

Primary Attendance and Punctuality Policy

PRIMARY ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Aims

Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) is committed to maximising educational opportunities and achievement for all children. For children to gain the best from their time at OGAT, it is vital that they achieve excellent attendance and punctuality. We strive for 100% attendance for all children. OGAT actively promotes good attendance and discourages unjustified absence. OGAT recognises that promoting good attendance and punctuality prepares children for the disciplines of adult working life. This policy applies to all primary academies within Outwood Grange Academies Trust.

Guiding Principles

- Each Academy emphasises that it is the responsibility of everyone in the Academy to improve attendance and punctuality.
- OGAT needs to ensure that all its children access a full-time education which meets their needs and allows all to realise their potential.
- Each Academy will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each child can engage in all opportunities offered.
- Each Academy will work with children and their families to ensure every child attends regularly and punctually.
- Each Academy will challenge the behaviour of those children and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Each Academy has an effective system of communication with parents/carers together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- Each Academy will continue to develop ICT-based attendance recording systems in order to provide accurate information and to use suitable tracking strategies to recognise any trends that can damage good attendance and learning.
- Each Academy will support all aspects of the Education Act 1996 and the Children's Act 2003: 'Every Child Matters' by implementing this policy in a consistent manner.
- Each Academy will have regard to the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.

What you can expect from Outwood Grange Academies Trust:

- We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- We will work closely with parents/carers where child's absence is cause for concern.
- We will support children to achieve good attendance and punctuality.
- We will support children returning to school after prolonged absence.

What Outwood Grange Academies Trust expects from Children:

- To attend regularly and on time
- To be punctual to all lessons

- To ensure that they register for all timetabled lessons and inform the Academy / Reception where appropriate if they are not able to be registered.
- To ensure all messages and notes from parents/carers are taken to the appropriate place (age appropriate)

What Outwood Grange Academies Trust expects from Parents/Carers:

- To ensure their child attends regularly, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- To ensure their child attends every day the Academy is open unless they are too ill to do so.
- To avoid keeping their child away from the Academy for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation (see overleaf).
- To avoid arranging holidays during term time
- To immediately inform the Academy Reception if their child is unable to attend (by 8.25am/8.30am where possible), including the reason for absence and expected date of return.
- If no indication of a return date has been given, parents/carers should contact the Academy on each day of absence.

Registration

- The law requires the register to be taken twice a day – at 8.55am at the start of the morning session and 1pm at the start of the afternoon session.
- Children are expected to arrive by 8.50 in order to be ready for the start of the first lesson at 8.55am.
- Registers close at 9.00am in the morning. After 9 am children will be marked as late, after 9.15 children will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation has been received. For the afternoon session registers close at 1.15pm.
- The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes (see Appendix 1).
- Guidance on applying the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 can be found in 'Advice on School Attendance' published 2012 by the DfE.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the Academy has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the Academy can do this.

- Parents/carers should contact the Academy Reception (by telephone) on the morning of absence (preferably before 8.25/8.30am*) giving a reason and an expected date of return.
- Absence may be authorised for such reasons as:
 - Significant illness
 - unavoidable medical/dental appointments
 - exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement
 - days of religious observance (see Appendix 2)
 - exclusion
 - involvement in a public performance
- Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as:
 - looking after brothers/sisters/unwell parents/carers
 - birthdays, weddings
 - days out, e.g. The Yorkshire Show
 - shopping trips
 - family holidays where permission has not been granted (please note, family holidays during term time will not normally be approved).
 - special occasions, where the Academy does not agree that the absence should be granted.

- Medical/dental and other appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, children should, where practically possible, come to school before the appointment, sign out and return to school after the appointment. Should the academy require evidence of a medical appointment this will be requested. If a child isn't present for registration due to a medical appointment but is present for the majority of the session a code can be amended to mark the child as present for the session.
- Following an explanation from parents/carers regarding a child's absence, the Academy will decide whether or not it accepts the explanation and authorise/unauthorise accordingly.
- Absence which hasn't been explained will remain as unauthorised.
- Parents/carers should not take their children out of school for days out, to attend sporting events, etc.

How we Respond to Absence/Lateness

- If a child's is absent at morning registration without contact from a parent/carer to explain the absence, the Academy will contact parents/carers. We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will always do our best to contact parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of their child's absence. Contact will be via text message / phone which will attempt to text / phone mobile numbers for the priority contact number. Parents/carers are able to respond directly upon receiving this call. Alternatively, where a message has been left by the automated service, a parent should contact the Academy Reception. The academy asks that parents/carers ensure that the academy has the most up to contact details at all times including at least one landline contact number.
- Where a child's absence is cause for concern, the Academy will write to parents/carers and/or invite the parents/carers into school or visit parents/carers at home.
- Where no sustained improvement in attendance is demonstrated despite intervention, the Fast Track to Attendance process will be followed (Appendix 3). Fixed Penalty notices may be issued in line with each relevant Local Authority's Code of Conduct.

Persistent Absence

A child becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 15% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason and results in the child having an attendance figure of 85% or less. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any child whose attendance has reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention. Intervention may be via:

- An action plan to improve attendance will be created which may involve a CAF and referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant Academy staff and parents/carers.
- Where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the Academy, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed.

Persistent Absence data is communicated to the relevant Local Authority and Department for Education via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

Any absence interrupts the continuity of child's learning. Government Legislation now states that only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence, please refer to the Department for Education for the latest guidance. Parents/carers are strongly urged not to take children out of school for holidays during term time.

Even where the circumstances are considered exceptional, please be aware that:

- Your request will not be authorised during exam periods (such as May for both Key Stage 1 and 2).
- Your request will not be authorised during the month of September or October.

