



# Attendance Policy

January 2018

## **Introduction**

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school.

## **Attendance Team**

The promotion of excellent attendance is the responsibility of everyone, parents/carers and school. At Oakwood School we are very lucky to have a dedicated team to ensure attendance is a high priority in our school.

Our Attendance Team consists of:

- Mrs Kate Bargh (Executive Headteacher)
- Mrs Debbie Newey (Attendance Manager)
- Mrs Jackie King (Head of School)
- Education Welfare Officer

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.

## **Arrival and Registration**

School is open from 8:40 am every morning to aid a calm start to the school day. During this period children have the opportunity to take part in a range of early morning activities. Children should be in their classroom ready to start the school day at **8.55 am**. The register is taken twice a day (morning and afternoon marks). **A day counts as 2 attendances.**

Morning registration ends at 9.15 am. If a child arrives after the registration period he/she will be marked in as late. After 9.30 am this will become an Unauthorised Absence. The afternoon register is taken at 1:00 pm. Our school day ends at 3:00 pm.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The signing in/out system in the office is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

## **Illness and Medical Appointments**

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

The school office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and **then each morning**, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence.

## **Definitions**

### **Authorised Absence**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will be as classes as an unauthorised absence as permission for this would not be granted.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

### **If a child is absent...**

When a child is absent, the class teacher or school office will record the absence in the register. If no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence, the school office will contact the parent or guardian by 10.00 am on that day.

Parents are, however expected to telephone the school by 9.00 am on the morning of the first day of absence, to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason.

### **Procedure for working with parents to support good attendance**

Working in partnership with parents/carers is key to good attendance. We will inform you by letter of your child's attendance is heading towards **persistent absence** (90% and below). We will make contact with parents when your child's attendance is heading towards 93%, which can prevent your child becoming persistently absent from school.

In most cases this conversation prompts better attendance, however in some cases the next step will be a formal letter asking parents/carers to come into school to discuss your child's attendance with a member of our Attendance Team. In this meeting we will discuss the importance of good attendance and offer ways of support.

Following this meeting, if attendance does not improve a formal meeting will be arranged with the Headteacher and EWO to further discuss your child's attendance.

If attendance does not improve following all of the school based support, then the case will be referred to Walsall Local Authority as a legal matter.

### **Nursery Absence**

Although education for Nursery aged pupils is not compulsory, at Oakwood School we see full attendance within our Nursery setting as essential for a successful start for their school life. If Nursery attendance falls below **85%** we will reserve the right to take the child off our roll and the place will be offered to another child.

### **Leave of Absence**

The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time.

If you do wish to take your child out of school for a leave of absence in school time, you

must put this in writing, so that we know where all children are. Our '**Leave of Absence Form**' is available from the school office or can be downloaded from our school website. This form must be returned to the school office before you take your child out of school.

When the written request, including email ([postbox@oakwood.walsall.sch.uk](mailto:postbox@oakwood.walsall.sch.uk)) comes into school, the Headteacher will acknowledge receipt. In exceptional circumstances the Headteacher has the discretion to authorise leave of absence.

**Teachers will not set work for completion when a child is absent on holiday, but the family should be encouraged to keep a diary of their experiences.**

### **Long Term Absence**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up their school work. This work will be different according to the needs and age of the child.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

### **Medical Appointments**

We recognise that children have medical appointments and would ask where possible appointments are made outside of school hours. If your child does have an appointment within the school day we will ask for an appointment card or letter. All medical appointments are coded as an 'M' in the register.

### **Repeated Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absences remain on the child's record and will be reported to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

If a child is not in school for **10 consecutive days** the school will inform the EWO as this could be classed as a child missing in education (Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2016 updated).

Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the EWO and the school. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents and guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. The EWO may also visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

If a child's absence falls below 90% it is classed as a persistent absence (PA). This will be investigated by the EWO and school and a meeting will be called at the earliest point. To prevent children becoming a 'persistent absent' we send letters home to parents if a child's attendance is heading towards 93%.

**The Local Authority has the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.**

### **Leaving school**

If your child is leaving our school to start a new school you must inform us of the new school details. This enables us to ensure that every child is in education at all times. If we

are not provided with this information the child is classed as '**missing from education**'. In this situation all cases will be referred to Walsall LA's Education Welfare Office (EWO).

### **Rewards for Outstanding Attendance**

- All the children who achieve 100% attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate in Key Stage assemblies.
- A reward will be given each week to the class with the best overall attendance (e.g. additional playtime/sensory time) and have the privilege of looking after our school attendance mascot- Attendance Ted.

### **Attendance Targets**

The school is set a challenging attendance target each year. These targets are agreed by the senior staff, the Chair of Governors and the LA School Improvement Partner at the annual target-setting meeting. The Headteacher will report on attendance percentages to the Governing Body.

### **Monitoring and Reviewing**

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they should be. The school based 'Attendance Team' meet on a half termly basis to monitor attendance and plan interventions when necessary.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of six years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class. If they become aware of an unexpected pupil absence during the course of the school day, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every year, or earlier if considered necessary.