

# Attendance Policy



## Oakmeadow C E Primary & Nursery School

Adopted: Autumn 2018/ Reviewed Autumn 19

Next Review due: July 20

### Introduction and Statutory framework

Oakmeadow CE Primary & Nursery School aims to maximise attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them. If allowed to remain unchecked persistent absence and lateness can significantly impact on a pupil's progress and achievement. Our partnerships with parents are play a vital role in ensuring that this is achieved.

In line with the 1996 Education Act, we expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to create happy and rewarding environment for all children where the children want to come. We will make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

We recognise that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. At all times, parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school life and to share and support their children's learning. Though our home-school agreement, parents agree to ensuring their child's the regular and punctual attendance. As part of our annual written reports to parents, the children's attendance records are shared.

### Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon.

Registers are checked by the Office team. All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes, the attendance officer checks the messages. If a pupil is absent and the school has not been contacted, then the attendance office will telephone parents to check on why a pupil is not in school.

Attendance data is held electronically on separate SIMS Management Information System, accessible by the Headteacher who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records. The Headteacher monitors the attendance of pupils regularly. Where the head

feels it appropriate, parents/carers will be notified by letter when their child's attendance drops below the **School's target of 95%**.

**If attendance drops below 92%** a 2nd, letter may be written to inform parents/carers and the head may invite the parents to meeting to discuss ways of improving attendance.

**The School will refer a pupil to the Education Welfare Team (EWO) if a child's attendance drops below 87% and there is no satisfactory reason for this drop in attendance.** Please use the link below for further information on Shropshire attendance expectations.

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/schools/school-attendance/>

As a school we then need to complete returns of school data annually to the DfE and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and Governors at the first Full Board meeting of the school year. Targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. As a school we will **always strive to remain above the national average for attendance.**

### **Punctuality and lateness**

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start at the start of the school day. The Headteacher monitors lateness of pupils as punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is of extreme importance therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

Children may arrive at school from 8.50 and go straight to class. There is no supervision on site for children before this time and the school is not legally responsible for them.

Registration is at 8.55 am and again at 1.00pm.

Registers will close at ten minutes after registration times. A pupil that arrives after this time will be marked as 'late' unless the school have previously acknowledged the reason for their late arrival into school.

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Headteacher will write to the parents/carers. If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school will make a formal referral to the EWO.

### **Authorised and unauthorised attendance**

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence not parents and it is a statutory requirement for the Headteacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised.

Wherever reasonably possible, we expect parents to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time if this is not possible please give as much written notice as possible with a copy of the appointment slip. The codes for absences are included in each register.

If a child is absent from school for whatever reason **the parent must inform the school in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible**. The normal routine is to telephone the school on the first morning of absence. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed.

Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school received no reason/explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given. This could then trigger the schools' children missing in education procedure if we are worried about the location of a child.

## **Leave of Absence**

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/schools/school-attendance/pupil-leave-of-absence/>

When children are taken out of school during the term time not only does the education of the individual child suffer, but it can cause disruption to the rest of the class with teachers having to repeat work and give extra help so that the pupil can catch up. There are 190 school days in an academic year leaving 175 days free for families to take holidays. Not taking into account other absences, just taking a fortnight's holiday each year means that, between the ages of 5 to 16, a child would miss around half an academic year of learning.

### ***What does the law say?***

As of 1 September 2013 there has been a change in the **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**. Where there used to be the option for Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during the term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten days in a year, this has been removed.

Headteachers are **now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance**; the annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance".

### ***What should I do if I wish to request a leave of absence?***

You should contact school to request a leave of absence form. This will then be considered by the head teacher under the governing bodies recommendations.

The schools' current 'exceptional circumstances' are:

- **A bereavement in the family or a trauma.**
- **SEND requirements for a family**
- **A recent difficult family situation that has caused stress**
- **A change in family circumstance that is causing stress.**

We appreciate as a school there are points in children's lives that require exceptional circumstance consideration. These need to be confidentially shared with the head teacher (in written form) and will be considered. A decision for authorisation or unauthorisation will then be made. If you are not happy with any decision this can be appealed through the complaint policy for the school.

### ***What happens if my child goes on holiday in term time or takes leave of absence for other reasons without permission from the school?***

The absences will be marked in the school register as unauthorised absences and this may result in a Truancy Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120) per parent per child being issued by the Local Authority. In some cases, parents may be prosecuted for the offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

Parents/carers should never simply discount the amount of a penalty notice from the cost of a cheaper holiday, because this is a criminal offence and when doing so they are always risking prosecution.

**Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.**

Oakmeadow C of E Primary & Nursery School understands that holidays are generally less expensive during term time but this does NOT count as an exceptional circumstance.

Leave which is taken for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays

#### **Strategies for promoting attendance:**

##### **Why attendance matters:**

**Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance**

- **14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance**
- **20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance**
- **30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance**

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

At Oakmeadow CE Primary and Nursery School the staff and Governors endeavour to support parent in the responsibility of attendance by:-

- ☐ • an environment in which pupils feel welcomed and valued.
- ☐ • making every effort to match learning tasks to pupils' needs
- ☐ • collating attendance data termly and analysing it in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice
- ☐ • parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school portal, parents' evenings etc) of the importance of good attendance
- ☐ • The Headteacher will make a termly report to governors on attendance    Headteacher and
- ☐ SENCo may liaise with other agencies when this may serve to
  - support and assist pupils who are experiencing difficulties.

**Data Analysis**

The school collects and stores attendance data using the management information systems (SIMs). The school provides attendance data to the DFE, using SIMs to send data about the school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

The school uses the attendance data to identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils. Where attendance is a concern, the school will use data to analyse attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender.

The school uses attendance data to identify the main causes of absences within the school and to take action to address and improve those areas. The school will use data to monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.