- Your request will not be authorised for any child in Year 6.
- Your request will not be authorised if your child's attendance is below the respective academy's attendance target for the 12 months prior to application.
- Your request will not be authorised if your child has unauthorised absences.
- Your request will not be authorised where a previous holiday has been taken.

It is expected that a Request Form is submitted to the Academy Reception at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed absence. All factors that need to be considered must be stated on the request form. The Academy has the right to serve a Fixed Penalty Notice on parents/carers who insist on taking their children out of school without authorisation. Fixed Penalties require **each parent to pay a fine of £60 per child** if paid within 21 days or **£120** if paid after 21 days but within 28 days (with effect from September 2015). Failure to pay within the specified timescale could result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure regular school attendance. This legislation also applies to any child taking leave of absence without prior notification to the Academy.

Re-integration following Long-term Absence

Where a child has been absent for a prolonged period of time, perhaps due to illness, the Academy will:

- Welcome the child back to the Academy and value their return
- Provide support for the child in consultation with parents/carers to enable a successful return to the Academy.
- Ensure that all relevant staff are informed of the circumstances.
- Work with other agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a successful outcome.
- Consider a personalised programme of return if appropriate
- Nominate a key member of staff to monitor and review the child's return.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

- Children are regularly informed of their attendance levels and, if appropriate, how they can improve.
- Where appropriate, children whose attendance falls below the appropriate target for each academy will be set a target for improvement and progress towards these targets will be regularly reviewed.
- Good and improved attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded.
- Children, parents/carers and staff are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the Academy Attendance Office at any time to discuss their child's attendance.
- Regular meetings will be held with the appropriate members of staff/external agencies to identify and support those children whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Children who have been absent for extended periods of time will be supported as appropriate to re-integrate back into the Academy.
- Children' attendance will be reported six times a year in line with Praising Stars©

Attendance Data and Targets

- Each academy will set its own attendance target, in line with National attendance figures, please refer to each individual academy for the appropriate figure.
- The target for all children is to strive for 100% attendance. Only by achieving full attendance can children expect to achieve their full potential.
- Attendance data will be collected and analysed and used to inform the Academy's attendance practices and interventions.
- Individual child data will be analysed and monitored to enable early intervention.
- Attendance data is provided on a termly basis to the Local Academy Council.
- Attendance data and persistent absence data is communicated to the Local Authority and is published via Raise Online.

- Each academy will use a Cumulative Attendance Tracker to monitor attendance on a weekly basis.

Statutory Requirements, the Law and the Local Authority

- Registers are legal documents; regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.
- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers are responsible to ensure their child receives a suitable education.
- Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a parent who fails to ensure their child attends the school at which they are registered, is guilty of an offence.
- The Academy works together with the relevant Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibility. There are a range of legal sanctions that may be imposed for dealing with unauthorised absence: Fixed Penalty Notices, Parenting Contracts and Orders, Education Supervision Orders or referral to the Magistrates Court which can recommend fines (up to £2500) or up to 3 months in prison.
- All sanctions are used to improve attendance and punctuality and reduce absence.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities:

All members of the Academy have a role to play in improving attendance and reducing absence.

Class teachers

- Welcome and value the attendance of all children to school.
- Will ensure all children are accurately registered.
- Will ensure that children know the register is being taken.
- Will identify a child's absence to lessons and take appropriate action.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will discuss absence and attendance weekly with children.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will work with identified children, setting targets to improve attendance and monitoring progress towards those targets.
- Will ensure that all absence notes or verbal messages are sent to the Attendance Office.
- Discuss attendance with parents/carers at Parent evenings.

Learning Mentor (where appointed in an Academy)

- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly.
- Will discuss absence and attendance concerns with children and set targets for improvement.
- Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified.
- Will support children to improve their attendance.
- Will promote attendance through assemblies
- Will work with other members of staff to share information and support children and their parents/carers to improve attendance

Office Staff / Reception

- Will monitor registration on a daily basis.
- Will receive calls and messages from parents/carers regarding a child's absence.
- Will contact parents/carers regarding a child's absence.
- Will produce Attendance reports on a half termly basis.
- Will identify absence trends or concerns and raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers and liaise with relevant members of staff.

The Principal and Senior Leaders, including the Local Academy Council

- Will take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the Academy, including improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.
- Will ensure that the Academy attendance policy is implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Will ensure the whole Academy ethos promotes excellence in attendance and punctuality.

- Report to the Local Academy Council on attendance
- Monitor the curriculum to develop ways of improving the provision of educational experience.
- Utilise attendance data to inform strategic planning

This Policy will be reviewed every year. Next review due:

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By: Lee Wilson Associate Executive Principal

APPENDIX I

DfE ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS (adopted September 2006, and amended Feb 2013)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING	FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES
/	Present (AM)	Present	
\	Present (PM)	Present	
B	Off-site Educational Activity	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence	
D	Dual Registered – at another educational establishment	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence	
F	Extended family holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence	
G	Family holiday (NOT authorised by the school <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence	
H	Family holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence	
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence	
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence	
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence	
P	Approved supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	
S	Study leave	Authorised absence	
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Authorised absence	
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances	
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (Enforced Closure)	Not counted in possible attendances	
Z	Pupil not yet on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances	
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Not counted in possible attendances	

APPENDIX 2

Religious Observance

Authorised absence may be granted for religious observance, for example, Eid. The Department for Education definition is as follows:

“Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.”

If the religious body has not set the day apart, there is no requirement for the Academy to approve the absence or grant leave of absence.

Individual religions and their religious observance are too numerous to detail in this document.

Parents should contact the Academy to request leave of absence for all religious observance.

APPENDIX 3 – Fast Track to Attendance Academy Flow Chart

The following process outlines how the Fast Track process should be followed and what meetings/letters should be used at each stage.

