

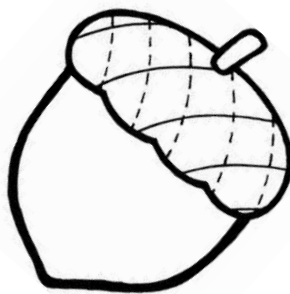


OAKFIELD ACADEMY

BELIEVE AND ACHIEVE

ATTENDANCE—GUIDE FOR PARENTS

HELPING OUR LITTLE ACORNS GROW INTO MIGHTY OAKS



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Oakfield Academy
Information Page



@OakfieldAcorns

School Vision

Oakfield Academy is focused upon the well-being and education of the young people in our community.

Our aim is to enable every pupil at the Academy to achieve their full academic potential, to nurture and encourage each of them to become a well-rounded person with a lifelong love of learning, able to build positive relationships and be a happy, confident member of the community.

We know that we live in a world that is changing rapidly and our pupils need to be equipped with the skills for life. Literacy and numeracy are the core of these skills. Our pupils must also have resilience, adaptability and creativity.

The staff and governors of Oakfield Academy will strive to work with pupils and their parents in providing an outstanding educational experience to achieve our aim. We believe that a happy and healthy environment, encouraging hard work and independence, is the right of every child.



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.
- You may drop a GCSE grade in each subject.
- 80% attendance each year means you've already missed a whole year of school by Year 5 .

At Oakfield Academy we consider student 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 letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

Types of Absence

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

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

The Somerset Education Safeguarding Service 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. A message giving the name, tutor group, reason and expected duration of absence can be left on the answerphone (01373 462539) or can be emailed direct to the Attendance Officer using schoolattendance@educ.somerset.gov.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 this is a safeguarding measure. We operate a system of 'First day calling'. A member of staff will telephone 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 or carers are experiencing problems with attendance we can offer advice and support if this is communicated to us.

| 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 students to leave the school 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 at 8.40 am every day. The red gates open from 8.25; pupils are to register at 8.40, the red gates close at 8.40. Any pupils arriving after this will need to enter school via reception and sign in. Any pupils arriving between 8.40 and 8.50 are marked present with a note of the number of minutes late and any pupils arriving after 8.50 are marked late. Pupils arriving after 9.30 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 Educational Safeguarding Service monitors all unauthorised absence & could issue a fine if attendance is a continued concern. Any parent who takes their child out of school for term time leave of 10 continuous sessions, not authorised by the school, may receive a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

There is no formal definition offered for exceptional leave at present by the Department for Education. However from discussion with the DfE and professional associations it is suggested that exceptional leave would be : Rare, significant, unavoidable or short.

Somerset County Council (SCC) Support schools in expecting parents & carers to make sure that children and young people attend school regularly. Any absence from school will impact on educational achievement, success in later life and longer term health & well being.

In ensuring the law is upheld. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2019 version, or as updated by the DfE) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupils welfare. (Please see our Academy's safeguarding policy for more information). Parents & carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where they are on roll.

Unauthorised absence including taking term time leave not agreed with the school, can result in legal action being taken including Penalty Notices and court prosecution.

SCC cannot override a school's decision not to authorise any term time leave.

Taking a child on holiday in term time interrupts the learning of the whole class & teachers have to spend time helping children catch up when they return. Parents should arrange holidays during the 13 week school holiday periods. Schools are open 190 days which leaves 175 days of the year for holidays.

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 – 96% to 95%. The tutor will phone home.

Step 2 – Below 95%. Letter 1 and registration certificate will be sent home to alert you that attendance is causing concern.

Step 3 – If no improvement in attendance Letter 2 will be sent home.

Step 4– 'A requirement for Information sharing' Letter will be sent home and possibly a referral to ESS/or contact from Head of Year.

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.

Samples of these letters can be found on our website page under the Parents header 'Attendance'.

<http://www.oakfieldacademy.co.uk/attendance-2/>

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

schoolattendance@educ.somerset.gov.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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