



Oak Field School

Attendance Policy
And Procedures

**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

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Oak Field School Attendance Policy

Statement of Intent

School attendance is **everyone's** responsibility: good attendance and punctuality are vital if pupils are to learn, achieve and thrive - it is the foundation for positive outcomes.

Oak Field School strongly believes that in order for pupils to make progress, good attendance is essential. We are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers, families and pupils to ensure that each pupil benefits from the academic, personal and social opportunities to which they are entitled during their years at the school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that for a number of reasons (such as complex and sometimes life-limiting health conditions, and/or specific health or equipment needs at particular times), some pupils find it harder than others to attend school, and some families find it harder than others to support them to do this. Through building strong and trusting relationships with pupils and their families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance, and working together to put the right support in place to minimise/remove them, we aim to protect all pupils' right to an education. While our attendance ambition for all our pupils is strong, and we aim to apply this attendance policy fairly and consistently, we are also mindful of, and sensitive to, the additional attendance challenges some of our pupils face, in line with our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas can have on improving pupil attendance. These include the curriculum, communication, personal development, behaviour and pastoral support, multi-disciplinary and anti-bullying approaches, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium. We also prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school.

Aims of the Policy

- To promote and model high attendance and its benefits
- To ensure this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by pupils, parents/carers and staff
- To define clear procedures which encourage and support pupils to make progress and to achieve positive outcomes by maintaining good attendance and punctuality
- To build strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance
- To facilitate early intervention and work collaboratively with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils
- To ensure parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND (Special Educational Needs and Difficulties) they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- To monitor and analyse attendance and absence data regularly, to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014

- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2022'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

The Law relating to attendance and safeguarding (see also Appendix 1: Penalty Notice Fines)

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable

- *to age, ability, and aptitude and*
- *to any special educational needs they may have*
- *either at school or otherwise*

Compulsory School Age: A child is compulsory school age from the beginning of the next term after their 5th birthday until the last Friday of June in the academic year of their 16th birthday.

A young person must then do one of the following until they are 18:

- stay in full-time education, for example in a 6th Form at school or at a college
- spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training
- start an apprenticeship

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

The issue of a penalty notice under section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act may be considered in cases where a pupil is absent from the school and the absence is unauthorised.

A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour, they are unlikely to be the most appropriate tool. Therefore, from Autumn Term 2024, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period, and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at **£160** if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to **£80** if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of **£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 issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

The decision on whether or not to issue a Penalty Notice at Oak Field may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences (eg 5 consecutive days, or 10 sessions within a 10-week period) without any mitigating circumstances
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- The active involvement of other agencies and processes (eg Child in Need, Child Protection)

Attendance target

Oak Field School intends to achieve the best possible attendance each year, and each pupil has an important part to play in this. We know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling, and we strongly believe that this is in our pupils' best interests.

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality regularly to show us where improvements need to be made. We ask for parents'/carers' full support with any individual or whole school strategies or initiatives which focus on these areas.

Working Together

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is **everybody's** responsibility - parents/carers, pupils, and all members of school staff.

What parents/carers can expect from the Governing Body

- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school, ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Working with school leaders to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals; this includes ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and providing support and challenge to school leaders to focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

What parents/carers and pupils can expect from the school

- Broad, balanced and engaging education that is dependent on regular attendance at school
- Promotion of good attendance and punctuality at school, and regular encouragement and support
- Open, honest and clear communication about our expectations of parents/carers, so that families understand what to expect, and what is expected of them, and when - we will be respectful with parents/carers and families, to ensure their trust and engagement
- Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance
- First day contact with parents/carers when absence is unexplained
- Regular attendance information given to parents/carers eg by phone, individual letter, parent evenings and at EHCP Review meetings
- Encouragement to make contact with school at the earliest opportunity to discuss any issues impacting on their child's attendance or punctuality.
- A quick and sensitive response by the school to any concerns or problems raised
- Prompt action when a problem has been identified
- Liaison with multi-disciplinary colleagues, external agencies and officers from the Local Authority, as appropriate, to assist and support families where needed
- Support from the school for pupils who are out of school for long periods due to ill health/other challenges (eg temporary inability to travel safely). This will include regular contact, home visits as appropriate, and support for the family to engage in learning activities with their child. Where appropriate, this will also include virtual contact with class peers and staff so the pupil remains in meaningful contact with the school and keeps up to date with as much of their learning as possible, taking into account their specific circumstances. Where appropriate, the school will also work in partnership with the Hospital and Home Education Learning Centre (HHELC).

