



BROOKLANDS
COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

At Orwell Multi Academy Trust, we expect all children to be in school every day, unless they are too ill to attend. Term time holiday will not be authorised and will result in a fine. Unauthorised absence will result in legal intervention.

Every school in the Trust has staff who can support you with your child's attendance, so we ask that you work with us to ensure that your child is in school, on time, every day.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff as well as governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and the purpose of the attendance policy is to clarify everyone's part in this. It is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations and the school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

We set our school attendance target at 97%.

2. Governors responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the Local Governing Committee to make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. This policy forms part of that overarching responsibility.

An internal attendance target will be set and regularly reviewed as part of the overall data analysis.

3. Teachers & Support Staff responsibilities

All staff have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The headteacher will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are regularly shared with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and made available to all staff, pupils and parents. A report is prepared for the Governing Committee each term, so that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

SLT will also ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

4. Parents / Carers responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by the School to ensure their children attend the school regularly and support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum as the school is not able to automatically agree any requests for absence.

Parents will also be expected to notify school on the first day of absence by telephoning the school, completing an absence form via the school website or emailing the school office by 9.15am. Emails and phone calls will be responded to after 8.30am.

5. Pupils responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

6. Registration

Children are expected to be in their classrooms by **8.50am** for the start of the school day. The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. The register will be called at **8.50am** and **1.00pm** by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child. The registers will close at **9.10 am** and **1.15 pm**. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will count as absent. Pupils who arrive before the register closes but after the start of school will be counted as present but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness.

In the case of persistent lateness (more than twice a week over a half term), arriving 5 minutes after the school day begins (8.50am) the school contacts the parents advising them of the disruption to both the school day and the child's education.

Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers online. The prescribed register codes are shown below

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence

F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

A mark will be made in respect of each child during the registration period. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the headteacher.

The School recognises the links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. If absence is frequent, persistent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at the School will engage with parents about the need and reasons for their children's absence and support and encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the headteacher.

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised.

Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:

1. where leave has been granted by the school in advance;
2. where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
3. where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents are encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible and to ensure their child attends

school before and after the appointment where possible). The school may ask to see proof of medical appointments (eg: an appointment card, prescription or prescribed medicines):

4. where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence that is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
5. the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs;
6. for compassionate reasons, e.g. a family bereavement;
7. in other exceptional circumstances.

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a regular basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

The school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for 10 school sessions or more.

7. Complaints and Appeals

If parents / carers are unhappy with the decision of the school concerning any part of the application of this policy then they have a right to complain under the schools complaints procedures. If their complaint is upheld then the school records will be amended as appropriate. (Parents / Carers cannot complain to the school about the statutory regulations.)

8. Collection and analysis of data

The Headteacher will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Governing Body and ensure that accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

9 Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

The School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents / carers will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. (It should be noted that a single day is counted as 2 sessions.)

Office staff to maintain a written record of reasons for absence. Where absence is due to sickness an explanation of symptoms will be required or requested where not volunteered. Statements such as 'they are unwell today' will not be accepted and will require further explanation.

This process will escalate in the event of non – contact with parents:

1st day unauthorised - Call home. No response, call all other contacts. Escalate to headteacher.

2nd day unauthorised - Repeat above process.

3rd day unauthorised - Repeat above and send a letter to parents requesting reason for absence. Inform Education Welfare Officer (EWO) of situation.

4th day – Seek advice from the EWO as to further actions to be taken.

The EWO and/or police will be contacted earlier if the school has safeguarding concerns.

Admin staff to notify Headteacher after 2 days absence for children who are persistently absent. The Headteacher may request medical evidence for future absence. If this is not provided the absence may be unauthorised.

SLT is responsible for the implementation of the attendance policy and systems to ensure that the School supports Parents / Carers with issues around attendance and absence and to intervene as appropriate in cases of persistent non-attendance. The School recognises that each case is different and intervention strategies will be applied on a case by case basis, for example; sending letters, monitoring fortnightly, parental meetings, registration certificate information given to parents.

If the support of the school does not result in improved attendance and unauthorised absences continue to be persistent, then the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be supported in the same way as an emerging pattern of absence. If appropriate the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Parents of pupils arriving late should report to the School office where they will be asked to write in the 'Late Book' time of arrival and the reason for being late. It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure. For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises e.g. for a medical appointment or returning to school later in the day also report to the School Office.

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil leaves the school premises having previously registered for the session. Truancy not only impacts on the pupil's education, but it also places the pupil at risk of harm. The School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. A member of SLT should be alerted that a child has left the school premises. A member of the office staff is asked to call parents and 2 members of staff are asked to follow the child.

A broken week is a week where a student has received an absence mark for any roll call sessions during that week. Monitoring will show how many weeks of attendance have been broken due to absences. Broken weeks are a significant barrier to achievement in, and enjoyment of, school. What may seem to parents and children as an absence of 'the odd day here and there' can have a significant impact on wellbeing, academic progress and friendships.

Early interventions:

The most successful interventions, will be those that identify the issue before it becomes a problem for the child, family and school. At the first signs that there could be a Persistent Absence issue emerging, schools should consider:

- use of attendance-targeting letters that make parents aware that pupils have become PA, or are at risk of becoming PA and what is expected
- early meetings with parents and pupils when concerns first emerge to discuss these and agree actions to improve attendance
- documented conversations with parents and pupils that agree actions
- use of formal attendance meetings, including members of senior leadership
- home visits.

Strategies to address Persistent Absence:

The focus on Persistent Absence should be part of an escalating process that is embedded in school policy and procedure, led by senior leaders and understood by the whole school community: staff, pupils and parents.

Having assessed the reasons for the PA and analysed its profile, it is important to identify strategies that can be used to address it. In more complex and longer-term cases of poor attendance and persistent absence, interventions may include:

- multi-agency meetings and actions plans
- requests for medical information or information from other services
- use of local authority enforcement processes and procedures
- home visiting
- direct work with children and parents to address root causes of absences
- engaging specialist services
- considering options for provision.

10. Circumstances and Procedure for a Penalty Notice

A Penalty Notice may be issued where a child has been identified as having 2 sessions (a session being a morning or an afternoon) of unauthorised absence in an Academic Year. A second Penalty Notice may be issued for further absence in an Academic Year.

11. Requests for Term-time absence

The School will consider authorising absence for holidays in very special circumstances:

All requests must be made in writing to the headteacher who will take into consideration the child's attendance, academic progress and any exceptional circumstances before making a decision.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

An absence is deemed to be 'exceptional' if it is rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By 'unavoidable' we mean that it could not be reasonably scheduled at any other time.

The School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing.

- The School will not authorise a holiday during periods of national tests ie: Year 2 and Year 6 SATS, Year 4 Multiplication Tables Check and Key Stage 1 Phonics Screening.
- The school will not consider requests for leave of absence during September.
- Any requests for leave of absence will only be considered by the school if the child has 97% attendance or better in the 14 weeks preceding the request.
- The school will not authorise absence for special treat days for example birthdays.