

Oliver Goldsmith Primary School

Whole School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Introduction:

Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. At Oliver Goldsmith Primary School we believe that all children benefit from education and from regular and punctual school attendance and good behaviour. To these ends, we will do all we can to ensure that all children attend to their fullest and that any problems which impede this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible.

Attending school is a habit and it helps children if they build the habit from the start. Arriving in school punctually and attending every day is as important in the Nursery as it is in Year 6. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational disadvantage. When children are away from school they miss what is being taught. They lose out on friendships because relationships are constantly being formed while they are away. If they are away without good reason, they get a message that school is not as important as other things and this strongly affects the attitude they have to their schoolwork. It places children at risk and in some cases it can result in children being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Lateness disrupts the whole class or assembly, and can be upsetting for some children (the latecomer and peers). When a child is in school on time s/he is part of the class from the beginning of the session and hears the information about the day.

The publication of schools' attendance levels is increasingly becoming a significant indicator of a school's performance. It is accepted that the regular attendance of children is closely related to raising achievement, and this underlines the importance of improving attendance rates in school.

As parents/carers, Headteacher, teachers, administrative staff, governors, and Local Authority (LA) staff, we **all** have a role, and share legal responsibilities, in promoting and ensuring regular attendance and punctuality of all our children in Oliver Goldsmith Primary School. If children are to benefit from their education, they must attend school regularly and on time.

Term time leave

- The School expects family holidays to be taken out of school term times. All such absences in term time are deemed as 'Unauthorised Absences'
- Requests for term time leave for family matters and holidays must be made prior to making any travel and accommodation bookings. Parents/carers must complete a request form, available from the school office. The school will then make a decision on each case. As stated above, holidays during term time will not be authorised, unless deemed to be exceptional by the Head Teacher.
- The Community Liaison Leader is responsible for attendance and will liaise regularly with the EWO to monitor school attendance and meet with the parent/carer involved before such absence. Records of travel arrangements showing proof of outward and return journeys, flights and tickets (dates etc) **MUST** be submitted to the Community Liaison Leader, who provides the parent/carer with a letter explaining the procedure.
- If parents/carers take their children on holidays during term time without authorisation from the Head Teacher, they may be referred to Southwark Early Help Service for issue of a Fixed Penalty Fine of £60. If this happens a second time, the local authority will take legal action against the parents/carers, who will be expected to attend court for breaking the Education Act 1996.
- The Community Liaison Leader and the Assistant Head will write to the parents warning them of the PENALTY NOTICE (PN) procedures and administration staff will inform parents of this procedure if they enquire at any time. For illnesses either side of a school holiday period – the

school expects medical evidence, otherwise the case may be referred to the EWO for issue of a penalty notice.

- The Community Liaison Leader records all holiday term time absences. EWO is informed regularly of cases where families have taken children out of school for fixed periods, as opposed to persistent absence. In the case of absences exceeding twenty school days, parents will be informed & written to, to warn of the possibility of off rolling. The child/children will only be off-rolled, after liaising with the parent/carer, EWO and LA Safeguarding Lead. In certain cases, the family will be referred to EWO by the Community Liaison Leader.

Exceptional circumstances:

The Headteacher will consider authorisation for requests for children to attend family funerals. The school requires evidence, such as death certificates before granting such requests. The school will always endeavour to treat such occasions with sensitivity. Consideration of other requests would be in exceptional circumstances only and the child's record of attendance over the past years would be taken into account when deciding on permission being granted.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- ensuring that registers are properly kept;
- submittance of regular returns of attendance figures to the LA;
- asking the Headteacher for an annual report on attendance;
- providing a framework for in-service training of governors on attendance-related matters.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

(this varies due to responsibility for attendance/pastoral care that is the day to day responsibility of the Community Liaison Leader)

- overseeing the implementation of Attendance Policy and procedures;
- ensuring the collection of accurate statistical data;
- development of efficient monitoring and evaluation systems;
- forming positive links with outside agencies such as EWO / Social Services;
- referral of appropriate children to the EWO;
- reporting back to the Governing Body and the Behaviour Strategy Panel on matters of attendance / punctuality.
- Making decisions regarding exceptional circumstances for term time leave