What the school expects of our pupils and their families

- Support from parents/carers and families for the pupils to attend regularly, on time, and ready to learn - this includes having had breakfast, and eg wearing splints and gaiters, as appropriate

- Support from parents/carers and families for the pupils to arrive at school prepared for the day with appropriate equipment eg swimming kit, medication, and health equipment (such as medication syringes, clean suction machines, and gastro feeding equipment)

What the school expects of parents/carers

- To fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly, on time and fully prepared for the day, as above
- To adhere to this attendance policy, including late arrival times, to minimise disruption to others' learning
- To speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or punctuality or require support, and to ask staff for help if they need it
- To contact school on the first day their child is absent for any reason
- To arrange routine medical and dental appointments **out of school times** wherever possible, or at the beginning or end of the school day if unavoidable
- To provide **in advance** official confirmation of medical appointments during the school day. This may be in the form of appointment cards, texts or emails, hospital letters, or a screen-print eg from the My GP app. Failing this, to provide official confirmation of this in retrospect, as soon as possible after the appointment. Confirmation of all medical appointments will be recorded, **and parents/carers will be expected to bring their child to school before and/or after such appointments.**
- Similarly to provide **in advance** official confirmation of any Rainbows (Leics) stays during the school week
- To arrange holidays out of school time. Further guidance is offered under the section **Requests for term time exceptional leave** later in this policy
- To provide accurate and up-to-date parent contact details, and more than one emergency contact name and number, so that the school can be confident we can reach parents/carers or their representatives at all times during the school day
- To follow the procedures set out in this policy regarding requests in advance for any exceptional leave.

Procedures

Registration

Registers are a legal document, and care must be taken to ensure registers are marked accurately.

The attendance of all pupils is recorded, monitored and evaluated regularly using the following procedures:

- School starts at **8.50am**, and pupils must arrive at Reception **between 8.50 and 9.15 am**.
- The start of the school day is staggered to enable the safe arrival of all pupils, many of whom are transported by specialised transport.
- Registration takes place each morning at **9.20am** and each afternoon at **1.30pm**. This is recorded electronically via **Arbor**
- Class teachers will enter a present mark in the register for each pupil present and an appropriate code for any pupil who is absent. Any messages re absence received in advance will be recorded by office staff.
- At **9.30am** and **1.40pm** the registers are closed.

Responding to lateness

- Any pupil brought in by parents/carers who arrives in the classroom after registration (9.20am, 1.30pm) but before the register has closed (9.30am, 1.40pm) will be marked as **late**, using the appropriate code.
- If pupils are brought in late by specialised transport, they will be recorded as present; the lateness will be recorded separately, and school will address this directly with Transport Services. If this is a recurrent issue, school will inform parents.
- The parent/carer of any pupil **who is brought in by them every day** and arrives after 9.15am will be asked to sign in at Reception, ask the Receptionist for a Late Arrival form, and wait in the cafe to speak to the school's Family Support Officer or to a member of the Senior Leadership Team *before* their

child goes down to class. The reason for lateness can then be discussed and any appropriate follow-up action taken (see role of the Family Support Officer). All Late Arrival forms will be filed.

- At 9.30am and 2pm the pupil is deemed to be **absent**. Unless the school has been informed **in advance** of the reason for lateness (eg medical appointment) and this has been authorised by the school, any pupil arriving in school after these times will be marked using the appropriate code (U). In case of emergency, the register shows the pupil is on the premises, **but they will not receive a present mark toward their overall attendance unless brought in by specialised transport.**

Responding to absence – criteria for requesting support from the Multi Agency Support Team (MAST)

- If there is poor overall attendance (below 90%) or punctuality, and no mitigating circumstances or acceptable reasons for absence have been provided to school
- If Home/School strategies (such as discussion with/home visits from the Family Support Officer, meetings in school, and support plans) have not prompted an improvement in attendance

Absence

Only the Headteacher may authorise absence.

- Even when a parent/carer provides an explanation of absence, the Headteacher will decide whether to accept the explanation and authorise the absence.
- Obligations for parents/carers regarding attendance and punctuality are clearly set out in this policy.

Authorised Absence

An **authorised** absence is where the school has either given permission **in advance** for the pupil to be absent, or where an explanation offered is accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, and medical appointments – but appointments should always be made outside school times where possible.
- Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the **minimum** amount of time necessary, and **pupils will be expected to attend school before and/or after the appointment, wherever possible.**
- For this reason, appointments towards the beginning or end of the school day can be helpful, as this minimises travelling time during school hours.
- If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, the parent/carer will need to sign them out at the school office.
- Parents/carers will be asked to provide **in advance** official confirmation of medical appointments during the school day. This may be in the form of appointment cards, texts or emails, hospital letters, or a screen-print eg from the My GP app. Failing this, to provide official confirmation in retrospect, as soon as possible after the appointment. This will be recorded.
- Where evidence of the appointment has **not** been received, or where the pupil has not been brought to school before or after the appointment for the morning/afternoon session when it would be reasonable to expect this, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Stays at Rainbows (Leics) during the school week – with booking evidence
- Unavoidable cause (which is expected to be an emergency and unavoidable)
- Days of religious observance
- Traveller pupils travelling for the purposes of parents'/carers' employment.

