



## Oakridge Primary School

### Attendance Policy

<b>Adopted:</b>	October 2025
<b>Chair of Health and Safety:</b>	Mrs K Lincoln
<b>Next review date:</b>	October 2026

**Your child's Individual School Attendance Target is at least 96.5% (with the aspiration of full attendance) - the higher the better!**

#### Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders settle into secondary school more easily.
- Improved attendance also supports pupils' wellbeing, confidence, and wider life chances, as set out in the Department for Education's *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (2024).

#### Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances, such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school in line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

*\*Throughout this policy any reference to 'parent/s' refers to all natural parents, whether they are married or not, any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person and any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child.)*



### **Accessibility of this School Attendance Policy**

This attendance policy is available on our school website. A hard copy is also available to parents within school. The policy may also be emailed to parents if requested or provided in alternative formats on request, to ensure accessibility for all families.

Parents will be sent this attendance policy when pupils initially join the school (including if a pupil starts mid-year). Parents will also be reminded of the policy at the beginning of each school year and whenever it is updated.

The Local Authority will be provided with a copy of our Attendance Policy if required in relation to their statutory legal role for school attendance. A copy will also be available for Ofsted and other external partners on request.

### **Principles:**

We strive to achieve an effective whole school culture of high attendance and punctuality underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities.

For children on the school roll, regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise their educational opportunities and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Promoting excellent attendance is a shared responsibility across pupils, parents, staff, governors and external partners. We aim for positive outcomes for all our pupils.

This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other statutory policies including safeguarding, parental responsibility measures, suspensions and exclusions, alternative provision, children missing education and supporting pupils with medical conditions at school.

In line with the Equality Act 2010, we will always consider the individual needs of pupils and families, particularly those with SEND, pupils with a social worker and disadvantaged pupils, ensuring that attendance support is inclusive and equitable.

### **School Responsibilities:**

- We will set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all our pupils. Good school attendance is integral to a child's attainment, wellbeing and wider development.
- We will share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Where attendance or punctuality is a concern, we will work with parents to supportively address any barriers to regular attendance and / or punctuality by arranging a meeting. Together with families, we will co-create an attendance support

plan, which may include reasonable adjustments, early help referrals, or a parental contract, with all support documented. We can offer emotional coaching through our Hope training as well as advice and voluntary referral to other supportive agencies such as: Early Help for families from the Local Authority, the School Nurse, Child and Mental Health Service and other Children's services.

- We will regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place. This includes analysis of SEND pupils, those with a social worker and disadvantaged pupils.
- We will follow up unexplained absences by phone calls, texts and where necessary home visits. (see section on First Day Contact below)
- We will remind parents of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality in our school newsletter as well as during our meet the teacher sessions. We will also celebrate improvements in attendance to encourage positive engagement.
- We will support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable absence to build the pupil's confidence and bridge gaps in learning. This may include phased returns, academic catch-up and pastoral check-ins.
- We will publish our attendance rate each week in the school newsletter.
- If we continue to have concerns over your child's attendance or punctuality we may make a referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Worker. These officers may visit you at home to investigate the reasons for your child's poor attendance if support and earlier interventions have not led to improvement.

#### **Parents' Responsibilities:**

- Ensure your child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Absence should only happen if your child is significantly ill and therefore unfit to attend school, or if there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty/period of difficulty.
- Notify school of your child's absence by 8:55am through parentmail, giving a reason for the absence as well as a timescale for their likely return. After a three- day absence, parents should contact the school again with an update via parentmail. If there is no contact from a child's parent, this will be marked as an unauthorised absence. This is part of our safeguarding procedures, see below for more details.
- Where possible arrange all non-emergency medical / dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays. Where this is unavoidable during the school day, pupils should attend school before/after the appointment where possible.
- Make sure that you provide school with a minimum of 2, up to date, emergency contact numbers for your child.
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect your child's attendance
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep.
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.



- Avoid booking holidays during term time. Requests will only be authorised in genuinely exceptional circumstances, in line with DfE guidance.
- If a parent or a pupil needs to speak to a member of staff regarding attendance, this should be their class teacher in the first instance. (Contact via phone or our contactus email.) If more detailed support regarding attendance is required, please contact the Headteacher. Parents are encouraged to engage with the school at the earliest stage if difficulties arise, so that supportive solutions can be found together.

