



Oak Heights Independent School
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Oak Heights School

School Attendance Policy Secondary

Updated by Date: September 2023

To be reviewed every year

Headteacher: Mr S Dhillon

Attendance Officer : Mr O Ali

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Oak Heights School Attendance Policy

Introduction We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. To do this it is crucial that every child attends school every day and on time.

This policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why regular attendance is so important Any absence affects the pattern of a student's learning and regular absence will seriously affect their progress. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every student should aim to have a minimum of 95% attendance. Anything less than this will impact on their education.

The school has targets to improve attendance and students have an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

We will keep parents and students regularly updated about progress to this level.

Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parent / carers, students and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this the school will:

- Give details on attendance in our regular Headteacher's Newsletter;
- Report to parents each half term regarding their child's attendance and punctuality
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent / carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably via email.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Examples include:

Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily

- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which are not properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children, birthdays, etc
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. In this situation it is essential that the parents do not give in to pressure and allow students to stay away from school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. The school works to support parent / carers to ensure that the child returns to school.

Persistent Absence (PA) A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' full support and co-operation to tackle this. PA students, and those at risk of becoming PA are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA students and their parents are subject to an action plan, and we will allocate appropriate support where possible. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Access and Attendance Officer. The attached appendix gives a summary of the stages and steps the school will take with persistent absentees.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent parents must:

- Contact Reception as soon as possible on the first day of absence; This can also be done via email – enquiries@oakheights.co.uk You can also contact Reception Telephone 0208 577 1827
- All appointment cards, letters or doctor's notes can be email directly to the attendance officer, Mr Ali : o.ali@oakheight.co.uk

If a child is absent the school will:

- Attempt to telephone or text parents on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them
- Invite parents in to discuss the situation with The Main Office or The Head Teacher if absences persist.

- Send a letter to parents once your child's attendance has dropped below 90%
- Refer the matter to The Main Office if attendance moves below 90%.

Contact details

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have accurate contact details and numbers at all times. Please ensure the school is informed immediately of any changes. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The Main Office

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. However, if difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to The Main Office. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if all efforts to improve the child's attendance fail and 5 absences persist, The Main Office & The Head Teacher can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the AAO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. Students who are late disrupt their own progress and the learning of others.

How we manage lateness:

The school day is staggered to get all students in safely in and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Start times

Year 7 – 8.30am

Year 8 – 8.30am

Year 9 – 8.30am

Year 10 – 8.30am

Year 11 – 8.30am

Secondary School – Late Procedures Registers are marked within the first 10 minutes of form time and your child will receive a late mark and given a same day detention. If they are late they are required to complete a 30 minute detention on the same day. Failure to complete this detention will result in an escalation of sanctions.

If your child is persistently late then you will be required to attend a meeting with the **Senior Leadership Team** to discuss the reasons for their lateness. If there is no improvement, then this will be escalated to The Head Teacher.

At 9.45am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence, unless there is a valid reason for the lateness agreed by the school. If not, this may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a child has a record of persistent lateness they and the parents will be asked to meet with The Main Office / The Head Teacher to resolve the problem, but parents can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time. Persistently poor punctuality may also be referred to the with The Main Office / The Head Teacher

Holidays in term time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Holiday absences may be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Any application for leave must be made in advance using the form available from Registry. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time and your child's overall attendance record.

Circumstances where such leave will be authorised:

Leave will not be authorised unless the reason falls within the DFE guidance for exceptional circumstances as outlined below. These include:

- Weddings of parents and siblings.
- The funeral of a parent or sibling.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised, which may lead to referral to The Main Office / The Head Teacher and attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Fixed Penalty Notices

We will refer students to the Local Authority Attendance Services with a view to issuing Fixed Penalty Notices in the following circumstances.

- Unauthorised holidays
- Regular unauthorised non-attendance

- Extended periods of unauthorised non-attendance

Coding Absence

When taking a register all staff should call each name and code as follows

P – Present

N – Not present

L – Late

They should duplicate any codes that have been prepopulated by registry and not override them.

Exceptional Codes

Code B:

Off-site educational activity This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils.

This code can only be entered with the agreement of the HT or DHT

Code C:

Leave of absence authorised by the school Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

This code can only be entered with the agreement of the HT or DHT

Code H:

Holiday authorised by the school Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave.

The people responsible for attendance matters in Oak Heights School are:

Attendance officer : Mr Omar Ali

APPENDIX

Roles and Responsibilities Students

- Students will arrive at school before 15 minutes before their start time.

- Students will attend all timetabled lessons on time.
- Students will bring absence notes to The Main Office.

Parent / Carers

- All non-urgent appointments to be arranged after school, at the weekend or in school holidays.
- The school should be informed in advance or first day back in school of reasons for absence.
- A reason for every absence to be given to the school either in writing, via email or by telephone.

Admissions and Registry

- Updating the registers when notification is received regarding reason for absence
- Daily monitoring of am / pm registration
- Provide each **HOY** with a list of students to receive Warning letters re attendance
- Meeting with students that have an attendance less than 85%
- Meet with parents to discuss attendance issues and offer support
- Contact parent / carers in writing where a student has an unauthorised absence for 10 consecutive days.
- Conduct home visits when necessary.

The Main Office / The Head Teacher

- Plan and review each term's work with the school The Main Office / The Headteacher.
- Liaise with The Main Office / The Headteacher regarding students where attendance and punctuality are cause for concern. (non-attendees and those with attendance below 85%)
- Support families in raising attendance through visits and mediating between home and school
- Lead the process towards court action where necessary.
- Attend review meetings of students supported by Children and families team and/or those with Special Educational Needs where low attendance or punctuality is an issue **Head of Strand**
- Meet at least once a fortnight The Main Office / The Headteacher to discuss issues of attendance and punctuality and agree actions
- Meet fortnightly with The Main Office / The Headteacher to refer students and review the progress of students
- Lead and ensure the system of rewards for attendance and punctuality is in place
- Monitor attendance and punctuality for their Key Stages and ensure appropriate and effective action is being taken
- Set challenging targets for Form and Year group attendance and monitor progress towards achieving the targets