Unauthorised Absence

An **unauthorised** absence is where either no explanation has been given for the pupil's absence or where the explanation offered is not considered acceptable by the school.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason eg because they (pupil or parent) have overslept and/or the pupil has not been made ready in time for specialised transport.

- Birthdays, looking after other children, or shopping
- Day trips and holidays in term time - this includes long weekends in term time which do not constitute 'exceptional circumstances' and have not been agreed
- Pupils who are brought into school too late to get a late mark - see lateness section.
- Absences which have never been properly explained

If an absence is recorded as unauthorised, the school may refer this to the Local Authority's Education Welfare & EOTAS (Educated Other Than At School) Service. The Local Authority can use various sanctions to promote regular attendance such as issuing a penalty notice fine or initiating court proceedings (see Legal Framework section). Whilst any pupil may be absent from school because they are ill, it can sometimes be that they are reluctant to get up and/or attend school, particularly as they get older. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers, and the pupil wherever possible. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is always better to try to get them back into the school routine, rather than to excuse them from attending or to cover up the reason for their absence. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact school **by telephone** as soon as possible **after 8am and before 8.40am** on the first day of absence, giving full details of the reason, to enable us to ask any further questions or to offer/signpost to additional support. Where possible, please also give us an expected date of return.
- You need to phone at least every second day after that to advise school of your child's progress, unless you have already identified an 'earliest' or specific return date.
- If we have a genuine concern about the authenticity of an illness, we may ask you to provide medical evidence, such as a GP appointment booking or a prescription. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If making a telephone call is difficult, you should email school by 8.40am, as above
- The school may arrange for the Family Support Officer to speak with you. **'Having a bad night'**, for example, will need additional information - is this linked eg to seizure activity, and could the pupil come in to school later? If not linked to seizure activity, would it be better to bring the pupil into school, to support them to get back into their usual day/night time routine? Does the pupil have a mobility vehicle?
- If the school is not satisfied with the reason for absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

If your child is absent and you have **not** contacted us as above, we will:

- Telephone, text or email you (in that order) on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you, and follow this up with subsequent phone calls, texts and emails.
- Invite you to discuss your child's situation with our Family Support Officer and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team, as appropriate.
- If you don't respond, or if the school is not satisfied with the reason for absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- If we have any concerns about your child's wellbeing, or if we have not heard from you by the third day of absence, the Family Support Officer will make a home visit to ensure the pupil is safe and well and to offer support, as needed; they will also liaise with other agencies (eg Social Care), as appropriate
- Ensure proper Safeguarding and/or Child Protection action is taken where necessary

Lateness Procedures (for parents/carers who transport their child to and from school every day)

If you bring your child to school **after 9.15am and before 9.30am**, you must:

- Sign in at Reception
- Ask for a 'Late Arrival' form to record your child's arrival time and reason for lateness
- Wait in the café to speak to the Family Support Officer or to a member of the Senior Leadership Team **before your child goes down to class** to discuss this and agree any support/actions

If your child will be arriving late because they have a **medical or other agreed appointment**, you must:

- Let the school know **in advance**, and make sure you have ordered a school dinner by **10.15am**
- If you have *not* ordered a school dinner by 10.15am, your child will need to bring a packed lunch.
- Bring your child to school as soon as possible after the appointment

If you are too late to bring your child to school before 9.30am, **and this is not because your child has a medical appointment**, you must:

- **Telephone school and ask to speak to the Family Support Officer** to discuss the next step in the lateness procedure and lunch arrangements, as appropriate
- Arrange to bring your child to school at **10.30am** (breaktime) or
- Arrange to bring your child to school at **12.10pm** (lunchtime) or
- Arrange to bring your child to school at **1.20pm**, ready for afternoon registration.

If your child is late for any reason other than a medical or other agreed appointment, we will:

- Ask you to discuss this with our Family Support Officer
- Invite you to a meeting to discuss the situation if lateness persists.

Persistent and Severely Absent pupils (PA and SA)

The DfE states that a pupil is 'persistently absent' if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**.

A pupil is 'severely absent' if they miss 50% or more of their schooling across the year **for whatever reason**.

