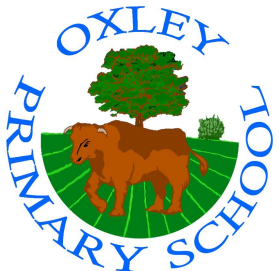


Policy:	Attendance Policy (non statutory)	
This policy was adopted or reviewed on:	January 2017	
Review Date:	January 2019	

Signed _____ (Chair of Governors) Date _____

Introduction

We expect all pupils 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 do all we can to encourage the pupils to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all pupils. We will also make the best provision we can for those pupils who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to, or find it difficult to get into school.

Pupils who attend school on a regular basis can take advantage of the full array of educational opportunities available to them. Research shows that those pupils who have irregular attendance are at risk of not achieving their full potential and in extreme cases, may be drawn into antisocial or criminal behaviour.

It is the parent's / carer's responsibility to ensure that the school has all current contact details, and a home or mobile telephone number must be provided for emergency contact.

Definitions

- **Parent:** For the purposes of this policy, "parent" refers to anyone with legal parental responsibility for a child, including registered carers.
- **Regular attendance:** There is currently no agreed legal definition of what level of attendance constitutes "regular attendance". **At Oxley Primary School, we define "regular attendance" at 96% and above.**
- **Persistent Absence:** In September 2015 the Department for Education (DfE) had announced that any student whose attendance falls **below 90%** from September 2015 will be classed as a Persistently Absent student. Therefore, if a student misses **19 or more days** over an academic year they will be classed as Persistently Absent. The DfE says:

*"If over 5 academic years a pupil has attendance of 90% the child will miss a **half of a school year**, that's a lot of lost education.*

Pupils taking unauthorised leave of absence early in the year could be categorised as persistently absent well into half term five but have perfect attendance from their return date onwards.

As parents play an essential role in supporting attendance the changes to persistent absence need to be shared with them"

1 School Responsibility - THE LAW and School Attendance

- Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated each regulation applies to all schools in England.
- School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that will be collected every term through the School Census.
- The Headteacher and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance.
- Where school attendance problems occur, the school will endeavour to work with parents in the interests of the child to achieve a resolution.
- Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module.
- It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session.
- Schools are also under a safeguarding duty, under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to investigate any unexplained absences.

2 Registration

Registration at Oxley Primary School is as follows:

Morning registration – 8:50 am. Registers close at 8:55 am.

Afternoon registration – 1:15 pm. Registers close 1:20 pm.

Pupils who do not register within these times will be marked as 'late' – coded 'L'

3 Types of Absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.

Authorised Absence – coded as 'M', 'I', 'C', 'T', 'B', 'R'

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Parents do not authorise any absences and only the school can decide to authorise absences. An example where a school will not authorise an absence is when a parent takes a pupil out of school to go shopping during school hours.

The school will code an absence as authorised if the parents/carers provide medical evidence to justify their child's absence. School will expect parents to provide medical evidence for **any absences over 3 days**. Once referred to the EWO (Education Welfare Officer), parents may be required to provide medical evidence for all absences even if it a single day.

The school may make a referral to our Education Welfare Officer Naina Zavery, if a pupil has an increasing number of authorised absences as this is classed as 'persistent absence'. Contact will be made with the parents regarding the absences.

The school may also make a referral to our Education Welfare Officer if there is a concern about a pupil's welfare or safety. Parents will be contacted to ascertain if further action needs to be taken.

Parents are expected to co-operate with the school and attend any meeting when requested to do so by the school.

Unauthorised Absence – coded as 'O' or 'G'

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given.

All absences are coded as unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason even with the support of a parent. Examples of this are

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Parents keeping pupils off school because they themselves are ill
- Family holidays or leave of absence that has not been agreed

An absence will also be coded as unauthorised if a parent fails to provide medical evidence when requested to do so.

4 Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent/carer of any pupil who has unauthorised absence. If a pupil has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/carers will be asked to a meeting at the school to discuss the problem

If the pupil continues to accrue unauthorised absences the school will make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer, Naina Zavery, who will make contact with the parents to arrange a meeting and seek to ensure that the parents/carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

Where required, legal action will be sought and the EWO will submit the case before the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice and /or prosecution. The Education Act 1996 (Section 444) states:

'If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence'. The school reserves the right to consider taking legal action against any parents/carers who repeatedly fail in their responsibility to send their children to school on a regular basis.'

