

Oakwood Infant and Nursery School



Attendance Policy and Plan

School Mission Statement

*At Oakwood Infant and Nursery School we provide a safe, healthy, happy and creative learning environment for everyone, through high expectations and mutual respect.
We are all stars watch us shine.*

Approved : 21st November 2018

Ratified: 21st November 2018

Review: July 2019

Attendance Policy

Aims

The aim of Oakwood Infant and Nursery School's Attendance Policy is to provide an environment which encourages all our pupils to attend school regularly and punctually. This is vital if we are to ensure they succeed in school and in their future lives.

There are clear links between attendance and attainment and attendance and safeguarding children; therefore the whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: governors, parents, pupils and all school staff.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act ("the Act"), parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority (LA).

The register is a legal document and school must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 ("the Regulations"), take a register at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session.

Under the Regulations, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed all references to family holidays and leave of absence shall not be granted unless an application has been made in advance and the headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances. Headteachers no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence. This discretion has been removed by the 2013 Regulations. Whilst the headteacher will consider all requests on a case-by-case basis, parents must be aware that requests will normally be refused.

Where a family chooses to take a holiday during term time, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child (where 5 or more days of unauthorised absence are recorded or where there are 3 or more days unauthorised absence due to a holiday taken during the first two weeks of September). A penalty notice may be issued if 10 unauthorised absences have occurred during a 10 week period.

If leave of absence is taken without the request having been agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the LA issuing a Penalty Notice,

in accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct (£120 per parent, per child/£60 if paid within 21 days), where there have been 5 or more days of unauthorised absence recorded. If this penalty is not paid, the LA will instigate legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

The school can also refer cases of poor attendance to the LA to issue a Penalty Notice. The school will always try to engage with the families to find a solution to poor attendance prior to issuing a Penalty Notice. At this point, parents must engage with the school.

In compliance with Section 436A of the Act, the school will, after making appropriate checks, report all Children Missing From Education to the Local Authority Attendance Compliance Team, which has a duty to investigate the whereabouts of such children and negotiate their prompt return to suitable education.

PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

If a pupil is prevented from attending school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school of the pupil's absence. This should be done by telephone on the first day of absence and each subsequent day, unless informed otherwise. Wherever possible, parents should avoid making medical/dental appointments for their children during school hours.

Where a child appears to be having an unacceptable level of absence due to medical reasons, the school may request that medical evidence (such as appointment cards or prescribed medication) be provided to cover all absences. Children who are absent for three or more days will be asked to provide medical evidence to support their absence. The headteacher will then use this evidence when deciding whether the absence should be authorised.

Failure on the part of the parent/carer to provide such medical evidence, will result in absences being recorded as unauthorised and referral to the The Attendance Compliance Team or Aquinas (School Attendance Provisions) Ltd will be considered.

Parents do not have the right to take children out of school for a holiday during term time.

There is the expectation that parents/carers will work with the school, the The Attendance Compliance Team and/or Aquinas (School Attendance Provisions) Ltd to resolve any attendance issues.

Parents have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

Below is a Guide for Parents which may help to answer some important questions.

PUPILS' RESPONSIBILITIES

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties which might prevent them from attending regularly, the school will provide opportunities to discuss any matters arising with an adult.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn.

SCHOOL'S RESPONSIBILITIES

All the staff at Oakwood Infant and Nursery School will provide an ethos which places a high value on regular attendance and good punctuality. They also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

School staff are responsible for ensuring pupils have good attendance by:

- Ensuring that attendance registers are kept accurately
- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence – a letter or message from a parent/carer does not of itself authorise an absence. Only the school can decide whether the parent/carer's explanation justifies authorising the absence. If in doubt, refer to the Headteacher.
- Responding to absenteeism firmly, consistently and with care
- Contacting parents when they are concerned about a pupil's absences and recording such contact
- Consulting with The Attendance Compliance Team or Aquinas (School Attendance Provisions) if a pupil's absence continues to give cause for concern
- Promoting regular school attendance (for example, by contacting parents on the first day of absence if parents have not contacted the school)
- By being aware of regular or patterns of absence and referring to the Attendance Officer for investigation.

Pupils may be marked as unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances if they are unable to get to school because of serious disruption to travel caused by a weather related emergency, such as snow or flooding.

There is a progressive attendance award scheme in place which is accessible to all pupils.

Individual pupils with excellent 100% attendance will receive awards each term and each academic year.

In addition, schools are required to produce written home/school agreements which include clear understandings about attendance and punctuality.

EVALUATION AND REVIEW

The school will review this policy annually and update accordingly to include changes in the law and guidance on good practice. The policy will be promoted throughout the school community and shared with outside agencies and partners as required.

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1. When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should be at school in good time for registration. The class doors open at 8.40am. The morning register will be called promptly at 8.55 am and the afternoon register at 12.00 pm.

2. What happens if my child is late?

If your child arrives after 8.55 am he/she is late and will be marked as such in the register. Pupils who arrive after registration should be brought to the School Office by a responsible adult where their names and the reason for lateness will be entered in the Late Book. If a pupil is late on several occasions, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss reasons/difficulties for lateness.

3. Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?

We expect parents/carers to telephone the school on the first day of absence and each subsequent day, unless advised otherwise. Ideally, we require medical evidence on your child's return to school if they have been absent for three or more days. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

4. If I send a letter, will this mean absence is authorised?

For absent pupils of compulsory school age, the register must record whether or not their absences are authorised. If no acceptable reason for the absence has been received at the time of registration, the absence is **unauthorised** unless or until a satisfactory reason is given. A note or explanation from parents/carers **does not** mean an absence becomes authorised. **The decision whether or not to authorise an absence rests with the school.**

5. What reasons will the school accept for absences?

- Illness (Authorised)
- Day of religious observance
- Emergency medical/dental appointment (please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays)
- Family bereavement

- Difficulties caused by travel due to severe disruption from weather

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness, you may be asked to produce medical evidence.

6. What is unacceptable?

The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping, birthdays or looking after brothers or sisters etc.

7. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?

The school will contact you if we have not heard from you on the first day of absence. This is because we believe it is our responsibility to ensure your child's safety, as well as their regular attendance at school.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

8. Can we take family holidays during term time?

Absences during term time **will not** be routinely authorised. If there are exceptional circumstances which require your child to be absent during term time, you must complete an 'application for leave of absence form', which will be referred to the Headteacher. If annual leave is governed by employment conditions e.g. armed forces, a letter from the employer may be required.

9. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep, gets up in plenty of time each morning and eats a healthy breakfast. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education. Your child will bring home their reading/home-school diary each day. Please ensure that you look at it with your child and sign it regularly.

10. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.

In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with Family Solutions. The school may also refer you to The Attendance Compliance Team who work with staff and families if difficulties

with attendance arise. The Attendance Compliance Team, North East Team can be contacted on 0333 013 9983 or they are based at:

**The Attendance Compliance Team, Children and Families Directorate
County Hall
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1QH**

Attendance and the School – what happens when a pupil's attendance is

98%+	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• PRAISE• Share and celebrate with the rest of the class• Whole school 100% assemblies
95-98%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school will monitor and may have an informal conversation with parent/carer regarding attendance concerns• Note made that this dialogue has taken place
Below 95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letter home from Attendance Officer outlining concerns over attendance and the need for improvement• Offer of support• SAM – school attendance meeting with Attendance Officer and Aquinas (School Attendance Provisions) Ltd
Below 90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance closely monitored• Penalty Notice may be issued