Absence at both of these levels causes considerable damage to any pupil's educational prospects, and the school needs parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to address this. As stated above, however, we are mindful of, and sensitive to, each pupil's individual circumstances, especially in terms of their health and eg wheelchair provision/repair issues.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA or SA thresholds, is at risk of moving towards that level, and/or where attendance is becoming sporadic or seems to be following a pattern (eg on a particular day of the week) is given priority, and we will discuss this with you.

PA and SA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully; absence affects progress and achievement, and we track the attendance of any pupil which drops below 90% across a three-month rolling period through our Safeguarding system, so that we can work positively and proactively with parents/carers to address attendance issues.

Where we have concerns about a pupil's health, we may ask parents/carers to arrange an appointment with their child's GP or Paediatrician, or for permission to contact their GP, Paediatrician or other medical professionals for advice.

We will use our attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance at both individual pupil level and for different groups within the school population. Once concerns have been identified we will work with parents/carers and pupils to understand any barriers to attendance, implement a range of support measures and interventions (including liaison with other agencies as appropriate) to address these, and work together to remove/resolve them before they become a more serious issue.

Escalation pathway

The school considers each case individually, but where attendance or punctuality is causing concern, broadly the escalation pathway is:

- Informal discussion with the Family Support Officer, clarifying the reasons for poor attendance / punctuality - agreement re support and interventions (this might include eg a home visit and/or liaison with other agencies such as SEN Team, Paediatrician, Social Care). This will be documented.
- Informal discussion with the DSL, as above - this might include the Family Support Officer

- Invitation to a meeting with the DSL at school, including other agencies as appropriate, to agree a more formal support plan to improve attendance/punctuality. School will follow this up with a letter outlining what has been discussed, and agreed actions
- Follow-up meeting/s and letters to review progress and agree any further actions - these might include the Headteacher, as appropriate.
- If there is still no improvement, the school will seek advice from the Education Welfare Service, which may lead to legal intervention. Since severe absence without a reasonable explanation is likely to constitute neglect, safeguarding measures are also very likely to be instigated with parents
- If a pupil is absent and there are **safeguarding** concerns, the school will always escalate as appropriate **at the earliest opportunity**, following safeguarding policy and procedures.

Requests for term time exceptional leave

Working together to improve school attendance states 'the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.'

Parents/carers should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leave of absence for holidays unless it is unavoidable. There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time. Taking leave in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not taking pupils away in school time.

Remember that any monetary savings you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

The school defines exceptional circumstances as circumstances in which parents/carers have made every effort to avoid taking their child out of school. These are usually - but not exclusively - sudden and unpredictable circumstances, such as a family emergency or the sudden death or sudden illness of a close family member, which might involve the family in travelling away from home or the pupil being cared for at some distance from home.

As Headteachers should only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday, unless there are compelling reasons for this linked specifically eg to the pupil's disability.

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

If the request includes eg travel to certain areas where the Local Authority advises additional checks be made, the school will seek further advice and guidance from the Local Authority, and parent/carer attention will be drawn to relevant sections of the school's safeguarding policy, as appropriate.

If the school has any doubt in regard to the safety of any pupil whose parent/carer has requested leave in exceptional circumstances, this will be discussed with the Local Authority (Safeguarding/Social Care/Education Welfare Service) with immediate effect.

In accordance with established protocols, any Child in Care will *not* be authorised for any leave of absence from the school without the school discussing this first with their allocated Social Worker.

All applications for a leave of absence must be made **in advance** to the Headteacher and will only be considered if there are exceptional circumstances. In deciding, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. The Headteacher will be the final arbiter as to the authorisation of any leave.

Any period of leave taken **without** the agreement of the school, or **more than that agreed**, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. Your child's school place may also be at risk.

Previous good attendance is not considered when the school make the decision. If your child has brothers or sisters at other schools, you must seek permission from *all* the schools, and it is possible that one school may grant it, and another may not.

If exceptional leave is agreed, you will receive written confirmation from the school. If you do not receive this, **do not** assume that permission has been granted. Only the Headteacher can decide if they will grant exceptional leave - no one else in school has permission to do so - and submitting an application form is *not* permission to take leave.

If leave has been granted and a pupil goes early or returns late outside the agreed dates, the school will reserve the right to unauthorise the entire period of leave taken.

If parents/carers wish to apply for term time leave under exceptional circumstances, a **request form** must be completed by the parent/carer, clearly stating what the exceptional circumstances are, and given to the Headteacher for consideration **no less than 20 school days** prior to when the requested leave begins. The school will inform parents/carers in writing, within 10 days, whether the leave has been authorised and why/why not.

