



Oakdale School

To be the best we can be

**Attendance,
Registration &
Punctuality
Policy**

Attendance, Registration and Punctuality Policy

We as a school community have a commitment to promote equality. Therefore, an equality impact assessment has been undertaken and we believe this policy is in line with the Equality Act 2010.

The aim of this school policy is to develop good attendance and punctuality to support pupils to be the best that they can be.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities.

The staff and governors at Oakdale regard good attendance and punctuality as a high priority and we are committed to a whole school approach. Many pupils attending Oakdale are more vulnerable and have greater needs than the majority of their mainstream peers. This means that they may have more genuine absences from school for medical reasons or may experience greater social need than others. It is our responsibility as educators to do all we can to encourage and support school attendance.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school. We at Oakdale are committed to ensuring that Oakdale families understand how important this is. We give high priority to conveying to parents the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance, we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers to resolve these problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

In order to achieve these aims the school will:

- Offer a safe and supportive learning environment, which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability
- Establish clear and effective procedures for administration
- Foster a climate where the school, community, teachers, parent/carers and governors value attendance and punctuality
- Comply with legal requirements
- Ensure any pupil presenting with a poor level of attendance and punctuality are noted, monitored and appropriate action taken
- Have systems in place offering rewards and recognition for regular attendance
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance through established procedures
- Support governors in taking an active role in promoting good attendance
- Work in partnerships with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service, Health Care, Social Care and other outside agencies

DOC:	W:\MSOFFICE\WINWORD\SCHOOL POLICIES\ATTENDANCE POLICY	ISSUE / REV:	ISS 1 / REV 1
AUTHORITY:	HEADTEACHER	DATE:	SEPT 2017
		NO OF PAGES:	Page 2 of 9

Expectations

Oakdale School expects its pupils to:

- Attend regularly and on time
- Be prepared adequately for the school day
- Comply with the school policies and procedures on attendance

The school expects its parents/carers to:

- Encourage their children to attend school every day, on time
- Contact the school on the first day of absence, before 9:30am
- Arrange holidays and medical appointments outside school hours
- Regularly update emergency contact details

Registration

The school currently uses a computerised system for registration. The register is a legal document and as such can be used in a court of law to establish a pupil's attendance or absence at a particular time on a specific day.

The registers are marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Registers are marked in the first 15 minutes of the start of the school day and the morning register closes at 9:30am. All pupil arrivals after this point are treated as absent from the full morning session even though they are present in school. This will be coded as an unauthorised absence (U) in the register. If pupils arrive on school transport and arrive after registers have closed they will be issued with a late code (L), unless there are clear reasons supported by medical evidence or identified in the EHCP (Education Health Care Plan)

A 'late book' will be kept in the school office where the names of pupils who have arrived after 9:30am will be written by the office staff. This information will be used in the process of identifying pupils on site after close of registration, should there be any need to evacuate the school building. These absences will be regarded as unauthorised absences if no satisfactory explanation is either given in a note or by telephone by the parents/carers. Parents or carers dropping pupils off late must report to reception and explain the reason for lateness. This is also recorded in the school information system along with the time of arrival.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first morning of the pupil's absence. This can be done by leaving a message on the answer phone or phoning the school office when it opens at 8:15am. In any case, a parent/carer should contact school prior to 9:30am. If this contact is not made, then Oakdale will contact the parent/carer by telephone, or, if the parent/carer is unobtainable, send a text message, email or a letter requesting information.

If this liaison fails to provide an explanation for the absence, school will attempt to get in touch again and a second letter may be sent to parents/carers. The schools Education Welfare Officer may be informed and the parents/carers may be invited into school for a meeting with the Headteacher and the Education Welfare Officer. The meeting will be to discuss, identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending or being late for school. Parents/carers will be also made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

DOC:	W:\MSOFFICE\WINWORD\SCHOOL POLICIES\ATTENDANCE POLICY	ISSUE / REV:	ISS 1 / REV 1
AUTHORITY:	HEADTEACHER	DATE:	SEPT 2017
		NO OF PAGES:	Page 3 of 9

First day of absence

If a pupil is absent from school the parent/carer should contact the school on 0161 367 9299 before 9:30am. If a parent/carer does not inform the school, the admin staff will ring the parental home on the first day of absence, send a text message or may undertake a home visit to ascertain why the pupil is absent.

The school is aiming to achieve an attendance target of 94%. If a pupil's attendance falls below 94% and a parent/carer fails to inform school, there is a clear strategy of intervention that will be put into place.