### **First day contact systems - Safeguarding**

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

As a parent you can help us by:

- Ensuring your child attends school regularly. Absence should only happen when your child is significantly ill and therefore unfit to attend school, or if there is an unavoidable/unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing a difficulty/period of difficulty.
- Parent/carers must notify our school that a child is absent, providing the school with a reason for the absence. This should be done on day one of an absence by parentmail.
- If a child is ill or has an appointment then it is the responsibility of the child's parent to inform the school by 8:55am. This can be done through the parent mail app. After a three-day absence parents should contact the school again with an update via parentmail. If there is no contact from a child's parent, this will be marked as unauthorised.
- Where the school does not receive information about child's absence from a parent, the school will text parents by 9:30 to ascertain the reasons for absence. If there is no response within 15 minutes then a phone call will be made directly to the parent / guardian and other emergency contacts. If there is still no response then the school safeguarding lead will be informed, which may result in a home visit or referral to Staffordshire Children's Support and Advice Service (or other appropriate safeguarding partners). Please be aware that if we are unable to establish the reason for your child's absence from school, this is considered a safeguarding matter regarding your child which we, as a school, have to act upon.
- If we fail to receive a response (and the absence remains unexplained) and your child has a social worker, we will inform the social worker of the concern.
- If your child does not have a social worker but we are concerned that we have not heard from the parent, then further welfare procedures may occur, such as a home visit, a referral to Staffordshire Children's Support and Advice Service, (social services) or a referral to the Police.

- Any unexplained absences will be marked as unauthorised absence. It is unauthorised absences that are the evidence for a Penalty Notice or prosecution for irregular attendance.

### Punctuality

It is important to be on time for the first part of the school day as learning begins at 8:45am. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for your child. They can also result in lost learning time and affect attendance records.

School starts at **8.45am** and finishes at **3.15pm**. Morning registration closes at 9:05am; arrivals after this time are recorded as unauthorised (U code).

<b>Morning Registration starts at</b>	<b>8.45am</b>	<b>Your child is late if they are not in school by 8.55am</b>	<b>L code</b>
<b>Morning registers close at</b>	<b>9.05am</b>	<b>Your child is unauthorised late if they arrive at 9.05am or later.</b>	<b>U code</b>
<b>Afternoon Registration starts at</b>		<b>Following the lunch break your child is late if they are not in school within 5 minutes of the lunchtime ending</b>	<b>L code</b>
<b>Afternoon registers close at</b>		<b>Your child is unauthorised late if they arrive 10 minutes later.</b>	<b>U code</b>

All lateness is recorded daily and monitored. Persistent lateness will be followed up with parents to identify and address any barriers.

If your child is persistently late you will be informed of the concern initially via letter. The option of speaking with the school about any barriers to punctuality and any support required will be offered. If your child receives 5 late codes in a half term then we will write to parents to inform you of our concerns over your child's late arrival. If it continues we will send another letter before setting up a meeting to discuss the situation with you and to find solutions to support you.

All lateness is recorded daily. The time of arrival and the reason for lateness, if known, will also be recorded. This information can be made available to the courts and to the Local Authority in the form of a report, should a Penalty Notice or prosecution be the outcome of repeated lateness after the registers have closed.



Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school may be required to share these concerns with other agencies. Persistent late collection may also trigger a referral to safeguarding services, as failure to collect a child on time can place them at risk.

### **Supporting and encouraging your child's school attendance.**

All children can sometimes be reluctant to attend school; however, it is never good to cover up their absence or to give in to the pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents should be aware that permitting absence from school without a valid reason may be recorded as unauthorised, which could lead to legal consequences.

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. We are committed to listening to families, identifying barriers and providing supportive strategies (e.g. pastoral support, attendance plans and referrals to Early Help) to help pupils attend regularly.

### **What is good attendance and how will parents and pupils be aware of this?**

We would like all of our pupils to achieve the highest possible attendance, aiming for 96.5% or above, with the aspiration of full attendance where circumstances allow.

