



Oxpring Primary School

'Learn, Endeavour, Aspire, Respect, Nurture'

Head Teacher: Mrs S. Irwin

Co - Chair of Governors: Mrs G. Mahoney and Mr Colin Gratton-Rayson

Date: May 2022

Review date: May 2023 (or earlier as required in line with DFE guidance)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Oxspring Primary School

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Our School's Mission: 'To be a learning community with a culture of ambition and achievement'

Our Vision: 'Embracing Learning - a school for all'

Our motto: 'Learn, Endeavour, Aspire, Respect, Nurture'

Our Values:



Introduction

The staff and Governors at Oxspring Primary School are committed to promoting a culture of high expectation, achievement and excellence. Good attendance is crucial if students are to take advantage of the learning opportunities available to them and complete a successful journey through their time at our school and as they move on into higher education or the world of work.

All of our school stakeholders need to work in partnership with relevant parties to ensure that everyone is aware of their responsibilities in our aim to promote high standards of attendance and punctuality.

The overall aim for all children should be for 100% attendance therefore any absence should only be for unavoidable and genuine reasons. If an absence is for a medical appointment, children should return to school after the appointment if at all possible. Medical evidence can be requested when a child misses school for an appointment.

Registration is a legal requirement that has to be taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions; this enables us to:

- Monitor attendance regularly
- Evaluate information and set targets/tackle areas of concern as early as possible
- Target absence, punctuality and truancy and communicate with pupils and parents about expectations
- Have the ability to publicise the above data within our school
- Have the ability to give a clear and accurate picture to parents, carers and guardians
- Have the ability to encourage and reward good attendance

Why regular attendance is important

Any absence, including family holidays, affects the pattern of a child's education and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Absence during transitional periods or the start of a new term can also significantly affect a child's friendship group and, therefore, their social and emotional progress. Any pupil's absence can disrupt the learning of others as they try to catch up with skills that have been taught in their absence. This can also have a de-motivating effect on individuals if they are unable to access parts of the curriculum following absences.

Rewarding Positive Attendance/Punctuality

At least once per year we will recognise 'excellence' attendance for individuals and cohorts. We always celebrate the best class attendance in school and using our newsletters. We aim to recognise outstanding attendance/punctuality through certificates but we may also reward improvement. Using the term 'outstanding attendance,' rather than 100% attendance, allows us to focus on children who have missed some school but only for long standing medical appointments or significant circumstantial reasons.

Parental Responsibility Parents/Carers

All parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive an efficient full-time education suitable for their age, ability and aptitude by regular attendance at school. (Section 7, Education Act, 1996)

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents and permitting absence from school, without a valid and significant reason, is an offence that may result in prosecution.

Our school will seek to build on partnerships with parents by informing them about concerns at an early stage. Our school operates a 'First Day Contact' procedure and expect parents to communicate the reasons for a child's absence at the beginning of the first day of absence. If there is no communication from home, parents will be contacted by school after 9.30am by telephone. This will be followed up if there is no contact. The school has a dedicated absence line so that you can leave a message with details of your child, class and their reason for absence. Where possible, please give an indication to the likely date of return.

Appointments for visits to doctors, dentist etc should, wherever possible, be made out of school hours. Parents are asked to provide a copy of medical appointment cards/letters for appointments made during the school day. These should be taken to the school office when collecting your child or, ideally, before.

Oxspring Primary – First Day of Absence

This is crucial in our efforts to raise the attendance profile of our school. A 'First Day of Absence' system is operated to communicate quickly and effectively with parents and carers. School staff make contact with homes on a daily basis. It is a requirement for parents/carers to provide **at least two** appropriate telephone numbers as emergency contacts. It is the parent/carers' responsibility to ensure that these contact details are up-to-date. This is vital for safeguarding reasons so that we make contact with an appropriate adult quickly, should your child have an accident or become unwell. In cases where we are unable to make contact with an appropriate adult, we would visit the home address. All contact with home is recorded and monitored by class teachers and/or the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Where leaders are concerned about a child's reason for absence or the welfare of a pupil /family the Headteacher or Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) may visit the family home.

