



Oliver Goldsmith PRIMARY SCHOOL

**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 every day is a habit and it helps children if they build this habit from the start of their educational journey. Arriving to 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.

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn. (*Working together to improve school attendance, GOV 2024*).

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. If a child is late, they also miss early morning work, which is a vital time to catch up on missed work or to cover aspects such as phonics or handwriting.

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.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

(this varies due to responsibility for attendance/pastoral care that is the day to day responsibility of the Pastoral Lead)

- 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 Local Authority / Social Services;
- referral of appropriate children to relevant partner agencies;
- 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 every day for school. School starts at 08.45am (Nursery to Year 6).
The Fire Gates and side gate 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, via the electronic sign in device, as 'Late' and a reason for lateness will need to be provided to the staff member at the front desk. Lateness is monitored and a letter is sent home if this continues to happen and if no improvement is seen a meeting may be scheduled with the Local Authority for further action.

- Contact the school on their child's first day of absence and every subsequent day after, so as to keep the school updated with regards to their child's progress and well being. Parents/carers are asked to let the school know the reason for any absence from school by telephoning the school, coming into school in person or by emailing the school office. It is possible for children to absent themselves from school without the parents'/carers' permission, therefore if parents/carers get notification of absence or poor punctuality but do not think their child should have been absent or late, they should inform the school as soon as possible, so that the matter can be addressed quickly. A daily update, by phone call or email, is required from parent / carer for all absences, even those linked to sickness or 'other circumstances';
- Provide a note / medical evidence, either before or on the day of the children/ child's return to school giving the full reason for absence and provide any medical or other evidence relating to the absence;
- Ensure their children/child has the necessary equipment, eg. P.E/swimming kit, reading folder/glasses etc. for the school day, so that they do not miss out on any aspect of school for that reason;
- Pick up their children/child promptly at 3.15pm. After 3. 25p.m, any children who have not been collected, will be taken to the main office where their name will be recorded in the Late Register (after school). A Lateness Record of children's names is kept. If a child has been left at school beyond 3.25 p.m. on numerous occasions, a late fine will be issued to the parent, via Parent Pay. This balance will need to be cleared before any other payments for clubs / trips or activities can be made. In addition to this, children who have not been collected and where the school has made every effort to contact parents/carers or secondary/emergency back-up contacts; 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 will also be informed.
- Ensure that the school is promptly informed when there is a change of address, contact telephone numbers (mobile/landline) and/or email, so that communication can remain consistent and effective between home and school and vice versa;
- Provide the school with an additional telephone contact number in case the school cannot contact a child's parents/carers in the case of an emergency.
- Understand that as per the School's Registration Procedures legislative guidance, it is the **school** who determines whether a child should be absent from school and **not** parents.

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

At all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work in partnership with pupils and parents collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place ((Working together to improve school attendance, GOV 2024).

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 Local Authority, OFSTED, DfE etc.
- Promote positive attendance and punctuality, through the use of incentives and rewards;
- Work in partnership with the Local Authority on all issues of Attendance and Punctuality.
- Refer using the Common Assessment Framework [CAF] to the Family Early Help Service, 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 Pastoral Lead will complete a referral/CAF and send it to the Family Early Help Service 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.
- Provide Registers and records of previous registration to the Local Authority when necessary.

Responsibility of the class teacher

- Accurate keeping of the Scholar Pack electronic class Register, completed before 9am and at the start of the first afternoon lesson, using the Interactive boards;
- Communicate with Administrative Officers, the Pastoral Lead and SENCo (if necessary) regarding patterns of absence, 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, when possible, for example when children arrive at school, dismissing children at home time, meet the teacher sessions and/or parent / teacher days/evenings
- Use the school policy with regard to absence and punctuality in triggering letters to be sent by the Pastoral Lead.

Responsibility of School Administrative Officers/ School Office

- If a parent/carer fails to contact the school on the first day of absence, the school will contact them by phone or email and will continue to do so for each subsequent day of absence after;
- Receive telephone communication from parents/carers, record information in registers and communicate to teaching staff & leadership regarding matters that require consideration of authorisation;
- Reasons for absences will be recorded electronically on each child's register, authorising the absences or not. Detailed reasons must be specified, e.g. type of illness (not 'unwell' or 'sick') by administrative staff.
- Make a record of late arrivals and laise with the Pastoral Lead in regards to sending 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;
- Assist the Pastoral Lead, Headteacher and LA in collection of data;
- Refer the names of persistent latecomers and poor school attenders to the Pastoral Lead for follow up and highlight trends in patterns of absence to the Pastoral Lead for investigative follow up;
- Assist in 'on and off rolling' procedures in liaison with the Pastoral Lead;
- Assist in casual admissions & liaise with the Local Authorities in regards to casual admissions and off rolling;
- Complete totals of daily Authorised and Unauthorised Absences and make a record of attendance statistics, using Not In School function on Scholar pack and send this data to the Pastoral Lead.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

- Registers are taken electronically twice a day in class, from 08:45am 9.00 a.m. and at the start of the first afternoon lesson. Morning registration closes in class at 9.00 a.m. Any child arriving after class registration time is marked 'late - L' by the office. If a child arrives between 9.00 and 9.15, they will be marked present by means of the L code and their time of arrival will be noted on the register by the school office. If any child arrives late s/he must report to the office so that a member of the administrative staff/the Pastoral Lead can record the reason for lateness by the child's name. 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) If a child arrives after 9.15, this is recorded as an

unauthorised absence [U], and a note of the time of & reason for their arrival is recorded on the register.

