



# Attendance Policy

Review Cycle	Date of Current Policy	Author(s) of Current Policy	Review Date
2 Years	September 2024	KP	Autumn 2026

Signed: *K Parr* Ms K Parr Headteacher

## Aims

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

**The expected regular attendance level at Oaklands Primary School is:**

**96%**

**Attendance below 93% is considered to be well below the expected level.**

## Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

## Roles and Responsibilities

### The Governing Board

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority

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- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

## **The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring, analysing and benchmarking school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Approving the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Deputy Head to be able to do so.

Ensure parents are regularly informed of their child's attendance levels through parents' evenings and annual reports.

## **The Attendance Team (Headteacher, Deputy Head, Inclusion Officer and Office Administrator)**

are responsible for:

- Monitoring the impact of implemented attendance strategies and attendance data
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Leading, championing and improving attendance and punctuality across the school
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, such as the EWO where needed to improve attendance
- Issue penalty notices under the direction of the head teacher (or deputy head)
- Ensure correct codes are used for absence (see Appendix 1).

## **Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance electronically for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, and submitting this information to the school office each morning and afternoon.

## **Parents**

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to:

- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them).

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call or message the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence
- Provide the school with 3 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, from a member of the Attendance Team
- Ensure they leave sufficient time for their journey to school and back.

## Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time.

## Recording Attendance

### Attendance register

Children should be ready for registration which will be taken at 8.45am and after lunchbreak. Lateness is unacceptable and it is expected that all children will arrive at school ready to learn and on time. Children who arrive after 8.45am are expected to sign in at the school office and provide a reason for being late. This ensures they are included in a roll call in the event of an evacuation due to fire or similar. Children who arrive after 8.45am but before 9.30am will be recorded as late.

Children who arrive after 9.30am will be recorded as absent and this will be unauthorised unless there is a valid reason e.g. a medical appointment (proof will be required). The Office Administrator will collate attendance information at 9.30am to identify children who are absent without authorisation or notification. The parents of these children will be contacted to provide a reason for their child's absence. Parents of children who are late may be contacted if a reason for absence is not acceptable.

Pupils in the Oaklands Centre (Autism Base) are registered and recorded in exactly the same way as mainstream pupils. However, if children who have Local Authority transport arrive after the register closes due to issues with county transport, this will not be recorded as an absence.

### Absence

Where any pupil who does not attend school without reason, the school will:

- Make sure proper safeguarding actions are taken, including daily phone calls, police contact, home visits and involving external agencies.

Where the absence is longer than 3 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

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

## Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. Parents should complete a term time leave request form which can be obtained from the school office or from the SZapp.

The headteacher will **only** grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances include:

- Taking part in a regulated performance
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable agreed with school
- Exceptional circumstances

The school will require evidence of exceptional circumstances and define exceptional circumstances as being a rare, significant or unavoidable short period of absence. Circumstances could include:

- Forces staff returning from lengthy active service abroad
- A close family member has a terminal illness
- Attending a funeral of a close family member

A leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. It is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence may include (but are not limited to):

- Illness
- Attending a medical or dental appointment as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides appropriate medical evidence.
- Religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## **Sanctions**

To tackle poor attendance, our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions including, but not limited to, those listed below. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

## **Penalty notices**

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, the school will check with the local authority before doing so, and send them a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice. The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, each parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

### **Notices to improve**

If the national threshold has been met (10 sessions of absence within 10 school weeks) and parents do not engage with appropriate support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

### **Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

The school regularly communicates with pupils the impact and importance of good attendance. This is celebrated in assemblies and classrooms e.g. attendance stickers.

Where attendance causes concern, the school will support families through a range of informal and formal strategies. These can include, but are not limited to:

- Regular phone calls, messages and meetings
- Support from the Inclusion Officer, PFSA or other external agencies
- Letters and parent contract meetings

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school; severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of, or are, persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the support that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Refer families to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

## 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>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

<b>C2</b>	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	<p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>



<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays