

OAK FARM JUNIOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed September 2016

Next review September 2017

Introduction:

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

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

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular Home – School Bulletin;
- Report to you at least annually on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance during assembly;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions and certificates.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required and must be in writing

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 Local Authority (POS) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- holidays in term time
- excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

You can support your child by:

Ensuring regular and early bed times

Helping with homework

Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before

Providing a healthy breakfast

Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly

Retaining open & honest communication with your child's teacher

Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

Encouraging your child to invite friends home to play

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more 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 parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through a Mentor or an LSA, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Participation Officer.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;

- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, Assistant Headteacher or Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance & Participation Officer if attendance moves below 90%.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. It is important you keep us updated if you change your telephone number.

The Participation Officer: (Formerly Education Welfare Officer)

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. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Participation Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice) or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

"If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence."

Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the Participation Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01895 250858

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8.50am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 9.00a.m and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.30am** 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. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Exceptional Leave:

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 taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

1. It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
2. Early poor attendance habits invariably follow through into secondary school and employment.
3. Graduates earn an average of £15.01p.h. Young people that leave school with no qualifications earn an average of £7.44p.h
4. All Hillingdon schools are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave. The Head Teacher will meet personally with every family applying for all leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
5. If a child is absent without contact for at least ten days the school may take the decision to take them off roll. The parents/carers will then need to reapply to the school for admission, subject to a place in that year group being available.
6. Exceptional leave will always be refused when a student's attendance is less than 95%
7. Exceptional leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
8. Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
9. Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the student's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.
10. The Participation Officer will issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised absence.

The Participation Officer can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised absence. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned and for each child's absences. If unauthorised leave is repeated the Participation Service may summons each parent to Court.

School targets, projects and

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

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **96%** attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

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

Those people responsible for attendance

Mrs Kanda, Senior Attendance Officer
Mrs Redford, Welfare Officer

Mr A Mills Headteacher
Mrs T Doyle, Governor with responsibility for attendance

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures & its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the DCSF. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment. It is also a fundamental part of the Every Child Matters intentions to:

- Being Healthy
- Being Safe
- Enjoying & Achieving
- Making a positive contribution
- Achieving economic well-being

September 2016