If an *unauthorised* holiday is taken, consideration could be given to issuing a Penalty Notice (see guidance). At the Headteacher's request, the Local Authority will issue the Penalty Notice and inform the school of the outcome.

It is essential that both the Local Authority and the school be consistent so that there can be no allegations of bias or favouritism. If it is seen that the policy is not being applied consistently, the Local Authority will not be able to apply a Penalty Notice.

Children Missing from Education

If a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from the school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will seek advice from the Children Missing from Education Team.

If you move away from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the school roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is therefore **vital that you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update us if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that **emergency contact information** is kept up to date, and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

Children in Public Care

A member of the Senior Leadership Team is the co-ordinator who liaises with the Local Authority's Children Looked After (CLA) team. Their individual attendance is reported to the Local Authority daily.

Roles & Responsibilities

The role of Governors (see also p5)

The Safeguarding Governor has responsibility for monitoring attendance, the school attendance policy and any issues. It is their role to be aware of general attendance issues and along with the whole Governing Body to inform and oversee school attendance initiatives.

Data and initiatives to improve school attendance will be shared and consulted on with the Governing Body and documented in Governor meeting minutes and the termly Report to Governors

Governors are responsible for:

- Recognising the importance of school attendance and promoting it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Attending Targeted Support Meetings where appropriate

The role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher oversees the collection and reporting of attendance data and the publication of statistics and reports on attendance to parents, governors and to Nottingham City Council.

Data is used to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most. Data will also inform the annual review of the school's attendance policy and practice.

The Headteacher will consider every request for leave on its individual merits. Ultimately the Headteacher will be the final arbiter of the authorisation of any leave.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance in school
- Implementing this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and taking appropriate action
- Ensuring all parents/carers are aware of the school's expectations and procedures
- Ensuring all staff are aware of 'what we do' in terms of attendance
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices where necessary

The role of the Safeguarding Lead (DSL) / Attendance Champion

The Safeguarding Lead (DSL)/Attendance Champion works in close partnership with the Headteacher, other members of the Senior Leadership Team and the Family Support Officer to devise a working attendance policy which is reviewed at regular intervals and is based on school attendance data.

The DSL/Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Championing and improving attendance in school
- Monitoring weekly, half-termly and termly attendance patterns and trends, and identifying individual and whole school strategies and support for pupils who are missing school.
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Evaluating the effectiveness of interventions and their impact on attendance levels.
- Being aware of those pupils the school is most concerned about, for example pupils subject to safeguarding procedures, Looked After Children, pupils with complex health needs and other vulnerable pupils.
- Liaising with the Family Support Officer and with other agencies and services, as appropriate.
- Identifying pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible, and ensuring the necessary referrals are made
- Determining, allocating and leading individual pupil attendance caseload work, including calling meetings as appropriate
- Agreeing attendance support plans with parents/carers, including engagement with wider support services, monitoring and reviewing these regularly, and escalating as appropriate
- Calling/attending Targeted Support Meetings where appropriate.

- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal meetings with parents/carers, documenting these, and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.
- Working with the Headteacher, Health, Social Care and Education Welfare Service, as appropriate, to address persistent absence
- Identifying and escalating any safeguarding concerns at the earliest opportunity, following safeguarding policy and procedures.

The role of the Family Support Officer (FSO)

The Family Support Officer works in close partnership with the DSL/Attendance Champion and other members of the Senior Leadership Team to implement the attendance policy 'on the ground'. The FSO monitors daily attendance, ensuring attendance codes and reasons for absence/lateness are accurate and liaising directly with parents/carers.

The Family Support Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring daily attendance data is accurate and up to date, following up unexplained reasons for absence from the first day of absence, logging details of all calls made, and liaising with other staff, as appropriate
- Monitoring and analysing daily and weekly attendance data at individual pupil level
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the DSL/Headteacher, as appropriate
- Meeting and greeting any pupils who are late to school, ascertaining with parents/carers the reasons for lateness and agreeing any support/next steps. Where parents/carers have not followed this policy in terms of agreed late arrival times, addressing this with them.
- Arranging further phone calls, home visits and/or informal meetings with parents/carers, as discussed with the DSL/Headteacher, to discuss attendance issues, and signpost access to wider support services, as appropriate.
- Attending Targeted Support Meetings where appropriate.
- Working with the DSL, Headteacher, Health, Social Care and Education Welfare Service, as appropriate, to address persistent absence
- Supporting pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, liaising with colleagues and other professionals and providing support to build confidence and bridge gaps

The role of Phase Leaders

Phase Leaders have a responsibility for overseeing the attendance of the pupils within their Phase. This includes:

- Being aware of attendance monitoring and tracking data for the pupils within their Phase (both in terms of individuals and of pupil cohorts), and liaising with the DSL/Family Support Officer around intervention and support strategies for improvement.
- Being aware of those pupils the school is most concerned about within their Phase, as above
- Supporting teachers within their Phase with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils (including identifying any patterns of absence) and taking appropriate action
- Ensuring any attendance issues have been addressed and escalated, as appropriate.

