



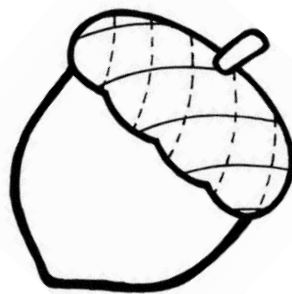
OAKFIELD ACADEMY

BELIEVE AND ACHIEVE

ATTENDANCE—GUIDE FOR PARENTS

(The full policy can be found on our website)

Mighty Oaks from little Acorns grow



Introduction

There is a direct link between good attendance and achievement in school . Poor attendance has a direct effect on a pupils attainment and their future life choices. For example, 90% attendance may sound quite acceptable but what that means is :

- On average half a day of school is missed every week. Would an employer think this is acceptable?
- In one year 4 whole weeks of schooling are missed.
- In 3 years it would mean a third of a whole school year is missed.
- Your child may drop a GCSE grade in each subject.
- 80% attendance each year means your child has already missed a whole year of school by Year 5 .

At Oakfield Academy we consider pupil happiness to be very important, and good attendance is an excellent indicator of how well your child is coping with school life. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable and acceptable. This guide explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

Types of Absence

Each absence is recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Absences may be authorised where the reason provided is considered valid. The decision to authorise an absence rests with the school, not with parents or carers. Absences will be recorded as unauthorised where no explanation is provided, or where the reason is considered unacceptable.

Examples of unacceptable reasons :

- shopping visits
- care for family members (unless registered young carers)
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- parents' work commitments or business trips
- To celebrate your child's or a family members birthday

The Somerset Education Engagement Team monitors all unauthorised absence and may have involvement if certain thresholds are met.

Illness and First Day Call

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us on the first day of absence before 9.00am. You can record your child's absence via the Arbor app or you can leave a message giving your child's name, tutor group, reason and expected duration of absence on the answerphone (01373 462539) You can also email our Attendance using : attendance@oakfieldacademy.org.uk.

If you do not supply us with this information we have a duty to contact you so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts as a safeguarding measure.

We operate a system of 'First day calling'. A member of staff will contact the home of every pupil who has been marked absent during that particular registration session in the morning. The purpose of this is to follow up absences and detect any problems as early as possible.

Occasionally parents may receive a call even though an absence note has been sent to school. This is because of the time lapse that sometimes occurs between sending the note to Oakfield Academy and the registering of the pupil. If parents are experiencing problems with attendance we can offer advice and support if this is communicated to us.

The table below illustrates how different levels of absence can result in a significant number of learning hours being lost across the academic year:

| Descriptor | Attendance | Days Absent | Lost Hours of |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| Excellent | 100% - 99% | Up to 2 | Up to 10 |
| Good | 98% - 96% | Up to 8 | Up to 40 |
| Requires improvement | 95% - 91% | Up to 18 | Up to 90 |
| Persistent Absentee | 90% - 86% | Up to 28 | Up to 140 |
| Critical | 85% - | Up to 38 | Up to 190 |

Medical/Dental Appointments

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside of school time; however we know that this is not always possible. We do not accept that it would be necessary to take a whole day off unless it has been agreed in advance. A note to inform the tutor should be brought into Oakfield Academy prior to the appointment. Pupils should be signed in or out when leaving or arriving at school. Medical and dental appointments count as authorised absences.

We are unable to allow pupils to leave the premises during the day unless this has been authorised by a parent.

Religious Observance

Oakfield Academy recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Lateness

Please ensure that your child arrives at school so that they are present for registration; this is done between 8.30 am and 8.45 am every day. The red gates open from 8.25; pupils are to register at 8.30, the red gates close at 8.30. Any pupils arriving after this will need to enter school via reception and sign in. Any pupils arriving between 8.30 and 9.00 are marked as Late with a note of the number of minutes late. Pupils arriving after 9.00 when registers close are marked U – unauthorised.

Term Time Leave

It is not our policy to authorise holidays in term time. Amendments to the 2006 regulations were made by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and came into force on 1 September 2013.

These amendments make it clear that Head Teachers can only grant leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances.

Any request for leave must be made in writing to the Head Teacher, in advance.

The Education Engagement Service monitors all unauthorised absence and may take action if attendance continues to be a concern. Any parent who takes their child out of school for term time leave of 10 continuous sessions (5 school days), without school authorisation may be issued a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority. The Local Authority cannot overturn a school's decision not to authorise term-time leave.

There is currently no formal definition of "exceptional circumstances" for term-time leave from the Department for Education. However, exceptional circumstances are expected to be rare, unavoidable, significant and short.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time. Unauthorised absences, including unauthorised term-time holidays, are deemed an offence and may result in legal action by the Local Authority, including the issuing of penalty notices and/or court proceedings.

Regular school attendance is essential to support children's learning, wellbeing and future success. Somerset County Council (SCC) supports schools in setting high expectations for attendance.

As part of safeguarding procedures, and in line with the Department for Education's Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance, if a pupil is absent and the school cannot establish their whereabouts, the school will take appropriate action. This may include contacting the Local Authority and/or the Police if there are concerns for the child's welfare. Further information is available in the Academy's Safeguarding Policy.

Term-time holidays disrupt learning and can affect both the individual child and the wider class, as teachers must spend time helping pupils catch up. Schools are open for 190 days each year, leaving 175 days available for family holidays, and parents are strongly encouraged to arrange holidays during these times.

Our aims for attendance

We monitor attendance very closely and if your child's attendance drops below 96% the following steps will be made –

Step 1 – The tutor will phone home to help identify any barriers/patterns.

Step 2 – Letter 1 will be sent home to alert you that your child's attendance is causing concern due to dropping below 95%.

Step 3 – If no improvement an attendance Letter 2 will be sent home to arrange a meeting with the Head of Year to discuss attendance.

Step 4– If still no improvement then you may be referred to our Education Welfare Office or issued a Notice to Improve

Step 5 – Warning Penalty notice issued by Oakfield Academy.

We would, therefore, greatly appreciate your help to ensure that, when possible, your child attends school every day.

To report an absence for your child you can call the Attendance Officer on 01373 462539 or email our attendance dedicated email-

attendance@oakfieldacademy.org.uk

Please supply the following information when contacting us :

Pupil Name

Pupil Tutor group

Reason for absence

Have you made a doctor's appointment ?



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