5 If a pupil is absent

Parents and carers should inform the school on the morning of the first day of absence either by telephone on **01509 502483** or leaving a message, clearly stating the reason for the absence and the expected duration of illness.

When a pupil is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, which will inform the school office. If the office has not already been informed of the reason for a pupil's absence, they will endeavour to contact a parent or carer by telephone or text message.

When the pupil returns to school, parents or carers must ensure that a note or verbal confirmation is provided to explain the reason for the absence. A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a pupil has a medical appointment. Parents are encouraged to provide the appointment

card/letter. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a pupil, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the pupil.

Where the school has concerns about a pupil's safety, the EWO will be contacted and a 'Safe and Well' check will be carried out.

When a pupil is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the pupil.

6 Requests for leave of absence

We believe that pupils need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child, e.g. a family crisis. We expect parents and carers to contact the school and request the leave of absence on the official school form. The Headteacher will respond to the request as soon as possible

7 Holidays in term time

Government guidelines, which came into effect on 1st September 2013, prevent Headteachers from granting any leave of absence during term time, unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. A family holiday during term-time does **not** fall under the category of 'exceptional circumstances' and the school is therefore unable to grant leave of absence for any family holiday.

In order to request a family holiday for 'exceptional circumstances', Parents must complete a 'leave of absence' form (Appendix 1), outlining the reason and the specific dates when leave is required. The Headteacher will consider the request and inform the Parents of their decision.

Holidays taken without permission will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' – family holiday not agreed ('G' Code). A referral may be made to the Education Welfare Officer to investigate the situation. If necessary, this could result in the issue of a fine. Governors are sympathetic to the financial pressures on many families but feel that a pupil's education should be the priority at all times.

8 Issuing a fine

The school does **not** issue fines. This is carried out by the Local Authority. The parent(s) of any pupil who has absences recorded as a result of an unauthorised family holiday, will each be fined £60 which must be paid within a 21 day period. Failure to pay the fine(s) within this timescale, will result in the fines being doubled to £120, which will need to be paid within 28 days of the original fine being issued. If the fine(s) remain unpaid after the full period of 28 days has expired, parents may face legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, Parents will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £1000.

Parents can seek further clarification from EWSM on 07947994289 or via email naina.zavery@ews-m.com

9 Long-term absence

When pupils 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 with their school work. This work must be completed and returned to school so that the school can monitor the pupil's progress.

Where it is deemed that a pupil is unable to return to school due to chronic medical or other medical reasons the school will make a referral to Naina Zavery to ascertain if any alternative provision for

education can be requested. Parents will have to provide medical evidence that clearly states a pupil is unable to return to mainstream education. Parents must provide the school with medical evidence when their child is going to be off from school for long periods but alternative provision is not being sought. The school may refer this for further investigations to Naina Zavery who will make contact with the parent/s.

10 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive punctually, ready to be registered by **8:50 am**. The school gate is locked from **8:50 am** and any pupils arriving after this time must enter school through the main entrance and be 'signed in' by a parent/carer.

Registers close at **8:55am** and pupils arriving after this time will be marked as 'Late' on the class register.

Any pupil that arrives at school after the register has closed will be coded as a **U** code. This equates to an unauthorised mark. Parents may be requested to meet with the EWO if this becomes a regular problem. Legal action can be taken when a child has 'U' codes as this is deemed to be an unauthorised mark.

Where possible, parents must ensure that they try and book all medical appointments either before school starts or after school finishes. It is useful for parents to provide the school with the appointment card and/or letter for any medical appointment. All medical appointments will be coded as an **M** which does equate to an authorised absence.

Parents/Carers of pupils who are persistently late will be contacted by the Headteacher and will be asked to address the problem. School may make a referral to Naina Zavery who will make contact with the parent/s.

