



# Oak View Academy

## Believe, Expect, Succeed

### Attendance and Punctuality Policy

#### Aim

To support excellent levels of attendance for all pupils to enable fulfilment of their potential at Oak View Academy.

#### **1. Legislation**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that “The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that “if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence”. Therefore regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement, as well as being essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainments and opportunities.

For the purposes of Education Law the definition ‘parental responsibility’ lies with whomever the child resides. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.

#### **2. Procedure**

Children are expected to attend school regularly, unless there is good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves a pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)

The school has a duty to safeguard all of its pupils therefore if a child is absent, parents/carers should inform the school on the first day of absence, and each day of absence thereafter, stating the reason. A note should be sent on the day the child returns to school explaining the absence. The school office will make telephone contact with home when a child is absent and the parent/carer has not notified the school of the absence. If no contact can be achieved or the reason for absence is not accepted the absence will be unauthorised.

#### **3. Registers**

Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all pupils. They are legal documents that have to be marked twice daily. The register may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance in school. The register should be marked using the codes as advised by the Department for Education. One school day is marked as two sessions; a.m. and p.m.

Registers should be completed at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions as a priority and be electronically returned to the school office in a timely manner. All children who arrive late must report to the school office to sign in.

Registration Session	Start Time	End Time
Morning	Staggered starts 8.30 – 9.00am	Staggered lunches 11.50 – 12.25
Afternoon	Staggered starts 12.30 – 1.00pm	Staggered ends 3pm – 3.20pm

#### 4. Lateness and Punctuality **Modifications to policy to reflect the current COVID-19 Pandemic**

Following a return to school in September 2020, an additional category to reflect authorised absences has been added.

When a child is asked to self-isolate because they have symptoms of Covid-19 or they live with a family member who has been diagnosed with Covid-19, or if a family member is waiting for the results of a Covid-19 test then they will receive an 'X' in the register. This is to reflect that they have been absent, but that this was due to the pandemic and therefore their absence is authorised.

School begins between 8.30am and 9am depending on the year group, and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at that time.

Register taken at 9.00am

Registers close 9.30 am

In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after registers close 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 invited to a meeting to resolve the issues. However you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time and we will offer support and advice.

Any child who arrives after the gates are closed must enter the school by the main entrance and report to the school office to sign in. If pupils are not in class when the register is taken they will be coded as 'L'. Any late arrivals after 9.30am will be coded as 'U' which is an unauthorised absence.

Children who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education but also that of other children. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, further action **will** be taken which may include referral to external agencies.

#### 5. Medical Absence

Absence due to sickness should be reported to the school by phone or using the Studybugs app on the first day of absence. The school should be kept informed during longer periods of absence.

Any medical absences in excess of 5 days (10 sessions) per academic year will need to be supported by medical evidence. If no medical evidence is received then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. School will contact parents during the first day if no satisfactory reason for absence has been received. The school will work with all families on an individual basis if medical absences exceed the maximum threshold.

## **6. Unauthorised Absence and Fixed Penalty Notice**

Where a reason for absence is not given, or where medical evidence has not been received where requested or where absence has not been authorised, the absence will be coded in the register as 'unauthorised'. Pupil absence will also be coded as 'unauthorised' when they arrive to school after registration has closed at 9.30am. Parents/carers should be aware that Oak View Academy may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in the current term with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Fixed Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court.

## **7. Application for Exceptional Circumstances**

In September 2013, amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any Leave of Absence (holiday) during term time unless there are 'Exceptional Circumstances'.

The Head Teacher and the Governing Body will determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance on an individual basis. If parents/carers need to request Exceptional Leave of Absence, they must complete an 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' form available from the school office. It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs of a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised days, then school may apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer.

A child's absence during term time seriously disrupts their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching on the days they are away, but also they are less prepared for the lessons building on that teaching when they return to school. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which we must seek to avoid.

The school reports attendance levels to the Governing Body and Academy Trust. The governing Body is responsible for ensuring any attendance issues are dealt with in line with school policy.

## **8. Religious Observance**

We recognise that pupils of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance;

- Falls during school time and
- Has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs.,

the absence from the Academy will be observed.

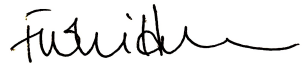
We ask that parents/carers notify the Academy in writing in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

## **9. Enforced School Closure**

If Oak View Academy was forced to close for a period of time, we have the facility to operate an online virtual school. The expectation is children will still engage with ALL activities when work is set. Procedures for online learning will be sent to parents as and when required.