Escalation of Intervention

If a pupil's attendance falls below 94% (GREEN STAGE)

- A letter will be sent to the parent/carer raising concerns as to the pupil's attendance falling below the school target. (stage 1 letter)
- The pupil's attendance will be monitored over 4 weeks
- If no improvement is made another letter will sent to the parent/carer. (stage 2 letter)
- The pupil's attendance will be monitored for a further 4 weeks
- If no improvement is made the pupil will be moved to the amber stage

If a pupils attendance falls below 90% (AMBER STAGE)

- The green stage procedure will be followed
- If there is no improvement in attendance another letter will be sent home (stage 3 letter)
- Parents/carers will be invited in to school to a meeting with the Headteacher and a referral to the EWO may be arranged
- A school attendance improvement agreement/support plan will be established and a Penalty Notice will be discussed
- Further absences may only be authorised if evidence is provided

If a pupils attendance falls below 85% (RED STAGE)

- The green and amber stages will be followed
- If there is no improvement in the pupils attendance:
 - Parents/carers will be invited in to school to a meeting with the Headteacher
 - Outside agencies may be involved
 - If there is no significant improvement in the pupil's attendance a referral to the Educational Welfare Service will be made and prosecution will be considered
 - Further absences may only be authorised if evidence is provided

Pupil Absence Monitoring Procedure

- 1) **ALL** registers must be completed by 9:30am
- 2) Parents/carers of all absent pupils will be contacted on their first day of absence by a member of the administration team. All telephone calls home will be made by 10:30am
- 3) Records of late arrivals will be made in the 'late book' and on SIMS
- 4) The time of all calls home will be recorded on the pupil absence monitoring form

DOC:	W:\MSOFFICE\WINWORD\SCHOOL POLICIES\ATTENDANCE POLICY	ISSUE / REV:	ISS 1 / REV 1
AUTHORITY:	HEADTEACHER	DATE:	SEPT 2017
		NO OF PAGES:	Page 4 of 9

- 5) If, on the first call to a pupil's home no one answers, then a message will be left for the family to contact the school as soon as possible, to explain why the pupil is not in school. This will be also followed by a text message
- 6) On making contact with the pupil's family, they will be informed that for every day the pupil is absent they must contact the school to inform them of the pupil's progress. If they do not, then school will contact them each and every day of absence. (If a pupil is absent for more than two days without contact by the family we will follow up the absence)
- 7) If the administration team is not satisfied with the reasons given for a pupil's absence, then the Headteacher will be informed of any concerns and will follow up with the pupil's family
- 8) The absence monitoring form will be kept as an individual record for each pupil. It will be used to inform individual pupil's families of any patterns forming. The information will also be used to inform the senior leadership team and school governors and, if necessary, the Education Welfare Officer for the school
- 9) If the Headteacher has concerns regarding a pupil's attendance, contact will be made with any siblings schools to check their attendance

Strategies for Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

Attendance statistics are monitored by the Headteacher and the Governing Body and reported to the Local Authority. Targets are set annually for attendance figures. The current target for Oakdale School is 94%.

Parents/carers and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence. Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents/carer meetings and pupil reports will be used. When a pupil with a known attendance problem is admitted to school, a meeting will be held with parents/carers and there will be set targets for improvement. Parents/carers will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding punctuality and attendance.

Regular attendance and punctuality will be promoted and recognised through awards and certificates.

We will contact parents/carers to discuss any issues which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties. The Headteacher has regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing difficulties. There are regular register sweeps and a letter will be sent out if a pupil is persistently absent from school.

Authorised Absence

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness.
- Religious observance in accordance with Local Authority guidelines.
- Medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school hours.
- Special circumstances (authorised by the Headteacher)
- Permanent or fixed term exclusions.

It may be necessary for the school to ask the parent/carer to provide school with written evidence of the reason for absence e.g. appointment cards, medical certificate or a letter from the GP.

DOC:	W:\MSOFFICE\WINWORD\SCHOOL POLICIES\ATTENDANCE POLICY	ISSUE / REV:	ISS 1 / REV 1
AUTHORITY:	HEADTEACHER	DATE:	SEPT 2017
		NO OF PAGES:	Page 5 of 9

If there is an extended period of absence due to medical reasons, the school or the Education Welfare Officer may ask permission from the parent/carer to contact the pupil's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the pupil from attending school and establish a possible return date for the pupil.

Absence in Term Time

The Headteacher will only consider authorising an absence in term time where an application has been made in advance, and, where he/she is satisfied that there are exceptional or special circumstances to justify the request. The DfE (2013) now state that leave of absence requests for holidays should not be granted.

It is acknowledged that due to the individual needs of pupils at Oakdale, the Headteacher may apply special consideration to requests for compassionate leave, and/or where a parent/carer can demonstrate external funding has been awarded to a family for a holiday, or that there are significant extenuating circumstances.

Guidance relating to holidays during term time:

- Parents/carers do not have the right to take their children out of school during term time
- Authorised holidays will be marked in the register with a H
- Pupils who exceed the agreed time will be marked as unauthorised with a G in the register
- Holidays not authorised could lead to an automatic penalty notice and the pupil may be removed from roll

Unauthorised Absences

Absences may be recorded as unauthorised for the following reasons:

- Truancy - a child is away from school without authority from the Headteacher. This includes parentally condoned absences
- Late after registration is closed i.e. after 9:30 a.m. (unless the parent/carer provides a legitimate reason or evidence for the absence)
- Any absence which the school has not been informed about, either by letter or telephone
- Going shopping, going to the airport to meet relatives or having a haircut etc.
- Any family holiday that has not been authorised by the Headteacher

Reporting Non - Attendance

In addition to the procedures set out above, the school will report pupil's attendance and unauthorised absences to homes in accordance with the legal requirements in the in the latest government circular.