Expectations of Parents/Carers

We expect all parents/carers to support the school in its aim to raise the achievement of their children through full attendance and excellent punctuality at school. Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility for making sure that their child/children attend(s) school regularly and on time, as per the Education Act 1996 and the Children's Act 1989;

We expect parents/carers to:

- Ensure their children/child arrive(s) on time at school for 9am start (Reception to Year 6).
Nursery opens at 8.45am.
The Fire Gates are closed at 9.00a.m. If a parent/carer is later than 9.00a.m., they enter the school via the front gate/door, where the name of their child is recorded as 'Late' and a reason for lateness will need to be provided to the staff member on duty (Community Liaison Leader & Communications Manager). Lateness is monitored and a letter is sent home if this continues to happen and if no improvement is seen a meeting will be scheduled with the EWO for further action.
- contact the school on the first day of absence. Parents/carers are asked to let the school know the reason for any absence from school by telephoning the school, calling in to the office or telling the teacher. It is possible for children to absent themselves from school without the parents'/carers' permission. If parents/carers get notification of absence or poor punctuality but

do not think their child should have been absent or late, the school should be told as soon as possible so that the matter can be picked up quickly. A daily update is required for all absences, which may be due to sickness or 'other circumstances';

- provide a note either before or on the day of the child's return to school giving the full reason for absence;
- ensure the child has the necessary equipment, eg. P.E/swimming kit, reading folder/glasses etc. for the school day;
- pick up their child promptly at 3.15pm. After 3.25p.m., the child will be taken to register their name on the Late Register (after school), in the Lower Hall. A Lateness Record of children's names is kept. If a child has been left at school beyond 3.25 p.m., the school makes every effort to contact parents/carers. If contact cannot be made with parents/carers, and there is no secondary/emergency back-up, Social Services/Police will be contacted. The school will consider referral to Social Services if a child has been regularly left at the end of the school day. Governors of the school are informed.
- ensure that the school is promptly informed when there is a change of address and/or contact telephone numbers (mobile/landline);
- provide the school with an additional telephone contact number in case the school needs to contact a child's parents/carers in the case of an emergency.

Expectations of the children

We expect that each child will:

- attend school regularly;
- arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day;
- tell a member of staff about any problem which is making it hard for them to attend school regularly and/or to be punctual.

Expectations of the School

The school is expected to (as detailed in **Registration Procedures**, below):

- Keep efficient and accurate registration of children. **Please refer to section on 'Responsibility of the class teacher' and 'Registration Procedures';**
- Make immediate, first day of absence contact with a parent/carer if a child fails to attend without an explanation (Unauthorised Absence). **Please refer to section on 'Registration Procedures';**
- provide regular reports on the school's attendance statistics to outside agencies such as the Early Help Service, OFSTED, DfE etc.;
- promote positive attendance and punctuality;
- work with the Early Help Service /EWO on all issues of Attendance and Punctuality.
- Refer using the Common Assessment Framework [CAF] to the EWO if there is persistent non-attendance, if no further contact can be made by the School or there is no response from the parents/carers. The Community Liaison Leader will complete a referral/CAF and send it to the Link EWO for action.
- Hold Team Around the Child [TAC]/Team Around the Family [TAF], multi-disciplinary meetings, when appropriate and necessary, to improve a child's attendance/punctuality, in particular when older siblings are attending secondary school etc.
- Provide Registers and records of previous registration to the EWO for termly Register Inspections.
- The Community Liaison Leader will meet fortnightly with the Link Education Welfare Officer.

Responsibility of the class teacher

- Accurate keeping of the Scholar Pack electronic class Register, completed before 9.10am and at the start of the first afternoon lesson, using the Interactive Whiteboard;
- communicate with Administrative Officers, the Community Liaison Leader [and SENCo if necessary] regarding individual messages about absence, lateness and/or possible change of address, school etc., that has been communicated to them by parents/carers, to ensure prompt recording;
- positively promote good attendance and punctuality within the classroom, with regard to the School's Attendance and Punctuality Policy;
- make positive links with parents/carers;
- use the school policy with regard to absence and punctuality in triggering letters to be sent by the administrative support.

