



GOVERNORS' POLICY STATEMENT

(05) ATTENDANCE

The staff of Oakwood School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, students, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community and which the community is proud of.

Oakwood School expects students to attend 100% of the time unless authorised by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Attendance Manager. This allows our students to thrive and take part in all educational opportunities available to them ensuring their future success. As a school, we are committed to encouraging and supporting parents/carers to ensure that their children achieve 100% attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted upon promptly.

Adopted by the Senior Leadership Team: June 2020

Review date: June 2022

AIMS AND EXPECTATIONS

Students are expected to attend school 100% of the time unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or Attendance Manager.

When a child is absent from school without authority the parent/carer can be held accountable for an offence under S.444 Education Act 1996; failure to secure the regular school attendance of the child. The Headteacher has the responsibility to decide what mark is placed in an attendance register irrespective of reason presented for the absence by the parent.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation

The following legislation informs the attendance guidance issued to Surrey maintained schools which is included within this policy:

- The Children Act 1989 (section 36);
- The Education Act 1996 (sections 7, 19, 436A, 437-39, 443-447);
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education Act 2005 (section 115);
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006 (sections 97-111)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Regulation) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session which is taken at the start of P4. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

In addition to the two legal registration sessions, class registers are taken in every lesson.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

All Students Must:

- Attend school every day and attend all lessons – morning registration takes place at 8.40am on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and at 9.05am on a Wednesday. Afternoon registration takes place at 12.25pm which is at the start of Period 4 and class registers are taken in all lessons.
- Arrive to school punctually, in preparation for morning registration.
- Sign in at the Attendance Office if arriving late to school after 9.05am on a Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and 9.15am on a Wednesday; this will be recorded as late. If arrival is after the registers close at 9.30am, a U code will be given which is an unauthorised absence unless there is a valid reason provided for the absence such as a medical appointment.
- Attend in full school uniform, with the appropriate equipment for the day.
- Discuss promptly with their form tutor, Year Group Leader or Student Services, any problems that may affect their school attendance.

All Parents/Carers Will:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and be aware of their legal responsibilities under the Education Act 1996 that a child of compulsory school age must attend full time education suitable for their age, ability, aptitude and special educational need.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually in full school uniform and prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school on the first day and subsequent days of absence or, if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school and keep absence to a minimum.
- Where possible, use Studybugs to report their child's absence from school through illness
- Send a note of explanation about the absence on the first day of the child's return to school which is to be taken to the Attendance Office.
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

The School Will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Provide a sympathetic response to any student's or parent/carer's concerns.
- Keep accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality using the appropriate coding of authorised, unauthorised or approved educational activity
- Monitor individual student's attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents/carers when a student fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence.
- In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, medical evidence such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence may be requested or verifications from a relevant body may be requested and until this is obtained, absences will be recorded as unauthorised. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily
- Encourage good patterns of attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition
- Make initial telephone and letter enquiries regarding students who are not attending regularly and provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and students
- Send letters to parents/carers informing them when their child's attendance is below the expectation of the school and therefore a cause for concern.
- Where little or no improvement in attendance is seen, parents/carers will be invited to meet with school staff to discuss the reasons for the poor attendance and identify/offer further support.
- Meet fortnightly with the Inclusion Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality.

- Follow advice and statutory guidance for children missing education and report to the Local Authority Inclusion Service any student who has 10 consecutive unauthorised days of absence, however, earlier notification to the Inclusion Service would be advised in these circumstances
- In conjunction with the Local Authority, in some circumstances, use Fixed Penalty Notices to address poor school attendance for those parents/carers who do not ensure their child's regular school attendance
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the Inclusion Officer may result in further actions, e.g. the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice, Court prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.

STUDENTS LEAVING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

- Students are not allowed to leave the premises during the day without permission from the school
- Whenever possible parents/carers should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time
- Parents/carers are requested to confirm in writing the date and reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time and whether the student is being collected or will make their own way to their destination
- Students must sign out on leaving the school and sign back in on their return at the Attendance Office
- Where a student is being picked up from the school, parents/carers are requested to report to Main Reception to collect their child
- All students leaving without being collected but with parental permission will be given a written authorisation slip by the school in case of being stopped by the police or Inclusion Service
- If a student leaves the school site without permission their parents/carers will be contacted, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and this will be followed up by the School and sanctions put in place where appropriate

UNAUTHORISED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

- The school holiday dates, external exam dates and INSET days are published a year in advance.
- Unauthorised leave of absence and family events in term time for students throughout the school will **not** be authorised and recorded as such, unless there are exceptional circumstances for which leave has been applied for and granted by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or the Attendance Manager.
- A request form for Leave of Absence for exceptional circumstances must be completed prior to any absence taken – this can be obtained from the Attendance Office/Reception.
- Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the leave of absence is without the authority of the Headteacher – further details can be found at the end of this policy.

PUNCTUALITY/LATENESS

Punctuality to school is crucial and registration at the beginning of the day with a student's tutor is one of the most important periods in the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other students in the class. It is paramount therefore that all students arrive to school on time, at 8.40am fully equipped for the day.

- Registration on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday will take place between 8.40am and 8.50am and students who arrive after 8.50am will be recorded as late to school. Registration will take place between 9.05am and 9.15am on a Wednesday and students arriving after this time will be recorded as late. All students arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Registers close at 9.30am and any student arriving after this time will be recorded as a U (unauthorised absence) and can be subject to prosecution by the Local Authority.
- Students who are late to school will receive a Break 1 detention the same day and in the case of persistent lateness, this may result in a referral to the Inclusion Office Service and could lead to the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level can have a significant impact on a child's educational attainment and we need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to address this.

We monitor all absences thoroughly through joint fortnightly meetings with the Inclusion Office Service, Attendance Manager, Pastoral Year Group Assistants and Year Group Leaders. Any student that has reached the 'persistent absence' threshold or at risk of becoming a 'persistent absentee' is identified and investigations made as to the reasons for the absences. Persistently absent students' are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and where absence is affecting attainment, further interventions may be offered such as a referral to the Access to Learning Faculty, support from our Pastoral Year Group Assistants or Student Services department.

In some cases, parents/carers will be notified by a letter of concern or invited to a meeting where an Attendance action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified.

CHANGING SCHOOLS

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform Oakwood School as soon as possible in writing. Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll only under certain circumstances defined in **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016)**.

A student will not be removed from Oakwood School roll until the following information has been received in writing from the parent/carer:

- The full name of the parent with who the student will live
- The date the student will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The name and address of the new school
- A new home address if appropriate
- The reason for the change in school

If the above criteria has been met and confirmation received from the new school that the student has commenced their education there, the student's school records will be forwarded. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information and the child does not attend Oakwood School for a period of time, the student will be referred to the Local Authority Tracking Officer and Inclusion Service as a child missing education.

PENALTY NOTICES

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 per parent/carer, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider a prosecution against the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notices relating to Attendance

Penalty Notices may be issued, if considered appropriate, in the following circumstances:

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

- Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher, **each parent/carer** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.
- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a student has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents/carers failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Educational Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.
- Students identified by police and Inclusion Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents/carers will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent/carer liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 per parent/carer per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.