High attendance is directly linked to children's learning, progress, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Pupils who attend well achieve better academically and socially, and are better prepared for their next stage of education.

We will make parents and pupils aware of attendance expectations through regular updates in newsletters, Parents' Evenings and reports, and by celebrating good and improving attendance in assemblies and newsletters.

## **PERSISTENT ABSENCE AND SEVERE ABSENCE**

### **Persistent Absence (PA):**

A pupil becomes identified as having persistent absence when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. This is defined by the Department for Education. Absence at this level (90% or below) is a concern because of the negative impact on a child's education and we need parents full support and co-operation to tackle this. 10% absence is equivalent to 1 day or more (of absence) per fortnight across a full school year, (this is around 95 hours or more of missed learning.)

### **Severe Absence**

This is defined by the Department of Education as those missing 50% or more of their education. (This is around 475 hours or more of missed learning.) School will work closely with families in this situation as a priority for intensive support. If support is not accessed or



engaged with and absence continues, the school will escalate concerns to safeguarding partners in line with statutory guidance.

The Department for Education defines:

- Persistent Absence (PA): attendance below 90% (equivalent to 1 day off every 2 weeks).
- Severe Absence: attendance below 50% (missing half the school year).

At Oakridge, we also use the following categories (matching our Insight Tracking system) to help families clearly understand their child's attendance:

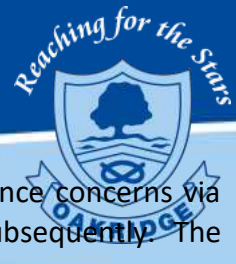
- Excellent attendance (99%+)  
Pupils rarely miss any school time, giving them the very best chance of success.
- Good attendance (95–99%)  
Only a small amount of learning missed; pupils have a good chance of strong progress.
- At risk of persistent absence (90–95%)  
Equivalent to missing 5–10% of sessions. Pupils are at risk of falling behind.
- Persistently absent (below 90%) – DfE threshold  
Equivalent to missing one day every fortnight. Significant concern requiring support.
- Severely absent (below 50%) – DfE threshold  
Missing half or more of school. Serious safeguarding concern requiring intensive support.

### **What is the school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence?**

Regular data analysis ensures that we act upon any incidents of absence concerns at the time of occurrence, so the promotion of school attendance is timely and personalised.

School attendance is monitored on a weekly, half termly and termly basis in order to address any attendance matters. We aim to reduce our persistent and severe absence by working closely with parents and pupils to identify barriers to attendance early and agree support strategies together. This is recorded on a child's welfare record. If there are any barriers to school attendance we will consider how we can support families to overcome these. Other support agencies can also be offered. Within school we consider whole school strategies to enhance school attendance as well as individual work with families.

- Each week in the school newsletter school attendance will be published
- Parents will be informed of their child's school attendance on a regular basis via Parents evenings and in your child's annual report.
- At each parents evening we will provide you with your child's individual attendance percentage.
- We will also celebrate improved attendance and recognise positive progress; not only highlight concerns.



We formally monitor children's attendance and will raise any attendance concerns via letters to parents at the end of the first half term and each half term subsequently. The school follows the escalation procedure as outlined below.

#### **After the first 4 weeks of the school year**

Any child whose attendance has already fallen below 90% is categorised as persistently absent. Parents will receive a first letter notifying them of this and offering support (Appendix A).

#### **At the end of the first half term:**

If a child's attendance has fallen below 90%, this is categorised as persistently absent. Parents will receive a first letter notifying them of this and offering support (Appendix A).

If at this point, a child who has previously received a letter for attendance below 90% continues to be persistently absent at this point, parents will receive a second letter (Appendix B). At this stage, school will also make a supportive phone call or offer an informal meeting to discuss barriers and how we can help.

#### **End of Autumn Term (December)**

If attendance remains below 90% by the end of the term, parents will be invited to a formal attendance meeting with the Headteacher. At this meeting:

- A personalised support plan will be agreed.
- Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence for future absences. Failure to provide evidence when requested may result in absences being recorded as unauthorised.
- A list of suitable evidence will be provided (Appendix C).

