



Oakley Infant School Attendance Policy

Thrive, strive and achieve together
Article 28- every child has the right to an education.

Section 1 - Rationale

Oakley Infant School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all pupils and endeavours to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play an important part in making the school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is the duty of the school to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

The purpose of this policy is to outline ways in which matters of attendance and punctuality will be managed in order to ensure school and parents can work together to achieve and maintain high standards in this area in accordance with current legislation and Government and Local Authority guidelines .

Section 2 - Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed and that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parent/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.**

Responsibilities of Class teacher:

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately;
- Promote good attendance with parents and pupils at all appropriate opportunities;
- Liaise with the Headteacher on matters of attendance and punctuality;
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

Ensuring their child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence by phone or email;
- Support the school in aiming for 100% attendance each year;
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for;
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments;
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

Responsibilities of School Office:

The School Office is responsible for recording absence and is usually the point of contact for parents reporting absence. The Admin Assistant responsible for Arbor is the designated member of staff responsible for checking registers for regular attendance and alerting the Headteacher of any concerns or patterns of absence.

Responsibilities of the Governing Body:

Attendance data will be termly monitored by the Buildings and Premises Committee. Annual attendance data will be reported to the Governing body.

Section 3 - Recording Attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day at 9.00am and again for the afternoon session at 1.00 pm.

Lateness/Punctuality

It is essential to be on time at the start of the school day. The start of the day is an important time when children settle into class and teachers give out instructions or organise work. At Oakley Infant School the first session of the day is when reading takes place. If a child is late they miss work, time with their class teacher, vital information and cause disruption to the lesson for others.

- The school day begins at 9.00am; all pupils are expected to be in school by this time. Morning registration is at 9.00 am and registers close at 9.30.
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with county and DfE guidance. This mark shows the child to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Parents are asked where possible to ensure routine doctors and dentists appointments are made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action** (see section 7 for further detail).

Parents/carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents/carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period the school or the Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a penalty notice in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance (See section 7 of this policy for further detail).

Parents are asked to collect their child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns as necessary with other agencies

Section 4 – Procedures for absence

First Day Absence

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter, therefore information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If a child is absent parents/carers must:

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

If a child is absent the school will:

- Telephone on the first day of absence if the school has not heard from a parent/carer; the school has a duty to ensure children's safety as well as their regular school attendance (See Appendix A for contact plan).
- Invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90% .

Third Day Absence

If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carers after three days of absence the school is required to start a child missing in education procedure as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. The school will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends, wider family. Members of school staff or the Parent Support Advisor may visit the family home to try to establish contact.

Ten Day's Absence

Oakley Infant School has a legal duty to report the absence of any child who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. Parents should ensure that contact numbers are always up to date. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If a child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as **persistent absentees**. Where this absence is authorised the school will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. The School Health Service may be involved in this meeting. If necessary an Attendance plan will be drawn up to address the concerns or a referral will be made to the Legal Attendance Panel.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. Oakley Infant School monitors all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If a child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% parents will be contacted and the reasons for the absence will be discussed.

At the midpoint in the year, February half term, the whole school attendance is RAG rated and parents receiving red letters are required to meet with the Headteacher.

Children at Infant School age are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school, and whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

Section 5 - Request for Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: **(Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining

'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. **There are no rules on this** as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday **and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised.**

Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from the School Office) in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will **be unauthorised** and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire's Code of Conduct parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code (see section 7 for detail).

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence and parents are expected to cooperate by not taking children out during school time.

It needs to be remembered that our young children are dependent upon their parents/carers to get them to school. They must therefore not carry the blame or be made to feel inadequate if their parents are not effective in this role.

