



Policy Name	Attendance Policy
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1. Aims

Statement of Intent

Oakfield Junior School is committed to developing and implementing a consistent and transparent set of standards and approaches that improve and maintain attendance in our school.

We are committed to developing and implementing policies and practice that supports improved attendance, in partnership with parents/carers, pupils and governors, with relevant departments within Surrey County Council and Mole Valley Council, and with other organisations who have an interest or are affected by school attendance.

Oakfield Junior School firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to achieve 100% attendance but when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school immediately.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly (100%)
- attend school punctually for 8.50 am *(school is currently operating staggered start and finish times-COVID-19)
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss with their class teacher or senior leaders any problems preventing them from attending school.
- Report to the school office to notify staff of any lateness once registers have been taken

We expect that all parents/carers and persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day and have completed any homework they have been given.
- notify the school immediately of any change to contact details
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- contact the school office when a child is absent by 8:30 am to notify of any absence or lateness. We have an answering machine so parents can leave a message if the office is not open. If you do leave a message please include the child's name, the reason for absence and how long you expect the absence to last. Parents are asked to provide written confirmation by emailing the school office at parent@oakfield.surrey.sch.uk
- *follow the most up to date government guidance for any COVID-19 related absence*
- *support and encourage access to learning for any pupils unable to attend school due to self-isolation*

We expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, as required by current legislation
- monitor every pupil's attendance
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- encourage good attendance and punctuality
- provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for children
- make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and the local authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance

- carry out a phone call/issue a letter/arrange a meeting with the parents to discuss a pupils attendance
- ask the home school link worker to follow up concerns about attendance by contacting or visiting parents/carers at home
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the attached Inclusion Officer
- *follow the most up to date government guidance for any COVID-19 related absence*
- *provide access to learning for any pupils unable to attend school due to self-isolation*

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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:

- › [The Education Act 1996](#)
- › [The Education Act 2002](#)
- › [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- › [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- › [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.

This policies section on absence relating to COVID-19 is taken from DfE guidance [Recording attendance in relation to covid-19](#).

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken 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 and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45 - 8:55 am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55 am and will be kept open until 9:00 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:15 pm and will be kept open until 1:30 pm.

The school is currently operating different start and finish times due to COVID-19

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8:30 am. Parents can contact the school office by phone on 01372 374781. We have an answering machine so parents can leave a message if the office is not open. If you do leave a message please include the child's name, the reason for absence and how long you expect the absence to last.

All absence needs to be confirmed in writing by a parent/carer therefore if the school is notified via a phone call parents/carers are asked to follow up the phone call in writing on the child's return to school.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or are concerned about a pupils attendance record.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt or the school are concerned about a pupils attendance record, the school may ask parents 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 and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is recorded as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

Please note that even if an absence is recorded as authorised it will still count against a pupils attendance percentage

However, we encourage parents 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.

Parents must notify the school in advance of a medical or dental appointment by sending an email to the office and class teacher or by phoning the office.

All absence needs to be confirmed in writing by a parent or carer therefore if the school is notified via a phone call parents/carers are asked to follow up the phone call in writing when the pupil returns to school.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and Punctuality

Registers in class open at 8:50am and close in class at 9:00am. *School is currently operating staggered start and finish times COVID-19*

Please note that, if pupils arrive at school after 9:00 am they should enter via the office. A late mark will be recorded (L code)

If a child more than 20 minutes late it will be recorded 'as late after close of register' and is counted as an unauthorized absence for that session (U code).

3.5 Following up absence

Responding to Non-Attendance

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carers, the school will endeavor to contact them that morning by phone before 10:00am.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carers.
- If, by the end of the second day there has still been no contact made with the parent/carers, the school will make use of the names provided on the pupils contact list to try and establish reason for non-attendance
- On the third day the Headteacher will send an email of concern to the parents/carers or phone to invite them into school to discuss their concerns and the reasons for the absence.

- Parents will be informed that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the attached EWO
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Officer (IO) may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution
- Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Inclusion Officer. This is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

3.6 Reporting to parents

The school will report to parents on their child's attendance at least annually in the written end-of-year report. If pupils attendance falls below 93% then the school will share this with parents at the termly parents evenings or by sending a letter of concern home.

3.7 Absence relating to COVID-19

The school follows Department for Education (DfE) guidance for absence relating to COVID-19.

The following scenarios are considered as absence relating to COVID-19 and will be marked in attendance registers as code X.

- Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)
- Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine
- Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable when shielding is advised
- Local or national lockdown

If a pupil tests positive for COVID-19 their absence code should be recorded as code I (illness) from the date of their test result until they are able to return to school.

In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice absence relating to COVID-19 (code X) will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances', for example for compassionate reasons.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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

Requests for leave of absence during term time

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term time as a right and authorization cannot be given retrospectively. Permission for absence during term time is at the school's discretion. If a family needs to request an absence in term-time as a result of an exceptional circumstance then an application for leave of absence form must, where possible, be completed at least two weeks prior to the leave date. This form can be obtained from the school office. The Headteacher, who may consult with the Chair of Governors, will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each request will be considered separately and a decision made based on the reasons for each request.

Please note: any requests for children in Years 6 during the SATs period will not be authorised.

Family holidays - The school holiday dates are published in advance and are available from the school office and on the school's website. School holiday dates are also available on the Surrey County Council website. We expect that parents/carers will book their family holidays within the school holiday dates. Oakfield Junior School will not authorise holidays during term time.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child in their care to a different school that they inform the Headteacher as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received,

- the dates the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- the address of the new school
- the new home address

School staff will then confirm with the parents the leaving date for their child. Following this date the pupil's school records will be sent on to the new school as soon as possible and

within ten days of the child leaving. Surrey Admissions will also be sent appropriate information within ten days of anyone leaving or joining the school. If no notification is received from a new school then the child's name will not be removed from the school roll until after an investigation by the Inclusion Officer.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The fine is issued to each parent if they are both liable for the absence. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Encouraging Attendance

Oakfield Junior School encourages regular attendance in the following ways,

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- by responding promptly to a child or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils
- by accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration
- by publishing attendance statistics
- by celebrating good attendance
- certificates are awarded to celebrate good and improved attendance
- the Headteacher is responsible for monitoring attendance. They will liaise closely with the school attendance administrator, the home/school link worker if appropriate and the Inclusion Officer
- by informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, including lateness
- by if necessary arranging meetings with parents/carers
- by referring the families to the attached Inclusion officer if the irregular attendance continues

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a [daily/weekly/monthly] basis.

Parents are expected to contact the school before 9.00am if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents are expected to contact the school and inform them each day a child is ill, unless advised otherwise by the school.

If a pupil's absence goes above two days the school may contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. A letter/phone call of concern may be sent/made. Parents may be invited in for a meeting if when attendance is next monitored there is no further improvement.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Attendance data is used to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors and records attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Contacts parents/carers to follow up on unexplained absence

- Provides reports on attendance data as required
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with the Headteacher and inclusion officer to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues on behalf of the headteacher
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 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. They should also notify the office of any communication they have had with parents/carers with regards to absence.

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding 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

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
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

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
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

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
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