Roles -

Families will:

- Notify the school of any absence on the day of that absence
- Keep close contact with the school if a pupil is on extended leave due to ill health

Administrative staff will:

- Maintain a record of pupils attendance on the schools computer system

DOC:	W:\MSOFFICE\WINWORD\SCHOOL POLICIES\ATTENDANCE POLICY	ISSUE / REV:	ISS 1 / REV 1
AUTHORITY:	HEADTEACHER	DATE:	SEPT 2017
		NO OF PAGES:	Page 6 of 9

- Telephone pupils homes as necessary regarding attendance - following recent guidelines from the coroner, if there is no response an immediate home visit by 2 staff will be undertaken
- Police to be notified if there is no response to the home visit
- Pass on information to the relevant staff
- Keep records of pupils who arrive late and note down reasons
- Keep records and inform outside agencies as necessary to comply with local and national policy and procedures
- Store notes from home in the pupil file

Teachers will:

- Monitor pupils attendance and punctuality
- Mark registers for the morning and afternoon sessions
- Discuss the impact of low attendance on learning with families where appropriate

The Headteacher will:

- Liaise with EWO or other relevant services
- Contact parents/carers by telephone/home visit to monitor attendance
- Liaise with admin staff over any queries
- Meet with the EWO every half term
- Be aware of safeguarding procedures for absences of vulnerable pupils
- Send out letters to parents/carers each term where attendance falls below 94%

Fixed Penalty Notices

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. This means that when a pupil has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more, in any term (where no acceptable reason has been given for the absence) or if their child persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration, their parents/carers may receive a Penalty Warning Notice.

If further unauthorised absence occurs following a monitoring period, (15 school days) the Local Authority may proceed to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices are £60 per parent per pupil if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. The penalty notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution

There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent/carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Penalty Notice.

The issuing of a Penalty Warning Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- The pupil has been absent from school for more than 10 unauthorised sessions in any term.
- Excessive holidays in term-time without prior agreement. Criteria for excessive holidays would include those listed below;
 - Failure to return a pupil to school following fixed-term exclusion
 - More than one holiday in a school year
 - General poor school attendance
 - Excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement
 - Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed
 - Failure to ensure attendance at any alternative educational provision
 - A parent/carer fails to ensure that their child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion from school

DOC:	W:\MSOFFICE\WINWORD\SCHOOL POLICIES\ATTENDANCE POLICY	ISSUE / REV:	ISS 1 / REV 1
AUTHORITY:	HEADTEACHER	DATE:	SEPT 2017
		NO OF PAGES:	Page 7 of 9

Procedure for Withdrawing Penalty Notices

Once issued, a Penalty Notice will only be withdrawn in the following circumstances;

- The Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person
- The use of a Penalty Notice did not conform to the terms of the Local Authorities Code of Practice
- When it becomes apparent that no offence has been committed
- It contains a material error

Payments of Penalty Notices

Arrangements for payments will be detailed on the Penalty Notice. Payment of a Penalty Notice discharges the parent/carer of liability for the period in question and they cannot subsequently be prosecuted under other enforcement powers for the period covered by the Penalty Notice.

The LA retains any revenue from Penalty Notices to cover enforcement costs (collection or prosecuting in the event of non-payment).

Non-Payment of Penalty Notices

Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result either in withdrawal of the Notice or will trigger the prosecution process under the provisions of Sec 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Non-Payment of Penalty Notices issued due to a pupil being in a public place whilst excluded

Non-payment of a Penalty notice for pupils found in a public place whilst excluded will trigger the prosecution process for non-payment of the Notice. This will be taken under the provisions of Section 103 Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Failure of a parent / carer to return a pupil from a Fixed-Term Exclusion

If a parent/carer is given clear notice and an appointment time for the return of their child after a fixed-term exclusion and the pupil then accrues at least 10 sessions of absence, a Penalty Notice may be applied for, for failing to secure regular attendance.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities.

Pupils found in a public place during the first 5 days of fixed-term or permanent exclusion

Section 103 subsections 2 and 3 and Section 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, makes it the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their children are not in a public place during the first five days of their exclusion, during school hours of a school day, including lunch and break times, without reasonable justification. Following this time a child would either return to school or be offered alternative provision by the school. There may be reasonable justification for a parent/carer to have not ensured the pupil is not in a public place, and the circumstances of each case will be considered.

DOC:	W:\MSOFFICE\WINWORD\SCHOOL POLICIES\ATTENDANCE POLICY	ISSUE / REV:	ISS 1 / REV 1
AUTHORITY:	HEADTEACHER	DATE:	SEPT 2017
		NO OF PAGES:	Page 8 of 9

In the instance where a child or young person is found in public place during fixed-term or permanent exclusion, a Penalty Notice can be issued even though the absences during the exclusion may be regarded as authorised.

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DOC:	W:\MSOFFICE\WINWORD\SCHOOL POLICIES\ATTENDANCE POLICY	ISSUE / REV:	ISS 1 / REV 1
AUTHORITY:	HEADTEACHER	DATE:	SEPT 2017
		NO OF PAGES:	Page 9 of 9