Teaching staff may also make calls to families in relation to any issues concerning children. The office staff are responsible for making daily calls with regard to attendance to parents and carers and for recording absence correctly on the School Information Management System (SIMS).

Procedures to be followed by staff

School staff monitor attendance and punctuality daily. When a child's attendance begins to present concern, without good medical reason/evidence, parents will be informed as outlined below:

Step 1: Below 95% attendance: Letter home

This is to inform parents of potential concerns and to ask for co-operation in trying to improve their child's attendance

Step 2: Below 90%: Letter home or below 95% and no improvement since last letter (impact of COVID absence will be taken into account)

At this point, depending on the reasons for absence (if linked to COVID), where there are concerns, parents will be invited into school to discuss issues relating to their child's attendance. At this meeting:

- Senior Leadership Team and, where appropriate external support agencies, will offer any relevant support or guidance to the family and they may make referrals as required for further intervention
- Set a clear target for improvement (and monitor in the following period).
- Make expectations clear
- Set up an Early help Assessment if required
- At this point, parents may be asked to provide medical evidence for any future absence from school.

Letters will also be sent out for concerns over lateness. Our doors open at 8.45am registration is taken at 8.55am. Pupils are deemed to be late when arriving after 8.55am and their late mark is recorded at the main reception. Children arriving after 9.30am should be accompanied by a parent/carer to the main reception so that a reason for absence/lateness can be given. The number of minutes late is recorded in order to measure the impact of lost education due to late arrival. Please note that arrival after 9.30am without reason will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the whole of the morning session. We will send out letters, contact parents via telephone, arrange meetings, set targets and, in the case of continued attendance or punctuality issues, seek EWO advice and, where appropriate, consider legal action and issuing penalty notices.

Holiday/absence requests

All requests for leave must be documented on a school request form available from the school office and on our website. Parents should share details about the request (including the specific dates) and give any special circumstances that explain the need to take your child out of school during term time. The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' and on a **case by case basis**. School will respond to the request in writing and it is possible that a penalty notice may be issued.

Legal Action (Penalty Notices)

The school and Governing Body do not wish to take legal action against parents/carers for unauthorised absences or incidents of persistent lateness. However, we may consider legal action and as we aim to ensure that every child is in school every day. Recurring unauthorised absence may lead to a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and this can lead to legal interventions and a formal assessment. The unauthorised absence may also result in a Penalty Notice being issued through the Local Authority, in line with their guidance.

Approved Absence

School leaders may authorise absence that will not affect attendance for visits to a potential new school settings, attending sporting/performance activities (like elite coaching or competition, or musical instrument examinations) or attend school visits or sporting competitions. This absence will be at the discretion of the Headteacher and it will only be approved if a child's attendance and behaviour are exemplary. This absence cannot be taken at key times of the year like formal assessments such as SATS and nor can it be taken during key learning dates like school visits, for example. Where potential absence for sporting talents clash with a school sports event, the school's programme of events will always take precedence.

Governors' Monitoring

Attendance data and the overall effectiveness of school attendance procedures are provided to the Governing Body to support the monitoring of this across school.

The governing body will;

- Elect a Safeguarding Governor who will work alongside office staff and Senior Leaders to ensure that attendance systems are effective.
- Ensure that the legal requirements for registration are complied with.
- Review the school Attendance and Punctuality Policy on a regular basis.
- Ensure that the Policy is in line with the BMBC 'Code of Conduct.'
- Have input into school attendance targets.
- Receive reports and statistics at least termly.
- Support the need for good attendance.

Education Welfare Officers

The Education Welfare Officer is a Local Authority employee who monitors attendance remotely and is responsible for the general well-being of all school aged children across the borough. Where necessary and appropriate, Education Welfare Officers will work alongside school staff to address pupil related issues that may be affecting their attendance at school. When a child is referred to Education Welfare, the officers will work within Local Authority guidelines to address the issues.