



# Oxspring Primary School

**Policy Title: Attendance and Punctuality**

**Date of Review: Autumn 2023**

**Review by: Autumn 2024**

**Signed by: Chair of Governors**

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# Attendance and Punctuality

Autumn 2023



## Introduction

This policy was created after a period of consultation with relevant stakeholders within school. It has been formally adopted by governors and reflects our approach at Oxspring Primary School.

## Aims and Principles

The policy is underpinned by the central aims of Oxspring Primary and values held by the school community:

### Aims of the school

- Oxspring is committed to promoting high standards of academic achievement for all learners in all subjects.
- As a school we will continue to develop and instil key life skills and values in our pupils.
- We will encourage positive relationships and communications between home, our community and the wider world.

In particular, Oxspring School has an inclusive approach to our provision. Our aim is always to involve all our children and stakeholders in all areas of the curriculum and school life. In accordance with our **Disability Equality Scheme**, we recognise that this may mean making special adaptations or arrangements from time to time for children with specific disabilities. We welcome the involvement of disabled adults in all areas of school life.

## **A Introduction to the policy**

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.**

## **B Registration**

Registration is a legal requirement that has to be undertaken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. 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

Morning registration is at 8.45am each morning. Registers close at 8.50am. Afternoon registration is 1pm in Class 1 and 1.15pm Classes 2-5.

## **C 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.

## **D Rewarding Positive Attendance/Punctuality**

We regularly recognise 'excellent' attendance for individuals and cohorts. We always celebrate the 'Class of the Week' in school and using our newsletters and Twitter feed each week. We aim to recognise outstanding attendance/punctuality through praise and rewards but we may also reward improvement over time. 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, for example or those who have attended well in general, but stayed away to risk the spread of illness to others when they became temporarily unwell.

## **E Parental Responsibility**

“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/carers 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.

If an absence is for a medical appointment, children should attend school for as long as possible before the appointment and/or return to school as soon as possible after the appointment. Appointments for visits to doctors, dentist etc should, wherever possible, be made out of school hours. Parents are asked to provide a copy of all 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.

When a child is to be absent from school, parents should contact the school office (01226 763020) and leave a message with the details of your child, class and the reason for absence. Please do not say ‘unwell’ or ‘poorly’ as we require details of symptoms to support our attendance logs. Where possible, you should give an indication of a likely return date. If there is no communication from home, parents will be contacted by school under the ‘First Day of Absence’ procedure set out below.

## **F ‘First Day of Absence’ procedure**

This procedure is crucial in our efforts to raise the attendance profile of our school. The ‘First Day of Absence’ system is operated to communicate quickly and effectively with parents and carers regarding the reasons for a child’s absence at the beginning of the first day away from school. When a child is absent and no reason has been given, parents will be contacted by school, **normally by phone to parents; if no contact is made, an email will be sent regarding the absence** . It is a requirement for parents/carers to provide at least two appropriate telephone numbers as emergency contacts, ideally more. It is the parent/carers’ responsibility to ensure that these contact details are up-to-date at all times. This is also 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. Where leaders are concerned about a child’s reason for absence or the welfare of a pupil /family the Executive Headteacher, other designated leader(s) and/or Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) may visit the family home to complete a safe and well check. This visit will be logged on the school’s welfare records in CPOMS (our current online system to monitor safeguarding concerns).

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

## **G Procedures to be followed by attendance leaders**

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 96% attendance and/or 2 or more instances of lateness after at least a full half term: first 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 94% attendance and/or 2 or more instances of lateness after at least a full term: second letter home or below 96% and/or no improvement since last letter.**

At this point, parents will be contacted directly or invited into school to discuss issues relating to their child's attendance, depending on the context of the absence. 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
- A clear target will be set for improvement (and monitored in the following period).
- Expectations will be made clear and the impact on future learning.
- A copy of the school policy will be shared either electronically or in hard copy for future reference.
- Parents may be reminded to provide medical evidence for any future absence from school for a set period of time.

### **Step 3 and beyond: No improvement has been seen despite the actions at step 1 and 2 above or attendance is below 92%.**

The school will refer for support and guidance from an Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). The EWO will be in contact with the family to advise them and if no improvement is seen, or attendance levels fall further, the school and EWO will organise a face to face meeting to discuss the health of the child and concerns about attendance.

## **H Arriving late for school**

Letters and/or reminder text messages may also be sent out for incidents of lateness. Our doors open at 8.45am. Pupils are deemed to be late when arriving at or after 8.50am and their late mark is recorded at the main reception. Children arriving after 8.50am 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.

### **I Holiday/absence requests- see Appendix A**

All requests for leave must be documented on a school request form (see Appendix A). 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 Executive 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.

### **J Legal Action (Fixed 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 as we aim to ensure that every child is in school every day so that they can meet their full potential. 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 Fixed Penalty Notice being issued through the local authority. This penalty will be £60 (per child, per full school week) if paid within 21 days; payment after this time, but within 28 days, is £120. The school will apply a fixed penalty notice through BMBC if attendance over the last twelve months presents concerns (see section G above) or if the holiday itself will ensure that attendance drops below 96%.

### **K 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 Executive 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. Absence that will affect a child's ability to achieve their potential in end of Key Stage assessments will not be granted. Families must work with us to ensure that children in such a position keep up with any learning missed from school.

### **L The role of Governor Monitoring**

Attendance data and the overall effectiveness of school attendance procedures are provided to the Governing Body at their termly meetings 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. This is currently Mrs Tracy Connolly at Oxspring Primary.

- Ensure that the legal requirements for registration are complied with.
- Review the school Attendance and Punctuality Policy on a regular basis, currently annually.
- Have input into school attendance targets.
- Receive reports and statistics at least termly.
- Support the need for good attendance through systems, processes and rewards in school.

### **M Education Welfare Officers (EWO)**

The EWO 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, an EWO 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 and national guidelines to address the issues. School can refer for support from an EWO if families in their care are presenting concern in terms of attendance and/or punctuality.