



The Orchard Primary School

Nurture Learn Grow

Attendance Policy

| Date | Review Date | | GB Committee |
|-----------|-------------|----|--------------------------|
| Spring 22 | Spring 2024 | HT | Curriculum and Community |

INTRODUCTION

At the Orchard Primary School, we think it is important to ensure that we have a safe environment which enables all pupils to learn.

We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and that successful learning and high attainment is dependent on good attendance. We know that poor attendance disrupts teaching and learning. It can disrupt the learning for not only the child who is late but also the learning of others in the same class because of the effect absence can have on teaching routines.

We know that regular attenders:

- make better progress socially
- make better progress academically
- find school routines, friendships and school work easier to cope with
- go on to settle at secondary school more easily
- promotes desirable work attitudes for future learning and employment

We expect all school staff to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school. School staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty. Also, at times we may have to give consideration for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and the links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

We believe it is essential to have a strong working relationship with the Education Welfare Service which provides support for pupils and their families in order to promote good pupil attendance.

We will exercise a consistent approach and ensure equity for all pupils. We all have a responsibility to ensure equality permeates all aspects of school life and that everyone is treated equally. We want everyone connected with this school to feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

Aims

- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- To work with other schools to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy;
- promote the importance of attendance and punctuality with all stakeholders;
- ensure compliance with all statutory pupil registration regulations;
- ensure that the attendance policy is carried out;
- ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders;
- monitor termly progress
 - Has attendance improved?
 - Has punctuality improved?
 - Has parental response to absences improved?
- ensure the Headteacher exercises his/her discretionary power to authorise absence in extenuating circumstances for up to 10 days in an academic year between September and July which may include term time holidays;
- ensure the Headteacher does not authorise absence if it is to the detriment of a child's education;
- effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy

Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- ensure all school staff, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- create a culture which encourages attendance;
- address all school based causes of poor attendance such as bullying, racism etc;
- undertake the daily monitoring of school attendance by using an appropriate and effective registration system;
- ensure registration is taken at the start of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session;
- ensure school personnel are fully trained in the registration process and with the appropriate categorisation of absence;
- ensure pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day;
- monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals, special educational needs and persistent absentees;
- ensure early intervention in order to prevent absenteeism or truancy and to put in to effect a range of procedures to deal with this problem;
- ensure parents are informed about their child's attendance each term;
- target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders;
- agenda attendance and truancy at periodic meetings with school personnel;
- work closely with the Education Welfare Service attending meetings as appropriate;
- have in place a system for parents to report a child's absence;
- question any parental explanation for pupil absence if there is doubt as to the validity of the explanation;
- expect an explanation for every absence and if one is not forthcoming then the absence will be categorised as unauthorised;
- report to the Governing Body every term attendance figures and progress in improving attendance
- remind parents of their commitment to this policy;
- meet with parents if they have applied for a holiday during school time;

- ensure school personnel are aware that unauthorised absence is absence without approval from the Headteacher and includes all unexplained absences;
- when considering an application for term time holiday request will consider the:
 - time of year of the proposed trip
 - length and purpose of the holiday
 - impact on continuity of learning
 - circumstances of the family
 - overall attendance of the child
- apply a consistent approach across the school and ensure equity for all pupils;
- promote the importance of attendance during collective worship;
- publicise good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body;
- award good attendance certificates to pupils when they have achieved 100% attendance;
- introduce rewards and incentives to encourage punctuality;
- adopt procedures for reintegrating long-term absentees;
- organise training for school personnel on the use and understanding of attendance codes and authorised and unauthorised attendance;
- strengthen links with external agencies who engage with and support families;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff especially on bullying and the needs of vulnerable groups;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy by:
 - monitoring trends and patterns as highlighted in attendance data
 - achieving results above the national average
 - looking at results from parent, pupil and school personnel questionnaires
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success of this policy.

