POLICY: Attendance	SIGNATURE CHAIR OF GOVERNORS:
DATE APPROVED: February 2024	*Gavin C Brown*
FREQUENCY OF REVIEW: Annually	
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ATTENDANCE POLICY
FOR OXLEY PRIMARY SCHOOL

VERSION: FEBRUARY 2024

Contents

1. School priorities

➢ To encourage and assist all students at Oxley to achieve excellent levels of attendance and our school target of 96%

➢ To make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone at Oxley including pupils, parents, staff and governors.

➢ To raise attendance across the school and reduce persistent absenteeism (below 90%).

2. Encouraging and enabling good attendance

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that Oxley is a place to which the children want to come and where everyone is treated with respect and feel valued. Oxley is a school where our pupil's needs are recognised and a place where all can experience success within a engaging, relevant and diversified curriculum. Oxley's "I Can" attitude is a central part of children being enthused, motivated and inspired to attend school and try their very best each and every day.

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the School and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for regularly attending school.

All staff at Oxley also make children aware of the importance of good attendance and children are praised. Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports and at parent evenings, attendance is discussed. It follows that individual records of attendance are kept and are passed onto subsequent schools.

3. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

> Promoting good attendance

> Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

> Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence

> Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

> We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

4. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the 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:

> Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

> The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

> 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.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

> Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

5.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

> Implementation of this policy at the school

> Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

> Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

> Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

5.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school

> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

> Having an oversight of data analysis

> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

> Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 8)

> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

> Working with education welfare officers and outside agencies to tackle persistent absence

> Process fixed-penalty notices to the Local Authority

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr Caldwell (Head teacher) and can be contacted via the main school office.

5.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office every morning and afternoon. When class teachers are not present (due to PPA, planned or unplanned absences) another member of staff will record attendance.

5.5 School office staff

School office staff will:

> Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

> Take and respond to messages via email and the school app (WEDUC)

> Transfer calls from parents to the Head teacher/ Class teacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

> Process paperwork for fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

5.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every day on time

> Call or message the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return

> Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. If appointments are attended during the school day, then evidence of appointments will be requested.

5.7 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time

6. Recording attendance

6.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register 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 of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

> Whether the absence is authorised or not

> The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

> The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils can arrive from 8.40am and must be in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm.

6.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling or messaging the school office.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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.

If the school do not receive a reason for any absence and have tried more than once to obtain a reason for the absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised

6.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parent/ carers can notify the office through WEDUC, email or calling the school office. Evidence of any appointments will also be requested. If we are not notified before the appointment absence and no evidence is provided, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

However, we encourage parents/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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 7 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

6.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who:

> Arrives after 8.50am and before 9.00am will be marked as **L** (late <u>before</u> register closed)

> Arrivals after 9am will be recorded as **U** (late <u>after</u> register closed)

> The amount of minutes late will also be recorded

Parents/ Carers of children who are regularly late (more than 4 times in a 4 week period) will be contacted by telephone or letter

6.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

> Message via WEDUC/ call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a welfare check at the address recorded on our system.

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

> If the absence continues without explanation and to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, the school will consider contacting Children's Social Services or completing a child missing in education form.

6.6 Reporting to parents/carers

When reviewing patterns of absence, we will typically look at attendance over a rolling 6-month period. However, where acute concerns arise (or during key periods such as the start of the school year) we

may intervene after reviewing absence over a shorter period of time. However, the school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels.

> All parents will receive a <u>termly</u> update of their child's attendance

> Where a child's attendance falls below 90%, parents will be contacted on a <u>half termly</u> basis

> Where a child's attendance falls below 90% and no notable improvement have been seen, then parents/ carers will be contacted more regularly

7. Authorised and unauthorised absence

7.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school recognises that there may be times when a student requires exceptional leave during term time for short periods of time. In these circumstances parents are asked to complete the 'Exceptional Leave Form' (appendix 2) to request the absence. These requests will be considered by the Headteacher on an individual basis. Please ensure that the Headteacher is provided with all evidence and context to support your application for exceptional leave at the point of the initial application as further information provided at a later date will not be considered.

> Exceptional leave **will not** be authorised during examination periods

> All requests must be considered on their own merits but there must be very particular and exceptional circumstances before the request will be granted

> Reduced cost of holidays in term time does not amount to exceptional circumstances

> Awkward flight times do not amount to exceptional circumstances

> Parental work patterns do not amount to exceptional circumstances

> Other family members booking holidays and unaware of school term times does not amount to exceptional circumstances

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness

> **Unavoidable** medical/dental appointments (see section 6.3 for more detail)

> 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

> 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

7.2 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

> One-off instances of irregular un authorised attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

> Persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the register has closed.

> 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 or withdraw the notice.

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

We will always seek to improve a child's attendance in a positive manner. We will seek to work with families and help provide support if necessary, or where required to provide signposting and/or liaise with any external agencies, early help and the school nurse team.

We also celebrate good attendance in assemblies with weekly recognition and rewards to the House with the highest attendance.

8.1 Attendance monitoring

Oxley Primary School monitors attendance carefully and considers the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting their own priorities for the coming year. The Headteacher and Deputy Head teacher monitor the attendance of children whose attendance is falling below the school target (96%) due to unauthorised absences or a pattern of regular authorised absences and implement strategies to enable attendance to improve.

Through letters, the school APP (WEDUC), the school attendance policy document and parent's evenings, parents/carers are reminded about their responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and the consequences of poor attendance. Parents will be encouraged to understand the full implications for both their children's academic progress and their social groupings when they miss school.

Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for bringing any concerns to the attention of the Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher. If there is concern about a child's absence, teachers will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term concern about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to Headteacher/ Deputy Headteacher, who will contact the parents or carer.

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

> Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- ❯ Have regular contact with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- ❯ Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- ❯ Letters/ communication will also be sent at least termly to parents/ carers through our WEDUC APP

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually and as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- ❯ Child protection and safeguarding policy
- ❯ Behaviour 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
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

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
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

Exceptional Leave Request Form

`Child/rens' names	Class

First date of absence:
Last date of absence:
Total number of school days:

Reason for Exceptional Leave Request

(Please indicate the reason why this leave needs to be taken in term time - **all** *evidence and context to support your application for exceptional leave* **must be** *provided with this request, as further information provided at a later date* **will not** *be considered.)*

Please tick if your child has sibling(s) at another school or schools ☐

Name of School(s)_____

Name of Parent/Carer _____ Signed_____

Date of request _____

School Use Only

Our records show that to date your child has been absent _____days during the current academic year giving them an attendance of _____% Last year their attendance was_____%

Having considered your request along with your child's attendance data it has been agreed that this request **does/doesn't** meet Oxley Primary School's criteria for Exceptional Leave. Therefore:

☐   Your request for Exceptional Leave **is granted** and your child's absence will be authorised.

☐   Your request for Exceptional Leave **is not** granted. If your child is absent on this occasion their absence will be unauthorised.

☐   Your request for Exceptional Leave **is not** granted. If your child is absent on this occasion their absence **will be** referred to the Leicestershire County Council for a Fixed Penalty Notice in relation to unauthorised leave during term time – *further information can be found in our Attendance Policy which is available on our website.*

Additional Comments

Signed	

Date	