



Attendance Policy

OAKDENE PRIMARY ACADEMY

The Enquire Learning Trust

Approved by:	Trustees		
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Version History

Date	Author	Version	Comment
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1. Aims

The Enquire Learning Trust aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- emphasising that it is the responsibility of everyone in the Academy to improve attendance and punctuality.
- ensuring that all pupils access a full-time education which meets their needs and allows all to realise their potential.
- striving to provide a safe and caring environment where each child can engage in all opportunities offered.
- working with children and their families to ensure every child has good attendance and punctuality.
- challenging the behaviour of those children and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- providing an effective system of communication with parents/carers together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- having a designated senior leader in the academy with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school.
- developing IT-based attendance recording systems in order to provide accurate information and to use suitable tracking strategies to recognise any trends that can damage good attendance and learning.

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

Our Academy

What you can expect from Oakdene Primary Academy:

- We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- We will work closely with parents/carers where child's absence is cause for concern.
- We will support children to achieve good attendance and punctuality.
- We will support children returning to school after prolonged absence.
- We will work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

What Oakdene Primary Academy expects from Children:

- To attend regularly and on time
- To be punctual to all lessons
- To ensure that they register for all timetabled lessons and inform the Office where appropriate if they are not able to be registered.
- To ensure all messages and notes from parents/carers are taken to the appropriate place.

What Oakdene Primary Academy expects from Parents/Carers:

- To ensure their child attends the academy on those days it is open, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- To ensure their child attends every day the Academy is open unless they are too ill to do so.
- To avoid keeping their child away from the Academy for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation (see overleaf).
- To avoid arranging holidays during term time
- To immediately inform the Academy Attendance Office / Academy if their child is unable to attend (by 9 am where possible), including the reason for absence and expected date of return.
- If no indication of a return date has been given, parents/carers should contact the Academy on each day of absence.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. School procedures

At Oakdene Academy, our senior leader for the strategic approach to attendance is Mrs Bramley and she can be contacted by telephone on 01642 560768.

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils 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. It will mark whether every pupil 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

Pupils from reception to Y6 must arrive in school by **8.50a.m.** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8.50a.m.** and will be kept open until **9.20a.m.** The register for the second session will be taken at **12.45p.m. for reception, 1.00p.m. for Y1-Y4 and 1.15p.m. for Y5 & 6** and will be kept open until **1.30p.m.**

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9a.m. or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

This can be done contacting the admin team by phoning the school office on 01642 677968. Class teachers should not be contacted via email regarding attendance – all messages relating to absence should come through the school office/ admin staff.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents and carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Please notify school in advance of the appointment by telephoning the office on 01642 560768

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Repeated lateness will be reported to parents/carers. Repeated lateness after the register has closed may be dealt with in the same way as absence. Parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice or even prosecuted in the Magistrates Court. Authorised/Unauthorised Absence Authorised absence is where the Academy has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the Academy can do this.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

For unauthorised absence, we will attempt to speak to parents/carers to establish reasons for this with a first day response – usually a phone call. If we cannot contact parents/carers via phone call, we will conduct a house visit to establish reasons why children are not in school. We will update our records with reasons provided and we will liaise with Stockton Local Authority to chase up any concerns. Our Safeguarding Officer, Education Welfare Officer and Attendance Officer work closely to establish how to proceed with any concerns relating to unauthorised absence and persistently absent children.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents have continual, instant access to their child's attendance record through the MCAS (My Child At School) app. Parents will receive a copy of their child's attendance record with their written report. Attendance will also be commented on during meetings and consultations that take place termly.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Principals may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Examples of exceptional circumstances may include:

- 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.
- 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.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative

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 Principal's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Exclusion
- Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement of close immediate family
- Involvement in a public performance
- **Authorisation is at the Principals discretion**
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Ofsted should not criticise schools for absences of Traveller children, providing the school can demonstrate that it:

- has used the registration codes correctly
- is strategic and proactive in communicating with Traveller parents about their travelling patterns on a regular basis
- is strategic and proactive in ensuring excellent attendance when the children are not travelling
- provides distance learning materials in accordance with good practice
- provides Travelling families with the parent held education record before they travel
- includes specific guidance for Travellers in the school's attendance policy and ensures the policy is accessible to parents
- evaluates its provision for narrowing the gap in attendance for Traveller children in the school self-evaluation form

- evaluates its provision for narrowing achievement gaps for Traveller children in the school self-evaluation form

Holidays

Pupils **will not** be granted authorised absence for holidays during term time unless there is an exceptional circumstance (see definition section 4.1)

Unless authorised due to an exceptional circumstance, any holidays taken will be unauthorised and parents/ carers may be subject to legal sanctions.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within *21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

How we respond to Absence/Lateness

As well as taking appropriate action against parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their children, we will take steps to reward good attendance and punctuality at Oakdene Primary Academy.

Attendance has a high profile and is always a key part of the whole school through Friday celebration Assembly. All children who attend every day for each week are recognized individually and they receive a 100% sticker. Classes with attendance above 96% receive incentives such as extra breaktimes.

We go above and beyond most schools to reward children for excellent attendance:

Weekly Awards

Each child attending all week will be entered into their class weekly 100% attendance raffle.