- In situations where lateness becomes 'Unauthorised', this can affect the child's overall attendance and may trigger a referral to the EIT (Education Inclusion Team) within Southwark Council.
- Persistent Unauthorised lateness may constitute grounds for prosecution.
- Every child must have the appropriate electronic mark by his/her name.
- For cases of persistent absences, letters will be sent home by the Pastoral Lead 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 Pastoral Lead 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, 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 school nurse or partner agency, parent/carer consent will be obtained for this. We will work closely with parent/carers & partner agencies, in cases where children have underlying health needs, to ensure that they are supported in school, so that they do not miss out on learning. For children whose health needs require them to remain at home for a significant time period, their learning will be subject to the Remote Learning Policy & Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.
- A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. The T code should be used when GRTS families are known to be travelling for normal occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups. To help ensure continuity of education for GRTS pupils it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school, if possible.

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 and every day after;

- 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 trophies / certificates / prizes, once weekly, in class assemblies;
- Publicly rewarding 100% Attendance once a term and 100% Punctuality each 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 and meeting with parents when necessary to address any barriers to full school attendance / punctuality;
- Promoting good practice in Attendance and Punctuality regularly on the weekly Parents'/Carers' Newsletter.

Pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities or who need additional support.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.

Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided.

COVID 19

Oliver Goldsmith understand the seriousness of the COVID 19 pandemic. whilst we understand that the legislative guidance is that we are now, "living with COVID", we will continue to work with parents / carers and all partner agencies to ensure that all children, who need time off, in relation to COVID 19 expectations/restrictions, have the necessary arrangements in place and that this will be recorded as necessary to their attendance record. These may include information for shielding, quarantines, self-isolation and illness with COVID 19.

We will liaise with Public Health England and the Local Authority, for guidance on how to manage cases of absences, due to COVID 19 and we will work inline with Governmental frameworks and guidance. We will take the necessary precautionary measures to ensure that all children are safe and well and expect parents / carers to do the same; so that children do not miss out on school.

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'
- The school recognises that both staff and families may have relatives who live abroad and that at times, travel out of the UK may be unavoidable. In these circumstances, we expect the following:
- 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 Head Teacher 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 Pastoral Lead is responsible for attendance and will liaise regularly with the Head Teacher and the Local Authority, 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 Pastoral Lead, 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 the Local Authority for the 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 then be expected to attend court in breach of the Education Act 1996.
- The Pastoral Lead 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 Local Authority for issue of a penalty notice.
- The Pastoral Lead records all holiday term time absences. Local Authority 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 and Local Authority. In certain cases, the family will be referred to Local Authority by the Pastoral Lead.

Exceptional circumstances:

The Headteacher will consider authorisation for requests for children to attend family funerals or other exceptional situations. 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. It is the Head Teacher alone who can make the decision regarding exceptional leave but the Head Teacher will discuss the particulars around the leave with the Pastoral Lead and the child's record of attendance over the past years would be taken into account when deciding on permission being granted.

Please note: The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance. Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

National framework for penalty notices

Purpose of penalty notices

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or, in certain cases, at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be used by **all** schools (with the exception of independent schools) where the pupil's absence has been recorded with one or more of the unauthorised codes and that absence(s) constitutes an offence. A penalty notice can be issued to each parent liable for the offence or offences. They should usually only be issued to the parent or parents who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

Penalty notices are intended to prevent the need for court action and should only be used where it is deemed likely to change parental behaviour and support to secure regular attendance has been provided and has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

National threshold when it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice

All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country.

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school

weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

In addition to this, where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of

Session, the code U (arrived in school after registration closed) will be used.

(Relevant regulation 10 (7) and (8)).

The school will actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes. Oliver Goldsmith School will observe a 30-minute window for both morning and after noon registers to be opened each school day.

For clarity the U code (unauthorised late) is classified for statistical purposes as **unauthorised absence**.

Schools and local authorities should consider what suitable forms of support are currently available in school and where necessary, from other services and agencies in the area, once a case for a penalty notice has been identified.

If in these cases, parent(s) fail to work in partnership with the school to resolve attendance issues, **A Notice to Improve** will be issued. This is a final opportunity for parent(s) to engage in support and improve their child's attendance before a penalty notice is issued.

Oliver Goldsmith's Attendance and punctuality policy is a working document that is implemented alongside the following policies:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/444>

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2024/208/contents/made>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

_____ **Chair of Governors** _____ **Date**

_____ **Headteacher** _____ **Date**