#### **Spring Term (ongoing)**

If attendance continues to cause concern despite support and agreed plans, the school may categorise further absences without medical evidence as unauthorised. If a pupil has twenty unauthorised absences (equivalent to ten school days) within a twelve-week period, the Local Authority will be contacted.

If attempts to improve attendance fail, the Local Authority may issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents (under the Education Act 1996 s444 / s4441a) or to seek an Education Supervision Order for the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

#### **Ongoing each Half Term**

At the end of each term, where there is a cause for concern (Attendance is between 90% and 93%) we will contact parents to notify them that their child's attendance is close to being seen as persistently absent. (Appendix D)

If parents have any queries regarding their child's attendance, or to request support, please contact the child's class teacher to discuss this further. Where additional support is required, the matter will be escalated to the Headteacher so that an attendance support plan can be put in place.

### **Exceptional Leave- requesting a Holiday or leave of absence during term time.**

We are always concerned if a pupil misses school as a result of term time leave. There is no entitlement to time off during term time. Leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Head teacher, in accordance with the DFE guidance.

It is our policy:

- Only in an exceptional circumstance will term time leave be allowed. Each request is considered individually.
- Alongside your request for leave for 'exceptional' circumstances it is parents/carers responsibility to provide all the necessary information and proof of the exceptional circumstance to enable the Headteacher to make an informed decision. Without the necessary proof and documentation to support the request for exceptional circumstances absence, the request will be automatically refused. The form is available on the school website.
- Parents/Carers wishing to apply for a leave of absence need to fill in an application form well in advance (with a **minimum of 2 weeks' notice** unless there is a family emergency) and **before booking tickets or making travel arrangements**. The Headteacher will advise you of their decision to authorise or unauthorise the absence in writing - this may require you to attend a meeting to discuss this.
- Please note the cheaper cost of holidays in term time is **not** an acceptable reason for an application.
- Please be aware that a Headteacher should not authorise a leave of absence after the event, if a parent failed to inform the school. If school become suspicious over an absence, then further investigations may occur to ensure the safeguarding of your child.
- If your request for leave is granted under exceptional circumstances but your child does not return to school at the time he/she is expected (i.e. the date following the leave of absence) and no information is available to explain or justify the continued absence, this continued absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Please remember that absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his/her learning. Valuable learning time is lost. A good understanding of the work and good progress can only take place when the child is in the classroom regularly and on time.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and you may be liable for a penalty notice fine (issued by the Local Authority.) (See below details). If you choose not to pay the fine you may face prosecution if the absence meets the criteria set out in the Local Authority's Code of Conduct.



You have the right to make representations to the Chair of Governors if you feel the Head teacher's decision is unjust, however the final decision lies with the Head teacher regarding the decision to authorise and the Local Authority regarding the Penalty Notice process.

### **Medical / Dental / Illness Absences**

Where possible, the school encourages medical appointments to be taken out of school hours. If a medical appointment has to occur during school time, we request that the minimal amount of time out of school is taken and where possible the child should register in school before and after the appointment.

If your child is unfit for school for medical reasons that are re-occurring, we recommend that a parent/carer seeks advice from their doctor about how long to keep your child off school. The school may request medical evidence (such as appointment cards, prescriptions, or fit notes) to authorise repeated or prolonged absences, in line with DfE guidance.

### **Safeguarding procedures relating to school attendance.**

Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to contact the parent/child or where there are safeguarding concerns about the absence to the Local Authority Safeguarding team / Education Welfare Worker.

Our first day contact procedures ensure that by contacting parents to establish the reason for your child's absence, parents are made aware that the child is absent from school and school can confirm with the parent that the child is safe.

If we as a school do not receive communication from a parent regarding their child's absence, and if we as a school are unsuccessful in contacting the parent, we will consider this to be a safeguarding concern. This is why our system of requesting parents contact our school on each day of absence, prior to 8:55am is of the paramount importance.

Our school will also encourage parents to provide a minimum of two emergency contact details for their child, to the school.

The school may also involve the Local Authority Safeguarding Team/ Local Support Team when absences are irregular or if there are punctuality issues of concern.