Role of the Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- implementing the policy with the Headteacher;
- contacting parents if they have not reported their child's absence by 10.00a.m;
- contacting the key worker if a child is on the child protection register and no reason has been given for the child's absence;
- monitoring individual and class attendance on a daily basis;
- keeping the Headteacher informed of attendance figures and trends;
- contacting parents regarding concerns about their child's attendance;
- organising meetings with parents to discuss their child's poor attendance;
- organising meetings between the Headteacher and parents to discuss their child's truancy or poor attendance;
- organising meetings between the Headteacher and parents to discuss their application for a term time holiday;
- ensuring registers are kept up to date.
- Publishing our attendance and punctuality
- Making referrals to the Local Authority education Welfare Service if we continue to have concerns

Role of the Education Welfare Service

The Education Welfare Service will:

- appoint education welfare officers (EWO) who will promote good attendance in schools;
- establish effective working relationships with schools, pupils and parents to ensure educational entitlement and regular attendance;
- ensure pupils attend school regularly;
- investigate reasons for a pupil's poor attendance;
- provide support and counselling for children and their families;
- work with pupils who may be excluded;

Role of School Staff

School staff will:

- comply with and implement this policy;
- set an example of punctuality and good attendance;
- ensure registration is taken at the start of the morning session and at the beginning of the afternoon session;
- ensure pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day;
- ensure registers are up to date;
- be responsible for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality by monitoring class and individual attendance patterns;
- inform the school office of any concerns about attendance or suspected truancy;
- emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance with pupils and parents;
- discuss individual pupil attendance at parent-teacher consultations.
- Safeguard children by monitoring attendance and reasons for absence.

Role of Parents

Parents/carers will:

- comply with this policy and ensure that their child attends school regularly
- work as partners with the school in the education of their children;
- ensure their children attends school regularly.
- Ensure that absence only happens when children are significantly ill and therefore unfit to attend school or if there is an unavoidable / unforeseen reason which is causing a difficulty.
- ensure their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance;
- inform the school on the first day of absence to give us the reason;
- inform the school of any changes to their contact details;
- Arrange all non-emergency medical appointments out of school hours or during school holidays.
- Bring their child to school before and returning them after a medical appointment.
- Provide medical evidence to support frequent absence claimed as illness.
- collect their children on time
- take part in periodic surveys conducted by the school;
- avoid taking family holidays in term time;
- be aware that the Headteacher when considering an application for a term time holiday request will consider the:
 - time of year of the proposed trip

- length and purpose of the holiday
 - impact on continuity of learning
 - circumstances of the family
 - overall attendance of the child
- be aware that where parents fail to seek permission for time off then the absence will be treated as unauthorised;
 - be encouraged to take an active interest in their child's work and to take an active role in the life of the school by attending:
 - parents and open evenings
 - parent-teacher consultations
 - class assemblies
 - school concerts
 - fundraising and social events
 - encourage effort and achievement;
 - encourage completion of homework and return it to school;
 - provide the right conditions for homework to take place;
 - expect their child to hand in homework on time;
 - join the school in celebrating success of their child's learning;
 - support the school to ensure smooth running of the school.

Role of the Local Authority

The Local Authority may prosecute a parent for not ensuring their child attends school regularly or may issue or apply for:

- Penalty Notice
- Education Supervision Order
- Parenting Order
- School Attendance Order

The Local Authority should:

- provide training on the understanding and analysing attendance data and clear guidance on the correct use of attendance codes;
- analyse attendance patterns in order to improve pupil attendance especially those from vulnerable groups;
- make schools more aware of national priorities, initiatives and available grants in order to improve pupil attendance;
- try to identify why there is a variation in the use of attendance codes between schools;
- share good practice within the Local Authority and should identify and explore good practice in other Local Authorities.

Role of Pupils

Pupils are responsible for:

- knowing the value of good attendance;
- knowing the seriousness of attending school each day
- accepting sanctions if they are caught playing truant;
- returning to school after a period of illness;

- support the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure the smooth running of the school;

Dealing with Trends in Attendance

When there is a pattern of poor attendance then the following procedure will take place:

- Parents are invited to attend an informal meeting with the Attendance Officer and Attendance Support Officer to explain their child's repeated absence.
- Support will be given if there are underlying reasons for the absence.
- If not, then the situation will be monitored for improvement.
- If there is no improvement, then a referral will be made to the EWO who will take the appropriate action.

Dealing with Lateness

It is always important to be on time for school. The first part of the day is used to give instructions and prepare children for the rest of the day. Children will also have activities to complete at the start of the day which support their learning and it is important that these are not missed.

Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and can be embarrassing for the child. The children are expected to come into school from 8.45 when the gates open. Children in the Reception should be in class **by 9.10am**. KS1 children should be in class **by 9.00** and KS2 children should be in class **by 8.55** each day.

Children who arrive after their start time must be accompanied to the school office by their parent / carer, where they will be marked in. Arrival after the close of registration may be marked as unauthorised absence in line with DfE guidance.