The role of Teachers

All teachers have a responsibility in keeping an attendance register. This is a legal document and must be completed accurately, using the correct codes. It is a legal requirement that the attendance register must be marked at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Absences are coded according to the information received from the pupil's parent/carer.

- Morning register should be completed at **9.20 am** (register closes at 9.30am)
- Afternoon register should be completed at **1.30 pm** (register closes at 1.40pm)

Where it is not possible to access the attendance management system, manual registers should be returned to the school office by the above times.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Encouraging good attendance and punctuality
- Welcoming pupils who have arrived late, and welcoming back pupils after an absence, using positive language.
- Ensuring that any information about absences (eg communicated by parents/carers at handover, by phone or in home-school diaries) is passed on to the office and the Family Support Officer, as appropriate, in a timely way.
- Monitoring the register daily and highlighting any emerging patterns of absence or lateness (eg on a particular day of the week) or any emerging changes (eg sporadic attendance), to the Family Support Officer in the first instance, in a timely way
- Reporting any concerns about a pupil's attendance or punctuality to the Family Support Officer in the first instance, and following this up
- Liaising with the Family Support Officer and DSL, as appropriate, to ensure phone calls and/or home visits are made in a timely way, and any support needs identified and met. For ongoing long-term absences, calls should be at least weekly, made by the person agreed as best placed and most consistent for the family.
- At all times, using their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupils and their families to inform decisions as to whether any welfare or safeguarding concerns should be escalated to the DSL.

Attendance monitoring

- The Family Support Officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis, liaising closely with the Admin Officer, DSL and Headteacher.
- The DSL and Family Support Officer monitor absence on a weekly basis, liaising closely with Phase Leaders and the Headteacher and delivering intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families.
- The Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team monitor absence weekly, and analyse attendance data more formally half-termly, termly and annually to identify and address any patterns and trends.
- The Governing Body monitor absence half-termly, challenging and holding senior leaders to account.
- Pupil attendance data is shared daily with the Department for Education.
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.

The school collects and stores attendance data through our [Arbor](#) software. This may be used internally to

- Track the attendance of individual pupils.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Monitor and evaluate those children and families identified as being in need of support and intervention around attendance.

Policy Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE or local authority is updated, and as a minimum annually, by the Headteacher and DSL/Attendance Champion. At every review, pupil and parent/carer views will be sought, and the policy will be approved by the Governing Body.

Help & Support

If you need help with attendance or punctuality, it is important that you contact school about the issues **as soon as possible**. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed we can also involve other agencies and services to make sure that your child and your family gets the **right support, at the right time, from the right people**.

Parents/carers who wish to work in partnership with the school to promote and implement good school attendance practice are encouraged and applauded. If a parent/carer believes the school can support or assist them in their child's school attendance, we would be very happy to help you with this.

If parents/carers have any comments, concerns, or complaints regarding the school attendance policy, please make an appointment for discussion with the Headteacher; alternatively, these can be addressed in writing to the Headteacher.

Summary

All Oak Field School staff are committed to working in partnership with parents/carers, families and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and promote positive outcomes for every pupil; this in terms of lifelong learning, welfare and life opportunities.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes



School Attendance Codes 2024

Present Codes	
/\	present during registration
B	educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed (within 30 minutes)
P	Sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip
W	work experience
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	exceptional circumstances
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable
E	suspended or permanently excluded
I	illness (not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
Unauthorised Absence	
G	holiday (not agreed)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed (after 30 minutes)
Administrative Codes/ Not a possible attendance	
D	dual registered
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	unable to attend due to whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Z	pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)

Appendix 2: Late Arrival Form

Late Arrival Form

Name of pupil	
Class	
Late arrival time	
Reason for lateness	
Discussed with	
Action/s	
Signed (Parent/Carer)	
Print name (Parent/Carer)	
Signed (school)	
Date	

Appendix 3: Request for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances form

To be submitted 20 school days before requested leave date

If this request is for a holiday to be taken during term time, please return this form to school **before** any booking is made

Name of pupil		
Class		
Name/s of Parent(s)/Guardian(s) making this request		
Date(s) of Proposed Absence	From (day/date):	To (day/date):
Number of school days pupil would miss		
Please give the reason/s for this requested absence (see also below re term time holidays)		
If this is for a term time holiday , please explain clearly why this holiday could not take place during the Nottingham City Council school holiday pattern		
Signature of parent(s) or guardian(s) making this request		
Date		

For Headteacher/office use only

Pupil's Attendance percentage	This academic year	Previous academic year
Number of days missed	This academic year	Previous academic year
This absence request is		
Authorised	Not Authorised	Subject to further information from parent/s or guardian/s
Reasons for the decision		
Signed:	Date:	

Appendix 4: Penalty Notice Fines

Penalty Notice Fines for School Attendance have changed!

