



**Oak Tree**  
Primary School

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

First Approved:	July 2012
-----------------	-----------

Reviewed by:	Attendance Officer
Date Reviewed:	FOR REVIEW APPROVAL: FGB 09.12.2024
Amendments made:	October 2024
L&M Approval:	

Next Review Due:	October 2025
------------------	--------------

## **Introduction**

At Oak Tree Primary School, we firmly believe that regular school attendance is crucial for all pupils to achieve their full potential. Our attendance policy is guided by the latest Department for Education (DfE) guidance (2024) and is aligned with the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model, fostering an inclusive approach to pupil well-being and success. This policy seeks to cultivate a culture of regular attendance through collaboration with families, effective monitoring, and supportive interventions. All schools are expected to achieve an overall attendance rate of at least 95%.

## **Rationale**

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suited to their age, aptitude, and any special educational needs they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to ensure their child receives this education, either through school attendance or education otherwise arranged.

At Oak Tree Primary School, we recognise the significance of regular school attendance as a key factor in enhancing the welfare, social inclusion, and achievement of our pupils. The school year comprises 190 academic days, during which staff and governors have meticulously planned the curriculum to raise pupil achievement and attainment levels. Alongside the National Curriculum, we place great importance on the personal, social, moral, and spiritual development of every child, with dedicated programmes integrated throughout the school year. Children are expected to attend school for the entire 190 days of the academic year unless there is a legitimate reason for absence. We prioritise ensuring that parents and pupils are supported in maintaining regular attendance.

## **Purposes**

- To support the school's vision, mission, and aims.
- To ensure all pupils achieve their full potential.
- To support all pupils in achieving their maximum possible attendance.
- To ensure the safety of all pupils by accurately recording attendance and punctuality.

## **Our Shared Responsibilities**

The responsibility for each child's full attendance is shared among the entire school community. Improving attendance is a collective effort. Barriers to accessing education are complex and may extend beyond the school gates, often varying based on individual pupils and families. Ensuring good attendance begins with fostering a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive school environment where all pupils want to attend and are eager to learn.

- Parents/Carers: Responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually, notifying the school of any absences, and collaborating with the school to address attendance concerns.
- Pupils: Expected to understand the importance of regular attendance and engage positively with initiatives designed to improve attendance and punctuality.
- School Staff: Support pupil attendance through high-quality teaching, a nurturing learning environment, and effective interventions. All staff are responsible for monitoring and promoting regular attendance.
- Attendance Officer: Monitors attendance data, supports pupils and families, and works with external agencies when necessary.
- Headteacher: Oversees policy implementation, ensures consistency, and engages with

parents/carers and local authorities as required.

- Governing Body: Ensures that the school's attendance policy is robust, effective, and compliant with statutory requirements.

### **DfE Guidelines on School Attendance**

- Children should attend school every day and on time.
- Absences are categorised as either authorised or unauthorised.
- Parents/carers will receive an annual report detailing their child's attendance, absences, and punctuality.
- The Governing Body will provide an overall school attendance and absence rate in its Annual Report to Parents, typically issued each July.
- School/Local Education Authority (LEA) attendance figures are published annually in national "Performance Tables."

### **Punctuality**

Pupils arriving late disrupt not only their own education but also that of others. At Oak Tree Primary School, we open our doors 15 minutes before the school day begins to maximise "contact time" with our pupils. Pupils are considered late if they arrive after 9:00 am, when the register is taken. Those arriving after 9:30 am will be recorded as 'U' (unauthorised absence) for the morning session. If a pupil arrives late or leaves early, they must report to the office and be signed in/out by a member of the office staff. We are committed to working with families facing persistent lateness to find appropriate solutions and ensure punctuality.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised Absences**

There are two types of absences:

**Authorised Absences:** These include legitimate reasons such as illness, unavoidable medical appointments, religious observances, and exceptional family circumstances approved by the Headteacher.

**Unauthorised Absences:** These include absences without a valid reason, unapproved holidays during term time, or cases where no explanation has been provided. Only the Headteacher can authorise absences.