Parents or another responsible person (aged 16+ who is authorised by the parent) must collect their children on time at the end of the school day. It can be very distressing for children if their parents are late

The office personnel monitor lateness and inform:

- the Head of patterns of lateness;
- parents of the school's concerns and arrange a meeting so that the problem can be addressed
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Dealing with Truancy

If a pupil is thought to be playing truant then the school will immediately inform:

- the parent / carer;
- in some circumstances the school will also inform the EWO and / or the police

All truants will receive:

- sanctions;
- support;
- discussions with the Attendance Support Officer or Headteacher to understand the seriousness of the matter;
- a programme of monitoring and support

Absence

Authorised Absence – these are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. For example, immediate family bereavement, a recognized religious observance day. If a child suffers an immediate family bereavement the Headteacher may authorize a maximum of 3 days leave to attend a funeral. This is one day to travel to the funeral, the funeral day and one day to travel back. Any additional leave would be unauthorised.

Where children are attending grammar school tests, we must be provided with a copy of the invitation letter which gives the date and time of the exam. The child should attend school before or after the exam – 1 session (half day) will be authorized.

We must see medical or dental appointment cards for appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school hours.

We do realise that there are occasions when there might be a particular issue that causes a child to be absent. It is very important for parents let us know when these rare occasions arise as we will always try to deal with it sympathetically.

Unauthorised Absence – these are absences 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 using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. These absences can include:

- parents/cares keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have not been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or day off for birthdays
- day trips and any leave in term time not agreed.
- Waiting for a delivery
- Taking or collecting a relative from the airport.
- Sleeping in after a late night.
- Term time holiday –cheap flights
- Parent's or sibling's illness
- Going for a family day out
- Birthdays
- Preparation for grammar school tests.

Holidays during term time – parents are encouraged to take a family holiday not in term time. There is no entitlement to time off during the school term to go on holiday. Leave of absence is only allowed in exceptional circumstances. Parents are asked to complete a holiday form requesting permission to take their child on holiday and a meeting with the Headteacher is arranged. At this meeting the Headteacher will explain that:

- term time leave is not authorised;
- there is a risk of the child losing their place if s/he does not return when parents say they will return;
- there is a risk of a Fixed Penalty Warning Letter or a penalty fine issued by the Local Authority.

Religious Observance – a maximum of three days absence is allowed for religious observance in any year.

Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments – we encourage these appointments to take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the child's education.

PROCEDURES

- Registers of all classes are kept and monitored by staff twice each day.
- A note is made on the register of children who arrive late. We also have a log of the time they arrive at school as children are logged in using our InVentry signing-in system.
- Our registers record absences of children for whom we have no notification.
- A referral is made to the Education Welfare Service after 3 days if we have had no contact with parents.
- A log is kept of phone calls and emails sent from parents and reasons given.
- Copies of appointments and other relevant documents are kept as required for proof of absence.
- Records are transferred to a child's new school on confirmation of their start date from the school.

Children who are absent for more than 20 days can be removed from the school roll. Parents will have to re-apply for their place on return with no guarantee of a place still being available.

ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION STEPS

1. Regular monitoring of attendance and daily attendance calls made to parents / carers where there are particular concerns.
2. If a child's attendance falls below 91% and absences are unauthorised we continue to monitor each week. Reasons for poor attendance are noted.
3. Where attendance continues to be a concern an under 95% notification letter is sent and attendance is monitored – this is sent at least each term.
4. If attendance continues to be a concern a target is set for 4 weeks. Parents can provide medical evidence at any time in the process for every absence within the target period.
5. If attendance has failed to improve the parent / carer is invited to an attendance meeting held at school to discuss reasons for absence and any support which may be needed.
6. If attendance does not improve to meet the target set but has improved with parents engaging with the school a second target can be set.
7. If attendance continues to be a concern a referral is made to early Help Hounslow using a CFAN – the under 95% letter, target letters, meeting notes (including telephone conversations) and registration certificates will be sent as supporting documentation along with the completed CFAN.

Registers are monitored in depth every month at which point a further under 95% letter can be sent.

Class teachers speak to parents about attendance at parents meetings each term.

The policy will be reviewed every 3 years or when the need arises by the Headteacher and Curriculum and Community committee of the Governing Body.

Any necessary recommendations for improvement will be presented to the Governing Body for further discussion and endorsement.