### **What can parents/carers do to help?**

Let the school know straight away why your child is absent. Home/school communication is extremely important in supporting your child achieves and feel settled in school. Try to make any dental/GP appointments outside of school time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fuside" with a long, sweeping underline.

Signed:

Reviewed on: 10.9.2020

Agreed by: NWAT

Review date: September 2021

## Attendance Letters

Attendance letters will be used to support parents to improve attendance to be in line with or above the national expectation of 96%.

Potential Persistent Absence = 95% and below

Persistent Absence = 90% and below

### **Letter 1:**

Letter 1 is sent to notify parents/carers that a student has 95% or less attendance, if appropriate to do so, (unauthorised and authorised absence). It offers parents/carers an initial opportunity to communicate with school if there are specific problems that impact upon attendance.

### **Letter 2:**

Letter 2 advises parents/carers that since Letter 1 has been sent absences have continued (authorised and unauthorised). It invites parents/carers into school to discuss the situation to see if there is any further support school can offer. It offers school an opportunity to discuss the consequences of continued poor attendance i.e. Fixed Penalty Notice. The LA will expect a meeting with parents/carers to have taken place before the Fixed Penalty Notice process can be considered.

### **Letter 3:**

School policy states that after a student has taken ..... sessions of authorised illness during an academic year, formal medical evidence will be requested before any further illness absences can be authorised. Formal medical evidence does not need to be a letter from the GP, but could be a prescription or prescribed medication or a GP/Nurse signature on a GP Surgery compliment slip or dated GP/Nurse appointment card.

**Letter 1**

Dear .....

Child's Name:

Class:

Your son/daughter's attendance record at ..... Since September 1st is a cause for concern. Your child's Registration Certificate is enclosed and shows the current percentage attendance. As a school we value the partnership with parents and unless this attendance begins to improve, it could have a detrimental effect upon your child's academic progress. Regular attendance at school is vital if children are to make the progress they are entitled to and benefit fully from all the opportunities that school can offer.

We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and would like to work with you to see improvement. If there are any specific problems or concerns you have which you feel may be impacting upon your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter 2**

Dear .....

Child's Name:

Class:

I recently wrote to you regarding my early concerns surrounding the attendance of your child at ..... Your child's attendance is currently ....% as highlighted on the enclosed Registration Certificate. As a result of continued absences and lack of noticeable improvement I would like to invite you to an attendance meeting in school on the date and time below.

DATE:

TIME:

This meeting will be useful to discuss how we can work together to improve the attendance of your child in the future. May I remind you it is your legal duty to ensure your child's regular attendance at school and failure to do this may result in the attendance data being passed to the local authority who may take legal action against you.

Yours Sincerely,

### **Letter 3**

Dear .....

Child's Name:

Class:

As your child has now had 7 or more days (14 sessions or more) of medical absence during this academic year we are writing to advise you that no further absences can be authorised for medical reasons unless formal medical evidence is provided. This can take the form of either a dated GP/Nurse appointment card, a compliment slip signed and dated by the GP/Nurse, a prescription or proof of prescribed medication relating to the current illness. It is our duty to inform you that ten or more unauthorised absences during a term may result in you receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice from the local authority, details of which can be found in the schools attendance policy online.

Yours sincerely,

#### **Fixed Penalty Notice**

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/education-and-learning/early-years-and-childcare/education-welfare-service/term-time-holidays.aspx>

1. A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence.
2. A maximum of two FPNs may be issued in an academic year and these FPNs may be issued against each parent/carer of a child. Once two FPNs have been issued, should there be further unauthorised absences, the Local Authority are able to move to prosecution immediately.
3. A FPN may be issued per parent per child.
4. Penalty Notices may be considered appropriate if
  - Unauthorised absences of at least 10 consecutive school sessions (five school days). Sessions either side of a weekend or school holiday will be counted as consecutive school days.
  - For poorly attending pupils, at least 10 sessions (five school days) lost due to unauthorised absence during a school term. These do not need to be consecutive.
  - For poorly attending pupils, persistent late arrive at school in a term. Persistent means at least 10 sessions of late arrival.
  - Truancy
  - The presence of an excluded child in a public place in the child's first five days of exclusion.
5. The Academy must notify parents of the Attendance Policy and clearly state that parents may receive an FPN for an unauthorised leave of absence relating to holiday in term time.
6. Schools and the Education Welfare Services will take into account and exceptional circumstances when determining whether to issue a FPN