Responsibility of School Administrative Officers

- Receive telephone communication from parents/carers, record information in registers and communicate to teaching staff in matters of consideration of authorisation;
- If a parent/carer fails to contact the school on the first day of absence, the school will contact them by phone or letter.
- Reasons for absences must be recorded electronically on each child's register, authorising the absences or not. Reasons must be specified, e.g. type of illness (not 'unwell' or 'sick') by administrative staff.
- Make a record of late arrivals and send out standard letters on Unauthorised Absence and Lateness. Class teachers (support staff, if they complete the electronic register) may inform administrative staff of issues about children's attendance each morning;
- follow up absence on the first day, by telephone;
- assist the Community Liaison Leader, Headteacher and LA in collection of data;
- refer the names of persistent latecomers and poor school attenders to the Community Liaison Leader;
- assist in 'on and off rolling' procedures in liaison with the Community Liaison Leader;
- assist in casual admissions;
- complete totals of Authorised and Unauthorised Absences and make a record of attendance statistics;

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

- Registers are taken electronically twice a day in class, at 9.00 a.m. and at the start of the first afternoon lesson. Morning registration closes at 9.10 a.m. Any child arriving after class registration time is marked 'late'. If a child arrives between 9.00 and 9.10, they will be marked present, and a note of the time of their arrival will be noted in the register. If any child arrives late s/he must report to the office so that a member of the administrative staff/support staff team can record a lateness mark by the child's name. The time of the child's arrival in the school office is recorded in the register. If the child arrives with their parent, with a valid reason, such as lateness due to a medical appointment, usually the lateness will be authorised (with evidence) In other situations, the lateness becomes 'Unauthorised' this will affect the child's overall attendance. Should Community Liaison Leader, followed by referral to the EWO. If a child arrives after 9.30, this is recorded as an unauthorised absence, and a note of the time of their arrival is recorded on the register.
Persistent Unauthorised lateness may constitute grounds for prosecution.
- Every child must have the appropriate electronic mark by his/her name.
- Following first day of absence contact, a letter will be sent home requesting a response and reason for absence from the child's parent/carer.

- The electronic registers will be checked by the school administrative officers on a daily basis in order to carry out first day contact procedure carry out other registration checks and ensure correct recording in registers. The Community Liaison Leader will advise teachers of procedures when necessary;
AUTHORISED ABSENCE: *when a parent/carer phones or a child brings a note, AND the SCHOOL finds the reason acceptable.*
UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE: *No phone call or note has been received OR the reason given is not acceptable to school.*
- Where there is persistent non-attendance that is authorised through sickness, and this is affecting a child's progress in any way, a parent/carer will be requested to seek further medical advice and possibly medical certificates for the child. The school may arrange for a school health check with the permission of the parent/carer.

Promoting Good Attendance

We will encourage good attendance and punctuality by:

- Accurately completing electronic attendance registers at the beginning of each session and following up previous absences, reminding children regularly to bring in notes about absences, from parents/carers;
- following up absence on the first day;
- undertaking attendance checks at appropriate times;
- recording attendance and punctuality on Annual Reports to Parents/Carers;
- celebrating the classes with the highest attendance of the week by presenting the Attendance Bear in Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1 Phase, the Attendance Cup in Year 3/Year 4 Phase and the Florence Tristram Attendance Trophy in Year 5/Year 6 Phase, once weekly, in Class of the Week assemblies;
- publicly rewarding 100% Attendance once a term and 100% Punctuality each half term, for individual children and over the course of the whole school year, by the presentation of certificates in class and in assemblies;
- providing parents/carers with attendance figures;
- promoting good practice in Attendance and Punctuality regularly on the weekly Parents'/Carers' Newsletter.

Review

This policy will be subject to review annually, subject to changes in local and national policy.

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