Attendance policy
Oakthorpe Primary School

Approved by:	Teaching and Learning Committee	**Date:** 25.1.2024
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1. Aims

At Oakthorpe Primary School we believe that our Attendance Policy should support a child's right to:

> attend school

> be healthy and safe

> enjoy and achieve well at school

Our policy aims to set out clear expectations, to encourage good life habits and to provide a framework for monitoring e.g. to identify patterns of non-attendance and lateness. We aim to ensure that our high expectations lead to maximum achievement.

Central to the fulfilment of this aim is the need for a consistently good level of attendance and punctuality by all our pupils and the belief that working in partnership with parents will ensure the regular and punctual attendance of pupils. Pupils are expected to be at school on time each day.

Punctuality is encouraged as an act of courtesy and supports children to settle and have a calm start to their day. Punctuality also ensures that teaching and learning time is not wasted: important learning opportunities take place at the start of the day

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

> [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)](#)
> [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school. This is reported to the Governing Body on a termly basis
> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
> Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the school
> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
> Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
> Having an oversight of data analysis
> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.3 The parent support adviser/attendance officer

The parent support adviser (PSA) is responsible for:

> Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
> Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
> Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
> Advising the headteacher and working with the Local Authority regarding when to issue fixed-penalty notices

> Supporting parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils.

> Following up specific requests from the Headteacher for information about individuals.

> Processing and following up leave of absence requests.

> Generating warning letters to parents.

> Making referrals to Education Welfare Service (EWS).

> Ensuring that the attendance policy is followed and that the actions from EWS meetings are carried out.

Our Parent support advisor is Mrs Jacqui Sesto who deals will issues relating to attendance. They can be contacted via the school office or email psa@oakthorpe.enfield.sch.uk

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers (and covering support staff) are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the online register. Registration takes place from 8.50am-9am. Morning registration closes at 9am.

Pupils arriving between 9am and 9.20am are marked as late. Pupils arriving after 9.20am have missed the morning registration period and will be marked as an unauthorised absence. Register notes will state the arrival time.

Staff should also submit an afternoon register at the beginning of the afternoon session.

Staff should inform the Headteacher/Senior Member of staff or Parent Support Advisor of any concerns that may impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.

3.5 School office staff and the school welfare officer

School office staff will:

> Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school register

> Keep up to date fire lists for emergency purposes

The Welfare Officer is responsible for:

> Promptly checking online registers have been completed and submitted by the class teacher on a twice daily (am & pm)

> Ensuring prompt follow-up on unexplained absences (first day texting/calling).

> Ensuring registers are accurate.

> Informing the Headteacher of issues relating to non attendance at school i.e. contagious illnesses

> Listen to absence line messages from parents and record absences and reasons for absence on the daily register.

The School Welfare officers are Mrs Jane Hamza and Mrs Cheryl Blowes and may be contacted by the main school number 0208 807 4689 and selecting the option to speak to the Welfare Officer

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time. As a parent, you are legally responsible for making sure your child gets a suitable fulltime education, usually from the age of 5 to 16.

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.50am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return, This is when the child is too ill to attend school

- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

- Arrange holidays out of term time

- Make leave of absence requests for exceptional circumstances only (see section 4.3 for further information)

- Raise any concerns with the school regarding issues relating to attendance.

- Collect promptly at the end of the school day

- Be aware of the attendance policy including timings of the school day.

3.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.50am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Leave of absence request forms are available from the school office or on the school website.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

> Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may send a text message or email asking the parent to contact them. Other measures that the school may take include home visits or referral to Social Services or Police.

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

> Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels. This may be verbally, by letter or by a written report. Where absence levels are of a concern, letters will be sent to the parents outlining the current attendance percentages and how the school can support them.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. There is

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare and one off situations such as the following:

- Grandparent or other close relative is seriously ill – and you must leave in an emergency
- Significant trauma in the family
- A one-off, never to be repeated occasion that can only happen at that time, eg family wedding/funeral.

The school may require proof of this circumstance e.g. appointment letter, flight details, doctors note, wedding invitation.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, before the absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 School Procedures in Cases of Intervention

Although a range of strategies and actions will be taken on an informal basis, a formal procedure is applied when an absence remains unexplained this is outlined in the steps below:

• First day of absence contact is made by the school office.

 • Discussion on an informal level with the child/parent and reminder about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

• If attendance remains erratic, letters are sent from school drawing attention to the child's attendance.

 • Parents and carers are invited to the school offering them the opportunity to meet with the PSA and EWS to discuss the pattern of attendance.

• If the parents/carers do not attend the meeting the next stage is for an approach to be made by the EWS either by letter or through a visit.

 • Further formal approaches might then be made according to the LA's attendance policy.

5.3 Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

> Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing body.

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

> Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

> Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

> Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

7. Pupils with a long term illness or special educational needs or a disability

In circumstances where a child is regularly absent from school because of illness (regardless of whether it is mental or physical) or special educational needs or a disability, they have the same right to a suitable full-time education as any other child. The school will work with parents to discuss the reasons and make sure the right support is in place.

Oakthorpe Primary School will:

- Work with parents to make reasonable adjustments to help their child attend. e.g. adjustments to uniform, transport, routines, access to support or lunchtime arrangements.

- Ensure pupils receive the right pastoral care and in certain cases may consider a time-limited phased return to school where appropriate, for example for those who have anxiety about school attendance.

- Work jointly with other services including the local council and health services.

- Make attendance support a key feature of any individual healthcare plan for pupils with a long-term medical condition

- Ensure access to any provision will be outlined within the plan for pupils with Education, Health and Care plans.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the Headteacher and Parent Support Adviser. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Medical needs policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting

		activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Short guide for parents

https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance.pdf?utm_source=12%20December%202022%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19

Enfield Local Authority Information

https://www.enfield.gov.uk/services/children-and-education/school-welfare-and-information/absence-and-attendance#absence-and-attendance

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
98-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
96-98%	Good/Regular	5-9	1-2
95-96%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-95%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19 Equivalent to 38 sessions	More than 4