday that is cheaper during term time would not normally be considered an exceptional circumstance.

If a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time without the absence being authorised, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**.

What happens if a term-time holiday is taken?

Where a child is absent from school for an unauthorised term-time holiday, the school may take the following steps:

1. **The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.**

The school will consider the circumstances of the absence and record it in accordance with attendance regulations and our attendance policy.

2. **The school may contact parents/carers.**

We may contact you to discuss the absence and the importance of regular attendance.

3. **A Penalty Notice may be requested.**

Where the legal criteria are met, the school may request that the local authority issue a **Penalty Notice** to parents/carers in relation to unauthorised absence. This is a matter for the local authority, rather than a fine imposed directly by the school. Please see the additional information about Penalty Notices attached to the end of this letter.

4. **Further action may be taken where appropriate.**

If attendance continues to be a concern, or where there are further periods of unauthorised absence, the school and/or local authority may consider further action in accordance with national attendance guidance and the law.

The school will always consider the individual circumstances of an absence and will work with families wherever possible to support good attendance.

Working together

We recognise that there may be occasions when a child cannot attend school for reasons beyond their family's control. **If your child is unable to attend, please let the school know as soon as possible and explain the reason for the absence.**

Our approach to attendance is not about penalising families. It is about ensuring that every child has the opportunity to attend school regularly, make good progress and benefit fully from the education and experiences we provide.

We are grateful for your continued support in helping us to achieve this. By working together, we can ensure that every child at Ewelme C.E. Primary School has the best possible opportunity to **learn, flourish and thrive.**

If you are unsure whether a proposed absence may be authorised, please contact the school before making arrangements or fill in the request for planned absence [online form](#) ahead of time. We will be happy to discuss the circumstances with you.

Thank you for your continued support. For more information about attendance at Ewelme, you can read our attendance policy here: <https://ewelmeprimaryschool.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Attendance-policy-2024-2025.pdf>

Yours sincerely,

J. Ottaway

Headteacher

Ewelme C.E. Primary School

Further information about Penalty Notices:

When must a penalty notice be considered?

Since 19 August 2024, schools in England must consider a penalty notice when a pupil has **10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period**. Ten sessions normally equate to **five school days**, as there are two sessions (morning and afternoon) per school day.

The sessions:

- do **not** have to be consecutive;
- can be made up of different types of unauthorised absence;
- can span different terms or school years; and
- can include a term-time holiday.

A **five-school-day term-time holiday** would therefore normally meet the national threshold for consideration of a penalty notice.

Amount of the penalty

For a **first penalty notice for the same parent/carer and child within a three-year period**:

- **£80 per parent/carer, per child**, if paid within 21 days.
- **£160 per parent/carer, per child**, if paid between days 22 and 28.
- If it is not paid within 28 days, further legal action may be considered.

For a **second penalty notice for the same parent/carer and child within three years**:

- **£160 per parent/carer, per child.**
- There is **no £80 discounted rate**.

There is a limit of **two penalty notices within a three-year period** for the same parent/carer and child. Following a further offence, prosecution or another legal intervention may be considered rather than issuing another penalty notice.

Important point about term-time holidays

Headteachers **cannot normally authorise term-time holidays**. Leave of absence during term time can only be authorised where the headteacher considers that there are **exceptional circumstances**. Oxfordshire County Council explicitly states that if parents take their child on holiday despite the school refusing the request, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and the school/county attendance officer may consider a penalty notice.

The Oxfordshire County Attendance Team has responsibility for issuing penalty notices and prosecutions under the relevant legislation.