If your child has a social worker, our school will also inform the social worker direct if your child has any unexplained absences from school

### **How does the school access wider support services to support in removing the barriers to attendance?**

We will ensure we remain up to date with the support agencies available to us within our locality. We will ensure that families are made aware of these voluntary options, such as Early Help, School Nurse, CAMHS etc. and that we are clear within school how to refer.



### **When will the Local Authority become involved?**

The Local Authority can support families via Early Help, which is a voluntary support option. If support is not being accessed and there is a continued concern, then the statutory options of a Penalty Notice or prosecution for irregular attendance will be considered. This is accessed by a referral from schools.

### **PENALTY NOTICES AND PROSECUTION FOR IRREGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

Fixed Penalty Notices and /or prosecution for irregular school attendance will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g. for an unauthorised holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

The Local Authority Fixed Penalty Protocol will be used as a parental measure to improve pupil attendance in accordance with DfE statutory guidance: Parental Responsibility Measures for School Attendance (most recently updated 2020) and the Staffordshire County Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (July 2024).

### **Referral to the Local Authority Education Welfare Worker**

If school attendance difficulties cannot be improved, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker from the Local Authority. If attempts to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents (under the Education Act 1996 s444 / s4441a) or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and / or 3 months imprisonment.

### **Penalty Notices**

Penalty Notices are fines, **only issued by the Local Authority** for a child's unauthorised absence from school. They are not issued by the school. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence.

- First offence: £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- Second offence (same parent, same child, within 3 years): £160 (no early payment reduction).
- Third offence: No further Penalty Notices will be issued. The case proceeds directly to court.
- The payment must be paid direct to the Local Authority.
- There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice.
- If the penalty notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the Local Authority will prosecute for the original offence, unless there are grounds to withdraw the notice.



## **Types of Penalty Notices (Staffordshire County Council, July 2024):**

### **1. Unauthorised Absence**

A Penalty Notice may be issued after 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-week period. The Local Authority reserves the right to issue earlier if circumstances warrant.

### **2. Leave of Absence (Holiday in Term Time)**

A Penalty Notice may be issued for unauthorised leave during term time. Term-time leave can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances by the Headteacher.

### **3. Persistent Absence**

If a child meets the minimum criteria of 20 unauthorised sessions (10 school days) over a 12-week period, the school can request either a Penalty Notice or prosecution referral. Absences do not need to be consecutive.

### **4. Persistent Lateness**

Defined as arriving after the register has closed (U codes) for 10 sessions within a 10-week period.

### **5. Exclusion**

A Penalty Notice can be issued where a child is excluded but seen in a public place during school hours within the first 5 days of the exclusion.

**Schools follow the Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices (July 2024). Details are available at:**

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/Education-welfare/Attendance.aspx>

**The Local Authority will continue to monitor all school attendance and take appropriate action for absences during term time, both to support Head teachers in their role and in challenging the small minority of parents that choose to disregard the law.**

### **EQUALITY ACT 2010 / UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD**

Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and high attendance expectations are set for all our pupils, this attendance policy does take into account that certain pupils and pupil cohorts will have specific needs. This policy will be applied fairly and consistently but we will always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

### **The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:**

Regular school attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.



## The Department for Education highlights that:

At Key Stage 2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared with 3.5% for pupils meeting the expected standard, and just 2.7% for those achieving the higher standard.

(DfE, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, August 2024)

At Key Stage 4, pupils not achieving grade 9–4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared with 5.2% for those achieving grade 4, and 3.7% for those achieving grades 9–5.

(DfE, Working Together to Improve School Attendance, August 2024)

These figures underline how even small differences in attendance can have a substantial impact on achievement, reinforcing our commitment to setting ambitious yet equitable attendance expectations and supporting all pupils to meet them.

### **PUPILS MISSING IN EDUCATION / LEAVING SCHOOL**

In the situation of our school being aware that a child is missing in education, we will follow DfE statutory guidance on Children Missing Education (2016, updated) alongside Staffordshire Local Authority procedures.

This will involve our school making reasonable enquiries for the whereabouts of the pupil during the first 10 days of absence, followed by the Local Authority making reasonable enquiries for the following 10 days. If the whereabouts of the child still cannot be ascertained, then the child will be taken off the school roll, along with a referral to the Local Authority Children Missing in Education officer.