With the introduction of The National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes came into force for Penalty Notice fines issued after 19th August 2024

Per Parent, Per Child	First Offence
Penalty Notice fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child who was absent. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.	The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time leave of irregular attendance the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days Reduced to £80 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days

5 consecutive days of term time leave

Penalty Notice Fines will be considered for Term Time leave of 5 or more consecutive days. INSET training days are school days and can be included in the 5 or more consecutive days where there was intent to be absent for term time leave.

10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Penalty Notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period

Second Offence (Within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time leave or irregular attendance, the amount will be £160 per parent, per child, paid within 28 days

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2,500 per parent, per child

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to a 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

Appendix 5: Requests for Elective Home Education (EHE) or Flexi-Schooling

In considering any requests for Elective Home Education (EHE) or Flexi-Schooling, the school will consider the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- The Education Act 1996
- [DfE \(2019\) Elective home education](#) - guidance for local authorities on elective home education, which references flexi-schooling
- [DfE \(2019\) Elective home education - guidance for parents](#) - guidance for parents

The school will also consider Nottingham City Council guidance:

- Nottingham City Council Education Welfare and EOTAS Service Flexi-Schooling Guidance
- This document provides additional advice and guidance to schools who may need to consider such requests. It clarifies what is meant by the terms elective home education and flexi-schooling, and aims to support conversations between parents, schools and the local authority (as appropriate) about these approaches to education.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

There is a legal right to Elective Home Education (EHE), and some parents may choose to provide a suitable education for their child by educating them at home. This is where the parent/carer takes full responsibility for the education of their child. In some cases, EHE can mean that children and young people are less visible to the services needed to safeguard and support them.

If a parent has expressed their intention to remove their child from the school roll for EHE, the school, in collaboration with the LA (such as the pupil's SEN Team Casework Officer) and other key professionals (such as a Social Worker), will coordinate a meeting with the parent to discuss this.

Flexi-schooling

Unlike Elective Home Education, there is no legal right to flexi-schooling.

While the Governing Board may be involved in agreeing and reviewing the school's general approach to this, any request for flexi-schooling must be made directly to the Headteacher, and the decision re whether or not to approve such a request must be made by the Headteacher.

In line with NCC policy, the Headteacher will consider each request individually, and where a pupil has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), any decision to agree flexi-schooling must be taken by the Headteacher in conjunction with the local Authority (LA).

There is no right of appeal against the decision of a Headteacher *not* to agree a flexi-schooling request.

Appendix 6: Additional Resources and links:

- [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)
- Children Missing Education [Children missing education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/657995f0254aaa00d050bff/Arranging_education_for_children_who_cannot_attend_school_because_of_health_needs.pdf
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/803956/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf
- Education Act 1996: The Education Act 1996 is the primary piece of legislation that sets out the legal framework for school attendance in England and Wales. It outlines the responsibilities of parents, carers, and schools in ensuring regular school attendance. Sections 444-447 of the Act deal with offenses related to non-attendance and penalties for parents and carers.
- Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006: These regulations specify the procedures for registering pupils and maintaining attendance records in schools in England. They also define the circumstances in which a pupil can be marked as absent or present.
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013: These regulations amended the 2006 regulations and introduced stricter rules on authorizing term-time holidays. Under these regulations, headteachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.
- Child Employment Legislation: Legislation such as the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 and the Children (Performances) Regulations 1968 govern the employment and attendance of children involved in performances, modelling, and other activities outside of regular school hours.
- Children Missing Education (CME) Statutory Guidance: This guidance outlines the responsibilities of local authorities in identifying and tracking children who may be missing education, including those who are not on a school roll or are not receiving suitable education.
- Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 (England and Wales) outlines the duty of local authorities in ensuring that suitable education is provided for children of compulsory school age.
- Keeping Children Safe in Education:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6650a1967b792ffff71a83e8/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

Additional Policies aligned to the Attendance Policy at Oak Field School

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy and Statement of Behaviour Principles
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy
- Equality Information and Objectives
- Pupil Premium Policy
- Family and School Communication Policy

Appendix 7: Parent Friendly Attendance Policy Summary

Introduction

- Oak Field School is an inclusive school committed to establishing a collective responsibility for attendance.
- Our Attendance process is completely aligned with Department for Education (DFE) guidelines as well as those set out by the Local Authority.

