



# **Oakwood Community School**

## **Attendance Policy**

Ratified by the Board September 2020

## **Context**

Children's learning is at the heart of everything we do at Oakwood Community School, but children cannot learn the prescribed curriculum if they are absent. Therefore, the staff take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the Attendance policy are:

- To improve attendance and punctuality across the whole school
- To reduce the percentage of unauthorized absence
- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school
- To use attendance monitoring to ensure that pupils are not missing or at risk during school times.

## **The Education Act 1996**

The Education Act 1996 states that parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (i.e. 5 to 16-year olds) receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Children between the ages of 16-18 are now required to be in education and/or training.

The school is required to inform the Home Manager/ LEA/ parents, immediately, if a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent from school. If there is no valid reason for the absence, it is treated as unauthorized.

## **Pupil Registration**

The school maintains an attendance register, which is taken at 9am and 12pm every day. For each pupil, the register is marked in accordance with its' requirements as specified in the register.

## **Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

### **Authorised Absence**

Authorised Absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences must be treated as **unauthorised absence**.

### **School Procedures**

Any child who is absent from school must have their absence recorded as being authorised or unauthorised.

Only the Head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

Registration will take place at the start of school (9am) and at 12pm in the afternoon.

Where children are regularly late for school, the school will inform/write to the parents/carers informing them of the schools concerns and offering support and help to rectify the situation.

### **Absence**

Parents or carers are expected to contact the school on first day of absence.

### **Frequent Absence**

It is the responsibility of everyone in the school community to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents/carers and the pupil.

### **Frequent Medical Absences**

The school will discuss with the parents/carers those pupils who frequently miss days for medical reasons.

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

### **Attendance Monitoring**

The school monitors the attendance of all pupils daily. Where the school has identified that a child's attendance has fallen below the level of 90% in any monthly period the school writes to the parents/carers making them aware of the concerns and the importance of consistent and regular attendance at school. In addition, the headteachers will monitor the attendance.

**The expected level of attendance for children is 100%**

If there is no subsequent improvement in a child's attendance a second attendance letter is sent home informing the parents/carers of school expectations and asking them to try to ensure that the young person's attendance improves and offering support and advice where necessary.

**The school will endeavour to work with and support all children, parent/s and carers where ever possible.**

## **Holidays in term time**

The school actively discourages the taking of holidays during term time, although we accept that in some cases, allowances have to be made.

The school is however only able to authorise holiday absences for a maximum of 10 days during an academic year.

Parents/carers should not normally take pupils on holidays during term time.

Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually; the time of year proposed for the trip; its nature; the overall attendance pattern of the pupil; the child's stage of education and progress.

If a school does not agree absence and the pupil goes on holiday, the absence is unauthorised. If a child is kept away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised.

## **Attendance Targets**

This table shows types of absences, which schools may treat as authorised

- Illness, medical and dental appointments
- Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is authorised absence.
- Absence as a result of judicial or police matters.
- If a pupil is present for registration but has a medical appointment later, or returns home because of illness, no absence need be recorded for that session.
- Schools should keep a record of pupils leaving or returning to site in case of an emergency.
- If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools will contact the Home Manager/parents.
- Absence from school to attend therapeutic sessions
- Days of religious observance
- Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.
- Interviews with a prospective place at another school (including entrance examinations). School staff should normally ask for advance notice and proof of the appointment, e.g. a letter of invitation.

***Failure to attend school at the proper time without good reason is unauthorised absence.***

### **Temporary Removal / Exclusions**

A pupil removed/excluded for a fixed period remains on roll and the absence should be treated as authorised as it results from a decision taken by the school.

If it is deemed necessary to temporarily remove a child from school, the school will comply with the DfE regulations regarding fixed term exclusions. Teachers are responsible for setting work for a pupil who has been temporarily removed /excluded.

### **Special occasions**

The school will consider each request individually.

The school will respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events and have discretion to authorise such absences.

Only exceptional occasions warrant leave of absence. For example, attending the wedding of a family member would be acceptable, but a day's absence for a birthday or a shopping trip in school hours would not.

The School will consider: the nature of the event; its frequency, (is it a one-off, or likely to become a regular occurrence?), and the pupil's overall attendance pattern.

### **Alternative Education**

If it is considered necessary, due to reasons of safety or risk, a child may be educated for a set period at an alternative site. Frequently this will be at the home or library. As far as possible, teachers will be sent to the home/alternative site to educate the child who is on alternative education plan and they will follow the full curriculum. When a child is on alternative education, the situation will be monitored and reviewed regularly with a view to returning the pupil to the school site as soon as possible. As far as possible, s/he will be involved in these decisions.