



Attendance Policy



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "M. J. J.", written over a horizontal line.

Signed:
Chair of Governors

June 2018

Review September 2021

Statement of Intent

Oakwood Park Grammar School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Oakwood Park Grammar School.

The school's policy is underpinned by non-statutory guidance from the DfE as set out in their 'School Attendance' document issued and updated in November 2016. The school is also guided by Local Authority updates on attendance.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts pupils at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.30am. All pupils that arrive late must report to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of the School Staff

Ms J Bevan (Deputy Headteacher), on behalf of Mr K. Moody, the Headteacher, has overall responsibility for attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The class teacher notifies their Director of Study of children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of Mrs L. Rogers (Attendance Officer) to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed termly of child's attendance figure

Timeline of School Action for Low Attendance

- 95 - 100% attendance – monitored weekly and Director of Study notified of concerns; meets with student
- 90 - 95% attendance - monitored weekly; Director of Study meets with parents
- Below 90% - Advise Attendance Service of child's attendance and consider Attendance Service or Penalty Notice where the absences have not been authorised.

Children Missing Education

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance should be followed.

The school will notify the Local Authority if a child's name is to be removed from the admissions register and provide them with the following information:

- Full name, address and contact details for the child.
- The name of the school which the student intends to transfer to, including start date.
- The grounds upon which the pupil's name is to be deleted.
- If the child is to be home educated.

Lateness

At Oakwood Park Grammar School, the register is taken at 8.30am and 1.50pm.

The register will close at 8.40am and 2.00pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence. After the registers have closed, pupils must report to the school office to sign in, where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded.

Students who arrive to school late, without good reason, on two occasions in one week will be given a Late Detention which will take place after school. These detentions will be run by the Directors of Study. Parents will be given notification of a detention 24 hours in advance.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents and may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). It can provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed in a term may lead to a referral to the Attendance Service (AS) for a Penalty Notice Warning Letter
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded

- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue, AS may instigate court proceedings

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence. Where there is doubt, the Headteacher, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation, a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

Request for Absence Procedure:

- Parents need to make a formal request for absence using the school's 'Request for absence' form as soon as they are aware that their child will be absent from school.
- The form needs to be promptly returned to the school for the Headteacher's consideration.
- The school may request additional information in order to allow them to decide whether the absence is to be authorised or not.
- The school will inform parents of the Headteacher's decision.

If no explanation is received, absences will **NOT** be authorised.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Family Holidays
- Confusion over school dates
- Child's/family birthday
- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Shopping trip

The following reasons are examples of absences that will be authorised:

- A death in the family or funeral.
- Scheduled medical appointment, for example with a doctor, dentist or consultant.

Attendance and Lateness

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held. The school has a 'five-step' approach to monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and discuss each case carefully.

'Five Steps'

1. Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all pupils.
2. Discussion with the Education Welfare Officer to identify pupils with attendance below 90%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness.
3. Invitation to meet with school staff
4. Referral to Early Help Service
5. Referral to Attendance Service

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral to the Early Help or Attendance Service is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **MUST** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there is at least 10 sessions (5 days) absence in a term the school will consider the following:

Education Welfare Officer Actions

This may include:

- Home visits
- Multi agency meetings
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Family Group Conference Service.
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

- **Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct.**
- The Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register has closed
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Leave of Absence/Holiday

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Requests for holidays in term time will not be authorised.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Holiday Absence

- **Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct.**
 - AS receives a request for an unauthorised holiday of 10 or more school sessions (5 days)
 - AS issue Penalty Notice(s) (one per parent per child)
 - If Penalty Notice(s) is/are not paid within 42 days of issue, AS may instigate court proceedings