In order to avoid the above situation, we request that parents / carers inform school in writing if your child will be leaving. We will require information such as the date of moving, new address, new school, and new contact details. This enables a smooth transition and ensures that a child is not recorded as missing education.

### **TAKING A PUPIL OFF THE SCHOOL ROLL**

Schools must inform their Local Authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register. These off-roll regulations are statutory. We will ensure that the Local Authority will be informed via the OR.1 form, following the Local Authority guidance.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;

- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.  
*(Please see further guidance from the Local Authority for the full details of De-registration.)*

### **School Registers are a legal document:**

School registers are a legal document and we are required to take the attendance register twice a day. This is coded to show whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off site or absent.

If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

- Authorised Absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.
- Unauthorised Absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This can include for example: waiting for a delivery, going for a family day out, children who arrive at school after the registers have closed with no exceptional circumstances, going shopping or getting a haircut, because it is your child's birthday, term time holiday/cheap flights, parent's illness.

Where there is no explanation for an absence or where the explanation or reason for the absence is considered unsatisfactory, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**.

### **Admission Register**

This is a legal document which records the date each child joined the school, their personal details, the details of their parents, and the name of their previous school.

All schools must keep a record of attendance register entries and their admission register for at least 3 years. Schools must also inform their Local Authority of any pupil who is to be deleted from the admission register, particularly where this occurs at a non-standard transition point.

### **Elective Home Education:**

If the school receive written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child we will inform the Local Authority's Elective Home Education team and remove the child's name from the admission register in line with statutory requirements.

Whilst we will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to home educate their child, neither will we seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.



### **Attendance data and targets:**

The school will regularly review attendance data to inform practice and address attendance concerns. The following data will be used:

1. Daily/weekly analysis, including lists of unexplained absences, unauthorised absences, broken week reports and attendance levels by class and for the whole school.
2. Historical attendance, persistent absence, and severe absence figures will be compared with current data. The school will use this information to set attendance and persistent absence targets. National and Local Authority data, as well as data from similar schools locally, will also be used for comparison. Targets will be realistic but ambitious.
3. Attendance data will also be analysed by group (e.g. vulnerable pupils, disadvantaged pupils, SEND, ethnicity, sex, and year group/class), as well as by attendance code. This analysis will be used to identify cohorts with low attendance or high levels of particular codes, so that strategies can be targeted appropriately. For example, if girls' attendance is lower than boys', the school will investigate the reasons and consider supportive strategies to improve it.

Our attendance figures are published publicly and our Ofsted report is also available for parents to view.

### **REPORTING TO GOVERNORS**

Governors will receive a termly Head teacher's report on attendance and punctuality.

This will include:

- attendance and punctuality comparative data
- information on school attendance and punctuality strategies currently undertaken within school
- information on how the barriers to school attendance are being addressed
- and the work with other agencies – including statutory school attendance work.

The school Attendance Policy will also be reviewed with the school governors.

### **Useful Contacts and School Staff Responsible for Attendance Matters:**

School Attendance Officer: Mrs K Brogan

Senior Leader responsible for the strategic approach to school attendance is Mr Wylde

Teacher in charge of attendance: Miss Homer

Staffordshire Children's Support and Advice Service: 0800 1313126



## Appendix A – Initial Concern (After 4 Weeks/October Half Term)

Oakridge Primary School  
Silvester Way

Stafford

ST17 0PR

Telephone: 01785 337300

[www.oakridge.staffs.sch.uk](http://www.oakridge.staffs.sch.uk)

17 November 2025

**Child's name ~ Class**

Dear Parents/Guardian

ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We know how much every day at school matters, and we want to work together with you to make sure your child is able to get the very best from their time at Oakridge. At this stage in the year, your child's attendance has fallen below 90%. This means that they are classed as having *persistent absence* under Department for Education guidance, and schools are required to contact parents when this happens.

[DELETE AS APPROPRIATE] We are only four weeks into the school year. This means that just 2 days of absence so far can bring a child's attendance below 90%. It shows how quickly percentages can fall in the early weeks of term.