### **Illness**

Parents/carers should report their child's illness-related absence to the school via the MyEd app, email, or phone. The school must be notified on each day of absence unless long-term absence has been communicated in advance through a 'Request for Authorisation of Absence' form. The school can be contacted by phone at 01444 233368 or via email at [office@oaktreeprimary.co.uk](mailto:office@oaktreeprimary.co.uk). Parents/carers are required to notify the school as early as possible on the first day of absence and each subsequent day.

### **Absence Reporting Procedure**

If no notification is received on the first day of absence, the school will send an absence alert text to the family to seek an explanation. If there is no response by the afternoon register, the Attendance Officer will contact the 'Priority 1' contact(s) listed on Bromcom. If no reason is provided, the absence will be marked as unauthorised for the day. If a child is absent without contact for a second day, all emergency contacts will be called, and Designated Safeguarding

Leads (DSLs) will be informed to prepare for a home visit if no contact is made. Prolonged or repeated absences may result in involvement from the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) or Social Services.

### **Medical and Dental Appointments**

Whenever possible, medical and dental appointments should be scheduled outside school hours or during holidays. If unavoidable, children should attend school before and after appointments whenever feasible. Appointment letters should be shared via MyEd, emailed to [office@oaktreeprimary.co.uk](mailto:office@oaktreeprimary.co.uk), or brought to the school office to be copied before the appointment. The child must be signed 'OUT' and 'IN' in the "Student Registration Folder" for safety and security reasons. Parents/carers should submit a 'Request for Authorisation of Absence' form at least two weeks in advance for foreseeable absences. For medical appointments, a photocopy of the appointment letter may be accepted instead of the form.

**Authorised Absences:** Illness and medical appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours are authorised upon receipt of an appointment letter.

**Unauthorised Absences:** Examples include keeping a child home for their birthday, shopping, visiting relatives, or because a parent is unwell.

### **Holidays During Term Time**

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional circumstances' are that they must be 'rare, significant, unavoidable, and short' according to DfE/NAHT guidance. Term-time holidays are strongly discouraged and not an entitlement. Parents who take a holiday without Headteacher approval will incur unauthorised absences for their child, which may be referred to the Pupil Entitlement Team for consideration of issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).

### **Use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs)**

FPNs may be issued if there have been at least 10 sessions (two sessions per day) of unauthorised absences within a 10-week period. In some cases, longer absences may lead to court action instead. Examples include unauthorised holidays, withdrawals without prior notice, frequent lateness, or lengthy illness-related absences without supporting documentation.

### **Strategies for Improving Attendance**

Attendance strategies will be regularly reviewed by the Attendance Officer and school staff, with targeted support provided for vulnerable pupils in collaboration with the SENDCo.

### **Monitoring Attendance and Tackling Poor Attendance**

Attendance registers are taken each morning and afternoon via online registration through Bromcom. In the event of a system issue, a paper register will be used and submitted to the office. The School Administrator reviews weekly attendance data, follows up on unexplained absences, and issues letters for late arrivals after five incidents. Attendance and punctuality data are monitored rigorously, with half-termly meetings between the Attendance Officer and designated staff.

### **Steps to Address Poor Attendance**

- Step 1: Attendance is reviewed weekly. Parents/carers of pupils with attendance below

95% will receive a first persistent absence letter.

- Step 2: If attendance does not improve within two weeks, a second letter and EWO referral are issued.
- Step 3: A Medical Letter Request is issued for further illness-related absences, which must be supported by evidence.
- Step 4: If attendance remains poor, a monitoring letter will be sent, advising that further action may be taken.
- Step 5: Referral to the Pupil Entitlement Investigation Team if no improvement is seen.

### **Extended Absences**

Prolonged absences exceeding four weeks may lead to the removal of the child's name from the School Roll. Parents will need to reapply for admission upon their return.

### **Evaluation of Attendance**

Attendance levels will be evaluated termly, with data collected on attendance for specific groups (e.g., pupils on the CP register, Looked After Pupils, SEND pupils) and reported to the governing body. This process ensures effective intervention and continuous improvement in attendance across the school.

### **Appendix's:**

- [Request for Authorisation of Absence during term time](#)
- [FPN-Leaflet-Aug-2024.pdf](#)
- [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)