

Oakfield Lodge School



Attendance Policy

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Written by: Head Teacher

Reviewed by: IEB

Last Review Date: February 2018

Ratified on: 14th February 2018

Core Statement

Regular attendance and punctuality is essential if pupils are to make good progress at school and to gain the appropriate skills, which will equip them for life. It is important to ensure that our most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in some cases.

The school aims to achieve good attendance and punctuality by operating an attendance policy within which staff, pupils, parents and when appropriate the Education Welfare Service can work in partnership. The school maintains attendance records and initiates quick and early intervention when a problem is identified.

The school also recognises that many pupils come to us with a history of poor school attendance, or may have had a lengthy period out of school. The school therefore works with the pupils to encourage good attendance but does accept that for some pupils this may be a long process of persuasion and perseverance, including sometimes working from home. Full attendance for some pupils may not be realistic although their attitude to school, their commitment to work, to make progress, to be socially acceptable, to make realistic plans for their future, may be one of the best experiences of their school career.

The school accepts also the need to constantly review the curriculum at all Key Stages but especially at KS4. The school aims to motivate pupils so much that they wish to attend and benefit from a curriculum which is enriched, diverse and relevant to their own individual needs.

Pupils are encouraged to develop the habit of regular and punctual attendance and learn to be responsible and reliable. Staff encourage good attendance and punctuality and liaise with parents and other agencies where appropriate. In addition, good attendance and punctuality are seen as achievements in their own right and are recognised as such by all.

Aims

- To create a culture where good attendance is “normality”
- To demonstrate to pupils, parents/carers and staff that the school values good attendance and to recognise that good, regular attendance is an achievement in itself.
- To be consistent in both rewards and sanctions
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive

Objectives

- To involve pupils more in their school attendance
- To increase all pupils attendance
- All school staff to continue to take responsibility for pupils attendance
- To work effectively with Education Welfare Service, and the reporting of half- termly figures to the service

Targets

- To have an effective means of collecting and monitoring attendance information
- To agree specific targets for individuals, groups, years and the whole school in a context of all known relevant factors
- To keep parents/carers, pupils, and governors informed of policy and practice
- To discuss the setting of targets for the school with the Education Welfare Officer

Registration

There are four broad classifications in the attendance register.

Present: Pupil on the school premises at the time of registration.

Approved Educational Activity: Pupil is engaged in approved supervised activity off site.

Authorised Absence: Pupil has the authority of the school to be absent, either given in advance or afterwards.

Unauthorised absence No explanation received or unacceptable reason given.

Register procedures

All registers at Oakfield Lodge School are taken using the electronic SIMS registration system. It is essential that the register is taken in both AM and PM registration sessions. All teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that lesson registers are taken promptly at the beginning of the lesson. Should the SIMS system not be accessible then a paper register must be taken and sent to the school office within the first 5 minutes of the lesson.

Students educated off site

Students who are educated off site are expected to attend on time. Attendance at off site providers is closely monitored by the attendance officer. Students who do not attend off site provision regularly will be referred to the local authority education welfare officer.

Symbols used

- / Present
- V Educational Visit/activity
- M Medical
- H Family holiday
- O Unauthorised absence.
- L Late
- U Late after registration has closed
- W Work experience
- B Education off site

The register is completed at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions, using the SIMS IT solution. Where pupils are engaged in an approved educational activity off site attendance will be monitored by the lead officer for off site provision.

First Day Contact

DfEE guidelines on school attendance stress that the single most effective initiative designed to improve rates of attendance is the implementation of first day response to pupil absence. It has the effect of:-

- showing the school is concerned about pupil attendance
- establishing the reason for absence at an early stage
- preventing unauthorised absence
- encouraging communication between parents and school

The school operates a first day contact policy as follows.

- Parents are encouraged to contact school if a pupil is absent.
- In the event of no contact being made the school office will either phone or text

parents.

- If contact is unable to be made this will be flagged to the attendance officer, who will then attempt to make contact on day 2 of absence.
- Should no contact be possible on day two a 'cold call' visit to the family home will be undertaken by the attendance officer, in situations where there are concerns relating to the safety of a pupil the school may request a safe and well police check to be undertaken.

If the family do not contact the school by telephone or by letter, the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

All records of contact relating to attendance are recorded on the SIMS communication log. Medical evidence can be requested if there are concerns in relation to high numbers of absence for medical reasons.

Follow up

The form register is reviewed weekly, by the form tutor, to ensure that attendance problems are noticed at the earliest possible opportunity. The following may suggest that further investigation is required.

- unexplained absences
- continual broken weeks
- patterns of non-attendance on specific day
- repeated medical absences and patterns of illness
- persistent lateness

If the school is unable to gain a satisfactory answer for absence, bearing in mind all mitigating circumstances, a referral is made to the Education Welfare Officer.

Acknowledging good attendance

Staff constantly praise and offer positive encouragement to pupils who are regularly punctual and have good attendance. This is also rewarded for pupils with attendance over 90% each term, with a voucher and a certificate which is presented in assembly. Parents' are also informed of this by text message.

Punctuality

Members of staff are on duty each morning to greet pupils on arrival. Lateness is noted and is discussed with individual pupils. If it is considered necessary, then parents are informed. A local pupil walking to school and regularly arriving late would be an example of this.

The school understands the need for on-going communication with parents/carers and pupils regarding this policy, particularly those new to the school.

Punctuality is monitored by form tutors. Registration takes place at 9am. Pupils arriving after 9.15 will be marked as late 'L' code. Pupils arriving after 9.30 am will be coded as 'U' arrived after registration closed.

Holidays during term time.

Holidays during term time will only be granted by the Head Teacher in exceptional circumstances. Parents have no right to a leave of absence during term time (2006 regulations).

Parents/carers with whom the child normally resides must apply in writing to the school for a leave of absence.

On receiving the request the Head Teacher will determine if the exceptional rule applies. Only the Head Teacher can consider requests, you will be notified in writing of the decision of the Head Teacher.

Should parents/carers choose to go ahead with a holiday that has been refused, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Fixed penalty notices

The school will decide if a fixed penalty notice should be issued. In these circumstances you will receive a letter from the school advising that they are referring the matter to the Local Authority and that a fine may be issued.

If a fine is issued a fixed penalty notice will be sent to you, accompanied by an explanatory letter. You will be given the opportunity to pay a fine instead of being prosecuted in the criminal court.

Fixed penalty notices – fines		
Timeline	One Child	Two Children
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear before a magistrate on the grounds that you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance at school.	You will receive a summons to appear before a magistrate on the grounds that you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance at school.

Payments will not be accepted after the 28th day. Part payments cannot be made.