We completely understand that there may be genuine reasons why children are absent, and we know how challenging it can sometimes be to manage illness, family situations, and other unexpected events. Our aim is not to worry you, but to keep you informed and to offer support if there is anything we can do to help. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you would like to talk through any difficulties that may be affecting your child's attendance.

Every day in school gives your child a chance to learn, to build friendships, and to grow in confidence. By working together, we can make sure your child has the best possible opportunity to reach their full potential and make the most of all the experiences school has to offer.

Thank you for your support in this important matter.

Yours sincerely,

L Wylde

Headteacher



## Appendix B

Oakridge Primary School  
Silvester Way  
Stafford  
ST17 0PR  
Telephone: 01785 337300  
[www.oakridge.staffs.sch.uk](http://www.oakridge.staffs.sch.uk)

Dear Parent/Guardian

**Re: Child Name:**

We have noticed that your child <forename>'s attendance is still below 90%. This means they are classed as having persistent absence under Department for Education guidance.

**Persistent Absence (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level (90% or below) has a significant impact on a child's education, and we need your full support and co-operation to address this. 10% absence is equivalent to 1 day or more (of absence) per fortnight across a full school year, (this is around 95 hours or more of missed learning).

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school can have an impact on learning. It is also a legal requirement for children of compulsory school age to attend school regularly.

**The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:**

Regular school attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

**The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.**

**At KS2**, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%).

We will continue to monitor «forename»'s attendance and I look forward to seeing an improvement. If the absence is due to a medical reason please ensure that we have been informed so appropriate support can be put in place.

If there are any particular circumstances that the school may not be aware of which is having an influence on «forename» attending school regularly or if you are concerned about your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact school so that we can work with you to support your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Mr L Wylde

## Appendix C



Oakridge Primary School  
Silvester Way  
Stafford  
ST17 0PR  
Telephone: 01785 337300  
[www.oakridge.staffs.sch.uk](http://www.oakridge.staffs.sch.uk)

Dear Parent

**Re: (student name) - Absences from school.**

Following on from our attendance meeting today, I am writing to confirm the next steps regarding <forename>'s attendance since the start of this academic year.

Although we have received notifications regarding absences, in line with our Attendance Policy we will now require supporting medical evidence for any future absences in order to authorise them. This is because <forename>'s attendance is below 90% and therefore classed as persistent absence.

Our Attendance Policy states that where persistent absence continues despite support, parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the Headteacher. At this stage, medical evidence may be requested to authorise absences. Failure to provide evidence when requested may result in absences being recorded as unauthorised.

Medical evidence for school absence can take the form of:

- Medical appointment card confirming attendance
- Medical appointment letter
- Copy of prescription showing name and date
- Prescribed medication with pharmacist label showing name and date
- Unfit for school declaration from GP/consultant

If a child accumulates 20 or more unauthorised sessions (equivalent to 10 school days) within a 12-week period, the school is required to make a referral to Staffordshire County Council. This may result in a Notice to Improve being issued, followed by a Penalty Notice if attendance does not improve.

The Penalty Notice currently carries a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid within 28 days.

If a Penalty Notice is not paid, this may result in court proceedings for the offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance (Education Act 1996, section 444). On conviction, the penalty can be a fine of up to £2,500 and/or up to 3 months' imprisonment.

I am sure you will do your utmost to ensure your child is not absent from school unnecessarily. If there is any support that we can provide, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mr L Wylde



## Appendix D

Dear Parent

Regular attendance is extremely important as missing school affects learning, wellbeing and future opportunities. It is also a legal requirement for children of compulsory school age to attend school regularly.

Each half term in accordance with our school policy we analyse all-pupils' attendance. We are writing to inform you that <forename>'s attendance since September is [XX]%. This is just above the Department for Education's definition of persistent absence (attendance below 90%).

We want to work with you to ensure <forename>'s attendance improves further. If you feel there are barriers affecting attendance, please contact school so that we can offer support.

### **Persistent Absence (PA):**

A pupil is identified as persistently absent when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level (90% or below) has a significant negative impact on a child's education, and we need parents' full support and co-operation to address it. 10% absence is equivalent to 1 day or more (of absence) per fortnight across a full school year, (this is around 95 hours or more of missed learning.)

Yours sincerely

Mr L Wylde