11 Attendance targets

The school sets its own attendance targets each year. These are set by the governors. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

12 Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the Headteacher. 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 attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The Headteacher will monitor attendance on a weekly basis to identify any pupils who are persistently absent or who continually arrive late. In the first instance, parents will be informed by letter and will be expected to address the concerns raised. If there is no improvement in the child's attendance or punctuality, a referral will be made to the EWO.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. The rates of attendance will be inspected by OFSTED who will make a judgement about the school's attendance in their inspection report.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance and punctuality in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a pupil's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular pupil, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or carers.

Appendix 1 - Request for term time absence for a pupil

Oxley Primary School:
EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE APPLICATION FORM

Date of application _____

Name of child _____

Date of birth _____

Proposed absence start date: _____ Return to school date: _____

PARENT NAME Mr/Mrs/Ms _____

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE

Please provide full details for the reasons for this request. (Please attach additional information if required)

Please note under the government’s new guidelines it is at the Heads discretion as to whether this request is accepted or declined. If granted and your child does not return to school on the stated date, the school can remove your child off the school roll and you will be required to make a new application to the Local Authority for a school place. Parents taking their child out of school where the request has been declined leave themselves at risk of a Penalty notice and/or Prosecution.

Parents Signature

Date.....

Granted Declined

Signed (Headteacher)

----- Date -----

Appendix 2 - initial letter to parents regarding pupil absence

Dear

RE: Pupil's Name

From monitoring our registers we find that your child's attendance currently stands at % with Absences.

As you know it is important that children attend school regularly and attendance and achievement are linked very closely

If there is anything we can do to support you in getting your child into school on a regular basis, please contact me to discuss the matter further. You must ensure that you call the school if your child is off from school and provide a reason for the absences.

Please be aware that should your child have further absences we may be asking you to provide medical evidence

Yours sincerely

Jason Gilman
Headteacher

Appendix 3 - follow-up letter to parents regarding ongoing absence concerns

Dear

RE: Pupil's Name DOB

We are very concerned at the number of absences that **(pupil's name)** has recorded against **(his/her)** name.

I wrote to you recently about your child's attendance, but unfortunately there has been no improvement and your child's attendance is currently% which falls short of the expected level of attendance. Please see attached copy of **(pupil's name)** attendance register.

If there is a reason for this level of attendance, I should be grateful if you could contact me to discuss the matter. We shall continue to monitor your child's attendance and hope to see an improvement. If there is no improvement, we will need to arrange a meeting to discuss the matter. You will from now on have to provide medical evidence for all future absences and examples of medical evidence:

- A short note from your GP
- Box of antibiotics or other prescribed medication
- An appointment card

Regular attendance at school is important to ensuring your child's success at school and I would like us to work together to improve **(pupil's name)** attendance.

I look forward to seeing an immediate and sustained improvement in **(pupil's name)** attendance.

Yours sincerely

Jason Gilman
Headteacher

Appendix 4 - final letter informing of referral to EWO

Dear

RE: Pupil's Name DOB

Further to the recent correspondence expressing the school's concerns about **(pupil's name)** poor attendance at school I note that there has not been any improvement.

As you have failed to provide medical evidence the absences have been coded as unauthorised and we will be making a referral to our Education Welfare Officer, Naina Zavery, to discuss this matter further with you.

Yours sincerely

Jason Gilman
Headteacher

Appendix 5 - letter to parents regarding concerns about punctuality

Dear.

RE: Punctuality

RE: D.O.B:

As you are aware at Oxley Primary School we encourage all children to arrive in school on time and to not arrive late unless there is a valid reason for doing so.

I am writing to inform you that your child.....between *date* and *date* was late on _____ occasions.

A child arriving late into school can significantly reduce achievement and your child may also feel awkward when he / she arrives late especially when the class is already settled. Your child will also miss vital instructions which are usually given at the beginning of the lesson and this also has an impact on other students and when one pupil arrives late it causes disruption to the entire class and the teacher.

If the lateness continues, the matter may need to be referred to the school's Education Welfare Officer, Naina Zavery, who would then will be in contact with you.

If you feel that there are valid reasons why your child is late into school I would like to discuss this with you and where possible offer you support in gettingto school on time.

Yours sincerely,

Jason Gilman
Headteacher