



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Oaklands Primary School

#### Principles

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

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

**96%.**

**Attendance below 92% is considered to be well below the expected level.**

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. The school make the decision whether a reason for absence is acceptable and whether to record an absence as authorised or not, it is not for parents to decide how an absence will be recorded even if they believe their reason for absence is acceptable.

**Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a valid reason such as genuine illness or an unavoidable cause. The school will reference current Health Authority Guidance regarding recommended exclusion from school for that particular illness/disease. (A copy of the Health Authority Guidance is available on SZAPP – Medical Information and Forms icon).**

***Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no “leave” has been given. This includes:***

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily (such as above)
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to go on the register
- term time leave without exceptional circumstances (please see appendix A)
- children regularly arriving after 9.30am without authorisation from the school

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. Attendance letters will be sent to parents where attendance drops without appropriate reasons; parents may also be invited to an attendance meeting. This is nearly always successful.

Attendance is also monitored by the Education Safeguarding Service from the County Council to whom a referral may be made.

#### Registration

- Children should be in class ready for registration which will be taken at 8.45am. Lateness is unacceptable and it is expected that all children will arrive at school ready to learn and on time.
- The class gates will remain open until 9am but any child arriving at class between 8.45 – 9am is late.

- Children who arrive after the class gates close must report and be signed 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, i.e.: medical appointment (proof will be required) . Our attendance officer will collate any attendance information at 9.30am from the registers, signing in, and absence books including any recorded term time leave requests to identify children who are absent without authorisation or notification.
- The parents of these children will receive a text message informing them that their child is not in school and asking them to contact the school 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.
- It is for parents to ensure they leave sufficient time for their journeys to school and back.

If attendance is poor families may be asked to produce medical evidence such as an appointment card or prescription clearly marked for the child for absences due to illness.

### **Safeguarding**

Where no contact is made by the parent for 2 days regarding their child's absence the school will assess if there is a risk to the child, particularly if there are any Safeguarding or SEND concerns. If a risk to the child is identified or known the school will, where possible contact those listed on the pupils details (provided by the parent).

Where the school have been unable to reach the contacts provided the school may visit the home address or contact the Police or Social Services to request a welfare check.

The school require 3 contact numbers for each pupil and will contact parents where this is not provided to clarify if, due to personal circumstances this is not possible. Contacts could include family members, neighbours or other parents at the school.

### **ASD Base**

Pupils are registered and recorded in exactly the same way as mainstream pupils. (See procedures above). However, if children in the base arrive after the register closes due to issues with county transport this will not be recorded as an absence.

### **Poor Attendance**

School requires that attendance is made a priority for all pupils. In cases where a pupil has **poor attendance (below 96%)** the parent will be contacted by the school and every effort will be made to improve attendance. If attendance does not improve and unauthorised absences occur, the school may request the issue of a PENALTY NOTICE in accordance with statutory guidance.

Parents are also expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful, however if it is not the school may refer the child to the Education Safeguarding Service (ESS) or Team Around the School (a multi professional meeting). The ESS can use legal action to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order for the pupil.

If a pupil's overall absence rate is (**90% or lower**) the government classify this as being a **persistent absentee**. This is based upon the pupils individual absence level.

Parents must understand that all absences whether authorised or not still affect the child's attendance record and can be subject to review. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments for the child which can only be accessed during school time.

### **Term Time Leave**

Parents do not have the right to take term time leave in order to take children on holiday.

Therefore parents should be aware that the Headteacher will not authorise requests for term time leave unless there are 'exceptional' circumstances (see appendix A). Should you wish to request term time leave the request must be made to the Headteacher in writing (forms are available from

the school for parents to complete). All requests will be discussed on an individual basis, and any authorisation is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Should the school decide not to grant term time leave and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice, which may result in a fine of £60 per parent per child (this can include step parents and parents who no longer live together). This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 within the period of 22–28 days may lead to Court proceedings.

### **Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives**

The school has adopted the following attendance Rewards:

At Oaklands we operate a weekly attendance reward for children with 100% attendance, this could be stickers or a fun session in school such as games.

### **Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

The Inclusion Support Teacher has overall responsibility for attendance. However, it is the responsibility of the office staff to check and record absences. The school monitors attendance and brings any concerns to the ESS (Education Safeguarding Service).

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

**Adopted by the school: 7 September 2021**

**Signed:**

*K. Parr*

**(Headteacher)**

**This policy will be reviewed no later than the autumn term of 2022**

### **Appendix A**

Term time leave is only authorised in exceptional circumstances. As suggested by the Dfe exceptional circumstances can be defined as being:

- Forces staff returning from lengthy active service abroad
- Police, Fire Service staff who are not permitted to take leave by choice
- A close family member has a terminal illness and it may be a last chance to be together especially if the family member lived overseas.
- Parents having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period.

And that the exceptional leave will be

- Rare
- Significant
- Unavoidable
- Short

The school would also seek evidence of the exceptional circumstances where possible.