Section 6 - Understanding types of absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year unless there is an **exceptional reason** for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Section 7 - Penalty Notices for Non Attendance and other Legal Measures

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire Schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:

1. **The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance**
2. **The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.**

The following legal measures are for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

Legal Measures for absence taken when the headteacher has declined parent/carers request for leave of absence

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

1. non approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
2. a holiday that has been taken without permission and the unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions then a penalty notice for non- attendance will be issued

Where a child has **unauthorised absence** the school must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-Attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from

<https://documents.hants.gov.uk/code-of-conduct-issuing-penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence-from-schools.pdf>

The code of conduct states that:

Schools or Hampshire Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late (coded *U*) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded *L*), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code *O*), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance

unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:

1. **10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period**
2. **1 or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment of testing where dates are published in advance.**

Parents and Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the schools attendance policy and website. The penalty notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parent/carers** for each child. **N.B** This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one PN for each child to each parent

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the Penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid the Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of Penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Councils website at: <https://documents.hants.gov.uk/code-of-conduct-issuing-penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence-from-schools.pdf>

Section 8 – Advice on specific attendance matters

8.1 If a child is trying to avoid coming to School.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending as this gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Parents should contact their child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss worries. The child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that the school identifies the reason for the child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases it may be helpful to discuss the circumstances of a child's difficulties with another professional.

How can a child be encouraged to attend School?

Ensure a child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show the child, that you are interested in what they are doing in school and that you value their education. Chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch

For many parents, a child attending school may be a first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both but consistency and a caring supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for both parties.

8.2 Leavers

If a child is leaving Oakley Infant School (other than when transferring to the junior school) parents are asked to:

- Give the Oakley Infant School Office comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and new address and telephone numbers, the child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to the school in writing.

If pupils leave without giving the above information, then the child is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate the child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By providing the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

8.3 Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman and Showman families

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance Learning packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

7.4 Absence through child participation in Public Performances, including theatre, film or TV work & Modelling.

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C an authorised absence.

Section 8

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. The school will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups.

Appendices

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in: The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Guidance documents on attendance.

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website

Hampshire County Council Guidance is available on Hantsweb at

[Behaviour and attendance resources for schools | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://www.hants.gov.uk/behaviour-and-attendance-resources-for-schools)

Approved by Buildings and Premises Committee

Dec 2023

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Autumn 2026

Appendix A

Step by Step Guide to First Day Calling and beyond

When no reason for absence has been provided by the parent/ carer, schools should as a minimum follow the below steps

<p>Pupils deemed at risk</p>	<p>Pupils deemed at high risk:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children subject to a child protection plan • Looked After children <p>If these children are absent and there has been no contact - notify the key worker within the first 24 hours.</p> <p>School's must notify the Family Operations Hub and / or the Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit immediately if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is suspected or known that a pupil is at potential risk of harm • There is information that a pupil is, or may be, a victim of criminal activity • At risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
<p>Day 1 of absence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone parents/carers if a response has not been received, leave a message if possible • If no response is received follow up with an email • Call the subsequent contacts on the child's record • Record actions on CPOMs
<p>Day 2 of absence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone parents/carers if a response is not received, leave a message if possible • If no response - telephone all contacts, if no answer leave message to return call • If international dialling tone is heard, leave message advising of this and ask for a call back. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This may indicate they are on holiday and have not notified the school ▪ Send a letter to both parents first class informing them of unauthorised absence and to contact the school • Record all actions on CPOMS
<p>Day 3 of absence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone parents/carers if a response is not received, leave a message if possible • Telephone all contacts, if no answer leave message asking them to return the call • Make home visit - if there is no answer leave calling card and move to next step

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send a letter of concern for absence, first class to all parents/carers and those with day-to-day care • Record all actions on CPOMS • Start a <i>child missing in education</i> procedure with Hampshire County Council
Day 4 of absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone parents/carers if a response is not received, if there is no answer, leave a message if possible • Telephone all contacts, if no answer leave message to return call • Record all actions on CPOMS
Day 5 of absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone parent / carers and leave a message if possible • Telephone all contacts, if no answer leave message to return call • If you believe this family are not on holiday and are concerned about the child's welfare request a welfare visit from the police • Record all actions on CPOMS
Missing Pupil Checklist	<p>Must be completed by the 10th day of absence, when one of the following criteria applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pupil has gone missing and no contact can be made with parent/carer to establish reason for absence • A pupil ceased to attend the school and forwarding address of the family is not known • A pupil has not returned from holiday within 10 school days of the expected date of return • A pupil fails to take up their place at the start of the academic year and the whereabouts of the young person is unknown <p><u>School must continue investigations, while the Local Authority undertake their investigations.</u></p>
Coding:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These absences must be coded as O for unauthorised absence due to no reason provided from parents/carers