Termly Awards

100% attendance for a term will be rewarded with an Oakdene termly experience.

Annual Awards

For those children achieving 100% attendance for the entire academic year, a gift worth £50.00!

ATTENDANCE FALLS BELOW 95% DUE TO UNAUTHORISED HOLIDAYS, ILLNESS OR UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE		
Step 1	Letter 1 to inform of a low level of attendance.	95% is a start for concern. This letter is to inform and advise. It starts the beginning of a 2 week monitoring period .
Step 2	After 2 weeks of monitoring, attendance has still not improved, and/ or there are additional absences – Letter 2 is sent.	Letter 2 explains the reasons given for absence so far, and that this has led to an unacceptable attendance level. If attendance has dropped below 90% your child is now classed as a persistent absentee. It also states that unless there is a significant improvement, a meeting will be held in school to form an attendance action plan. This is the beginning of a second monitoring period of 2 weeks .

Step 3	First attendance meeting.	If attendance remains below 90%, a meeting is called with the Attendance team. At this meeting, targets are set and an attendance action plan is formed with the family. If the family do not attend, the plan will be made by school and sent home.
Case will be referred to Education Welfare as a record of poor attendance.		
Step 4	Letter to state that sickness must be evidenced.	If a child has attendance below 90% due to an unusual amount of sickness, this letter makes it clear that they will be marked as unauthorised absences unless there is a form of medical evidence. This could be medicine prescribed, a note from the doctor or appointment card.
Step 5	Second attendance meeting	If attendance is still below 90% after the attendance action plan, this meeting is held to make clear what the next steps are, and what letters will be issued after the meeting.
Step 6	First legal warning letter	This letter states that there are serious concerns regarding the child's attendance, and that, unless there is significant improvement the case will be referred to the magistrate for prosecution. This begins the final monitoring period.
Step 7	Final Legal Letter	This letter states that the school has referred the attendance case to the local authority, and that there is to be an intent to prosecute.
Step 8	Court Date	A court date is set. Evidence is filed, and a magistrate makes a decision. At this point, parents are able to present any mitigating circumstances – Including any relevant medical evidence. All parties are informed of the court decision.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Regular attendance at Oakdene is part of the school culture and is expected by everyone. Every member of staff ensures they model the value of this to pupils and parent and carers.

Our attendance awards system is detailed above (Section 4). To support with good attendance, we always communicate early about issues and acknowledging positive improvements. We have an Education Welfare Officer in school who can support with all aspects of attendance, and we have an education welfare officer (Anne-Marie Cartwright) who provides specialist and bespoke support to families where children are persistently absent to help them improve their attendance.

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer, Anne-Marie Cartwright.

The persistent absence threshold is 90%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 90%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any child whose attendance has reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention. Intervention will be via:

- An action plan to improve attendance will be created which may involve an attendance panel meeting and referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant Academy staff and parents/carers.
- Where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the Academy, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed.

Persistent Absence data is communicated to the relevant Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

Staff work in partnership with other schools, local authorities and other partners such as the local Police and PCSO's and to support pupils and their families who have become persistent absentees.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with the Academy Improvement Committees.

Attendance data is stored on the Academy's secure Management Information System – Bromcom. The Education Welfare Officer (Anne-Marie Cartwright) works closely with the Principal to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole Trust on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principals to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Academy Improvement Committees (AIC) monitor attendance for their academies on a termly basis via the Academy Profile.

7.2 The Principal and Senior Leaders, including the Academy Improvement Committee

- Will take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the Academy, including improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.
- Will promote attendance through assemblies
- Will ensure that the Academy attendance policy is implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Will ensure the whole Academy ethos promotes excellence in attendance and punctuality.
- Report to the Enquire Learning Trust board of trustees
- Monitor the curriculum to develop ways of improving the provision of educational experience.
- Utilise attendance data to inform strategic planning

The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to members of the AIC.

The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly, by use of the weekly Cumulative Attendance report.
- Will discuss absence and attendance concerns with children and set targets for improvement.
- Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified.
- Will support children to improve their attendance.
- Will work with other members of staff to share information and support children and their parents/carers to improve attendance
- Will complete the Cumulative Attendance report and issue to relevant staff on a weekly basis.
- Will identify absence trends or concerns and raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers and liaise with relevant members of staff.
- Will work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual children.
- Will provide data to the Principal, Senior Leaders and the Academy Council on a regular basis.

7.4 Class teachers

- Welcome and value the attendance of all children to lessons.
- Will ensure all children are accurately registered.
- Will ensure that children know the register is being taken.
- Will identify child absence to lessons and take appropriate action.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.

7.5 Office/reception staff

- Will monitor registration on a daily basis.
- Will receive calls and messages from parents/carers regarding child absence.
- Will support the Safeguarding & Attendance Officer / Learning Manager in contacting parents/carers regarding child absence.

For more detailed information on attendance please contact the Principal through the school office on 01642 560768.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every three years or early if required by the Director of Improvement and Effectiveness and the Principal . At every review, the policy will be shared with the Academy Improvement Committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

Safeguarding Policy

Exclusion Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day