



Attendance Policy

Policy Lead:	Deputy Headteacher
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Approval needed by:	Headteacher



Introduction

It is widely accepted that attendance has a direct impact upon achievement, success and welfare. Strong evidence shows that where any individual pupils' attendance percentage is below 96% it will have a detrimental effect on their achievement, becoming increasingly damaging as their attendance percentage becomes lower. Non-attendance is one of the single biggest blocks to achievement and the school carrying out its function in safeguarding the welfare of children. Regardless of the reason for absence, not being present at school disadvantages children.

Therefore, it is imperative to work with parents and carers to maximise every student's attendance. By focusing on good attendance we can make a significant impact across the range of outcomes for pupils.

Statutory Obligations

Legislation – Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”*.

Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that *“if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence”*. Therefore regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement, as well as being essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainments and opportunities.

For the purposes of Education Law the definition 'parental responsibility' lies with whomever the child resides. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.

Schools are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll. In addition, lesson registers are taken each lesson.

Procedure

Students are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves learner's absence)
- Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)

Registering Attendance

- Registers are to be marked using SIMS within 10 minutes of the start of each period.
- Students present should be given a “/” mark (present for that session). At the end of the lesson this will be converted to an ATL (attitude to learning) score 1-5.
- Students not present in the lesson should be marked with an “O” (No reason yet supplied for absence). If it appears that the student has been present in other lessons, pupil reception to be informed.
- Students who arrive late should be given an “L” mark and the number of minutes late recorded.
- Paper registers should only be marked when there is no possible alternative and these should be returned promptly to pupil reception unless another arrangement has been made.

Punctuality and Arriving Late to School

- All students are expected to be punctual to school (8.40am) and to lessons.
- Students arriving after the registration bell at 8.40am will be marked as late using an L code.
- Any student who is late to school must attend a 20-minute lunch time detention in seclusion.
- Failure to attend this detention will lead to SLT Detention on a Friday 3pm – 5pm.
- Students who arrive after 09:30 will be marked with a “U” code (Late after register closed) and the absence will be unauthorised unless a satisfactory reason is given.
- Students who are late to school twice or more in a week are given an SLT detention on a Friday 3pm – 5pm.

Attendance Procedures and Responsibilities

Parents/carers are asked to telephone school before 09:30am to notify us of a child’s absence. Where parents/carers fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the attendance and pastoral team will endeavour to contact them by text initially with a follow up telephone call or home visit. If no contact can be achieved or the reason for absence is not accepted the absence will be unauthorised.

For an absence to be authorised, for example due to illness, it must be supported by a letter, note in the planner or phone call from the parents/carers explaining the reason for the absence.

Students who wish to leave the premises during the school day will be expected to bring a letter from their parents/carers explaining the reason.

Students arriving at school after registration should sign in at the main office and should sign out at the main office if leaving the premises before the end of the school day.

A first day response strategy is in place whereby when a child has not attended school by 9:30 am the attendance team will make contact to establish the reason for the absence and an estimated time of return to school.

Medical Absences

Any medical absences in excess of 6 days (12 sessions) per academic year will need to be supported by medical evidence. This does not have to be a doctor's note but can be prescriptions, medication, or appointment cards. If no medical evidence is received the absence will be coded as unauthorised.

Unauthorised Absence – Fixed Penalty Notices

Parents/carers should be aware that The Oaks Academy may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in any one term, with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. Parents will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and will have 15 days to ensure an improvement in attendance and / or punctuality. Failure to ensure improvement will lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice.

The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Application for Exceptional Circumstances- Leave of Absence in Term Time

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a student can be away from school if the leave is granted.

It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs of a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised days, then school may apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

Students are rewarded for good attendance and for improved attendance. This can take the form of positive letters home, awarding achievement points and entry to a prize draw.

What can Parents/Carers do to help?

- Let the school know straight away why your child is absent from school.
- Communication with school is extremely important in supporting your child in school.
- Try to make any dental/GP appointments outside of school time.
- Ensure that addresses and telephone numbers of parents and key contacts are up to date.

If Parents/Carers are worried about their Child's Attendance at School what can they do?

If you are concerned about your child's absence, please speak with their form tutor. You can find their contact details on the website by visiting www.theoaksacademy.co.uk/about-us/our-teams/form-tutors/

If you would like any more information you could also speak with their Head of Year, Pastoral Manager, Assistant Head of Behaviour or Deputy Headteacher.