Importance of School Attendance

- School attendance is not merely a requirement but a fundamental pillar of education.
- It plays a key role in promoting learning, progress and achievement, personal growth, and positive outcomes, making it an indispensable aspect of any educational system.

Safeguarding Children

- The school has a duty to safeguard the welfare of all pupils. Any concerns about a pupil's attendance will be investigated promptly to ensure support for their wellbeing.
- Unexplained or extended absences will trigger safeguarding procedures, which may include home visits and communication with relevant agencies.

Additional Policies

- Policies aligned with the Attendance Policy include: Safeguarding, Behaviour, Mental Health and Wellbeing, Equality, Pupil Premium, and Family and School Communication

Roles and Responsibilities

Pupils: The role of pupils attending school is actively to (be supported to) engage in their learning, and to demonstrate a commitment to, and enjoyment of, this. By attending school regularly and punctually, pupils not only benefit from their educational opportunities but also contribute to a positive and inclusive learning environment for themselves and their friends. Consistent attendance is essential for their learning and progress, social development, and preparation for adulthood, ensuring they make the most of the learning opportunities and resources provided by the school.

Parents/carers: Parents/carers play a vital role in ensuring school attendance by fostering a culture of punctuality and commitment to their child's education and by adhering to the school's attendance policies. Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child's regular and on-time attendance, which not only supports their learning and progress but also instils essential life skills.

School: The school plays a critical role in promoting and monitoring good attendance. This will be achieved through communication with parents/carers, identifying and addressing barriers to attendance, and implementing necessary interventions to support pupils in their learning.

External agencies: These agencies play a crucial role in supporting school attendance by offering specialised services and resources to address various attendance-related challenges. External agencies often collaborate with our school, and we signpost families to relevant services, including Health, Social Care, Education Welfare Officers, and other Local Authority teams. They provide additional support for pupils and their families, helping to tackle underlying issues such as health issues, social or behavioural difficulties, and other barriers to attendance. By working together, external agencies and schools can identify and address these issues effectively, promoting improved school attendance and well-being.

School Times

- School starts at **8.50am** (registration between 8.50 and 9.20am) and ends at **3.40pm** (departure between **3.10 and 3.40pm**). Class staff are on site until 3.50pm, in case of any late specialised transport.
- Afternoon registration is at **1.30pm**

Reporting a Child's Absence

- Parents/carers must telephone the school **between 8am and 8.40am** on the first day of absence, and keep in touch with the school every 2nd day and at least weekly if the absence is for more than one week.

Lateness

- Parents must inform the school **in advance** of any absences for medical appointments unavoidably in school time, and show **evidence** of these
- Other than because of medical appointments, any parent/carer who brings their child to school after 9.15am must sign in at Reception, ask for a 'Late Arrival' form, fill this in in the café, and wait to speak to the Family Support Officer before their child goes down to class
- *Other than because of medical appointments*, if a pupil is not going to be in school before 9.30am, the parent/carer must **telephone the school and ask to speak to the Family Support Officer**, then bring them to school at **10.30am, 12.10pm or 1.20pm**.

Requesting term time leave in exceptional circumstances:

- Parents must request leave of absence for their child in writing at least **20 school days** in advance.
- Leave of absence during term time will **only** be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Holidays during term time will **only** be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

Definitions (DfE)

The terms 'Persistent Absence', 'Risk of Persistent Absence', and 'Severe Absence' are used to describe different levels of irregular attendance by pupils. Here are their definitions:

Persistent Absence (PA):

- Definition: Persistent Absence is a term used to describe a level of pupil absence from school that is a significant cause for concern.
- Threshold: In England, a pupil is persistently absent when they have an attendance rate of 90% or below. This means they have missed 10% or more of their school sessions.
- For most pupils during the academic year this will amount to **19 days absence**.

Risk of Persistent Absence:

- Definition: The term 'Risk of Persistent Absence' refers to a situation in which a pupil's attendance is at a level that suggests they are at risk of becoming persistently absent.
- Threshold: While there is no specific threshold for 'Risk of Persistent Absence', it is typically used to describe pupils whose attendance is consistently below 95% but has not yet reached the 90% threshold for persistent absence.
- As the school communicates to parents in days, we identify **12-18 days** as risk of PA.

Severe Absence (or Severe Persistent Absence):

- Definition: The term 'Severe Absence' is used to describe the most serious cases of non-attendance.
- Threshold: Focus will be given by all to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may face bigger barriers to their regular attendance or find it more difficult to be in school, and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners and potential flexible adjustments to support them further.