



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

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## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Aims.....	2
School Responsibilities .....	2
Parent/Carer Responsibilities.....	2
Pupil Responsibilities .....	2
Reporting Absences.....	2
Authorised and Unauthorised Absences .....	3
Punctuality .....	3
Monitoring and Intervention.....	3
Impact of Attendance Levels .....	3
Support for Pupils and Families .....	4
Leave of Absence Requests .....	4
Legal Framework and Enforcement .....	4
Promoting Positive Attendance .....	4

## Introduction

At Oaktree School, we are dedicated to providing a nurturing and high-quality educational environment that supports all pupils, including those with complex needs. Regular attendance is vital for academic achievement, personal development, and social well-being. Absences and lateness can disrupt a student’s learning experience and hinder progress.

This policy outlines the expectations, procedures, and support systems in place to promote regular attendance at Oaktree School. We aim to work closely with parents, carers, and external agencies, including the Education Welfare Service in Enfield, to ensure all students can attend school regularly and thrive in our inclusive setting.

## **Aims**

Our attendance policy is designed to:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality to maximise learning opportunities.
- Ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Identify patterns of absence early and act promptly to address them.
- Collaborate with parents/carers and external agencies to provide tailored support for improving attendance.
- Create a positive school culture that values regular attendance.

## **School Responsibilities**

- Take morning and afternoon registers promptly and accurately.
- Monitor attendance data regularly to identify concerns.
- Communicate with parents and carers when attendance falls below the school's expected level.
- Support pupils and families in overcoming barriers to regular attendance.
- Liaise with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to address cases of persistent absence or serious attendance concerns.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of their role in promoting regular attendance.

## **Parent/Carer Responsibilities**

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and arrives on time.
- Inform the school of any absences as soon as possible on the first day and on any subsequent days.
- Provide reasons for all absences, supported by evidence when requested.
- Avoid booking holidays during term time.
- Schedule medical and dental appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.

Parents and carers play a critical role in promoting good attendance, and we encourage open communication to address any concerns or difficulties.

## **Pupil Responsibilities**

- Attend school regularly and punctually.
- Engage positively with learning and follow school routines.
- Communicate any concerns affecting attendance with staff.

## **Reporting Absences**

Parents/carers should contact the school office by phone or email before 9:00 am on each day of their child's absence, providing the reason for the absence.

If no communication is received, the school will:

- Contact parents/carers to ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Conduct a home visit if there are safeguarding concerns.
- Mark the absence as unauthorised if no valid reason is provided within a reasonable time frame.

## Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

- **Authorised Absences:** These include absences due to illness, medical appointments, religious observances, and exceptional family circumstances (e.g., bereavement).
- **Unauthorised Absences:** These include absences without a valid reason, term-time holidays not approved by the school, and arriving after the register closes without justification.

The Headteacher will make the final decision on whether an absence is authorised.

## Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. The school day starts at 9:00 am, and students should be in their classrooms by this time. Lateness is disruptive and can impact a pupil's learning.

- Pupils arriving after 9:15 am will be marked as late.
- Pupils arriving after 9:30 am without a valid reason will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

Persistent lateness will be addressed with parents/carers through meetings and support plans.

## Monitoring and Intervention

The school will monitor attendance regularly and implement the following interventions as needed:

- **Attendance Monitoring Letters:** Sent to parents/carers when attendance falls below 95%.
- **Meetings with Parents/Carers:** To discuss concerns and agree on support strategies.
- **Individual Support Plans:** Tailored plans for pupils with persistent attendance issues.
- **Referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO):** For ongoing or serious attendance concerns.

The school's Senior Attendance Champion will oversee all attendance-related matters and work closely with families, the Education Welfare Service in Enfield, and external agencies.

## Impact of Attendance Levels

To emphasise the importance of regular attendance, the following statistics demonstrate the amount of learning time lost at different attendance rates:

- **95% Attendance:** Equals approximately 9.5 days of lost learning per academic year.
- **90% Attendance:** Equals approximately 19 days of lost learning per academic year (nearly 4 weeks of school).
- **85% Attendance:** Equals approximately 28.5 days of lost learning per academic year (nearly 6 weeks of school).

These absences can have a significant impact on academic achievement and social development.

## **Support for Pupils and Families**

Oaktree School is committed to providing support to pupils and families experiencing difficulties that affect attendance. Support may include:

- Pastoral care and mental health support.
- Flexible timetables or part-time arrangements, where appropriate.
- Referrals to external services (e.g., counselling, social care).
- Adjustments for pupils with medical needs or SEND.

We will work collaboratively to find solutions that promote regular attendance and remove barriers to learning.

## **Leave of Absence Requests**

Parents/carers must submit a written request to the Headteacher for any planned leave of absence. Leave will only be granted in **exceptional circumstances**. Unauthorised leave may result in a fixed penalty notice as required by law.

## **Legal Framework and Enforcement**

This policy is underpinned by the Education Act 1996, which places a legal responsibility on parents to ensure their child's regular attendance.

The school may issue penalty notices or refer cases to the local authority for legal action in cases of persistent unauthorised absence.

## **Promoting Positive Attendance**

We aim to foster a positive school culture that values and rewards regular attendance. Initiatives may include:

- Certificates and awards for high or improved attendance.
- Celebrating class attendance milestones.
- Regular communication with parents/carers about the importance of attendance.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and approved by the school's Governing Body. Feedback from staff, parents/carers, and pupils will be considered to ensure its effectiveness.

By working together, we can ensure that all pupils at Oaktree School attend regularly and are given every opportunity to achieve their full potential.