Oasis Academy Putney

Localised Attendance Policy

1. Aims

Oasis Academy Putney (OAP) is committed to developing the character and competence of every student and believes that all students should receive an exceptional education. To attain this level of education children and young people must have high levels of attendance. OAP aims to ensure that attendance of pupils, both in the primary and secondary phase, is at least in line with the national average. For students and young people to reach their full potential they should rarely miss a day at school. Attendance is also a safeguarding matter. Poor attendance may be an indicator that a pupils' welfare is at risk. Weak attendance practice can risk pupils' wellbeing. Academies must ensure that effective attendance practice is understood by all staff and is closely linked with effective safeguarding practice.

OAP has a robust, clear strategy in place for:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy complies with the Trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Academy procedures

3.1 Attendance register

OAP is required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- **The original entry**
- **The amended entry**
- **The reason for the amendment**
- **The date on which the amendment was made**
- **The name and position of the person** who made the amendment

See Appendix A for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Each Academy will have a localised attendance policy that includes details including:

- Student's expected arrival time in the Academy
- The time that the register for the first session will be taken and will be kept open until.
- The time that the register for the second session will be taken after the lunch break

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents and carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8:45am or as soon as practically possible.

Absence due to illness will usually be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

OAP will ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If OAP is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

We encourage parents and carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. We also encourage parents and carers to ensure that pupils are in the Academy to be marked as attending, before they leave for a medical or dental appointment.

Students are expected to catch-up with any work missed through absence. Teachers will help students achieve this.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance by completing a leave of absence form two weeks in advance of the leave required.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

The school day runs from 9:00am until 3.30pm.

The classrooms doors open at 8.55am and the gate will be locked at 9.05am.

A pupil who arrives after this time but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L code).

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed (9.30am) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate Code (U code). This code shows that the pupil is on the premises but this does not count as a present mark and it will mean that the pupil has an unauthorised absence. A U code can result in a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning Letter and the pupil's attendance will be monitored closely by the Attendance Officer and the Principal.

Pupils who accrue three or more occasions of lateness will receive a warning letter. Should their lateness continue, then this will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

3.5 Following up absence

We will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. Absences should be reported before the start of the school day, either by telephoning the office from 08.45am or emailing the school.

3.6 Children unexpectedly absent

If a child is unexpectedly absent all efforts must be made to assure their whereabouts and welfare as quickly as possible. Often this will be achieved via a call home but sometimes this may require a home visit that confirms the child's whereabouts. Principals must not accept anything short of a definitive confirmation of the child's whereabouts. The DfE guidance, 'Keeping children safe in education' has been updated from September 2018 as follows: 'Where reasonably possible, schools and colleges should hold more than one emergency contact number for each pupil or student. This goes beyond the legal minimum and is good practice to give the school or college additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child missing education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.'

3.7 Reporting to parents and carers

OAP will report student attendance to parents and carers at least once each academic year. This is included with the students' annual report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Principals (or Executive and Lead Principals) may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Each Academy will have their own list of exceptional circumstances due to the needs of the community. However, the exceptional circumstances are likely to include the following:

- acute family trauma

- terminal illness or death of a family member
- if a family member serves in the Armed Forces - Service personnel returning from a tour of
- duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the
- near future that coincides with school holidays
- following advice from a health professional
- out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement

The Principal considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

Valid reasons for authorised absence may include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision
- Part timetables agreed between the Academy and parents or carers

4.2 Legal sanctions

There are two options:

1. A Penalty Notice

2. Prosecution

Penalty Notice – In line with the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

OAP will fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without Permission. In the case of term time holidays or instances where a child is taken out of the country or is not residing at the address held, OAP can request accommodation details and flight details to ascertain the child's whereabouts.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Prosecution – In line with the Education Act (Section 444)

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or 3 months imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibility measures for more information.

Persistent Absence: If a pupil is classified as PA, this means that they are classified by the Government as having missed 10% or more of school for whatever reason. These pupils will be monitored very closely and if we feel that a pupil is nearing this mark, then we will take action to speak to the parent or carer immediately. PA pupils are also made known to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), who works alongside the Attendance Officer to discuss individual cases and provide support and action for pupils and families.

Please see the table below, which shows the number of 'days absence a year' for each percentage range.

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future.
95%: 10 days absence a year These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2 week holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.
90%: 19 days absence a year Young people in this group are missing <u>a month</u> of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.
85%: 29 days absence a year The Government classes Young People in this group as "Persistent Absentees", and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of young people in this group could also face the possibility of legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

Each Academy will have a clear strategy to promote attendance which will include rewards, sanctions, assemblies, and meetings with parents and carers. These will be in line with those recommended by SOL Consulting and OCL Best Practice.

Weekly Celebration Assemblies:

Celebration Assemblies are held every Friday for the whole school. The class with the highest attendance percentage receives the Attendance Cup.

At the end of each half of term, the class with the highest attendance percentage will be awarded with a reward/treat, which is discussed with the class teacher.

Weekly Class Attendance Awards:

Every Friday, data provided by the Sol Attendance Tracker is provided to the class teacher. A sticker is awarded to pupils who have maintained excellent attendance and punctuality. There is also a strong focus on pupils who have improved their attendance and punctuality.

End of Term Assembly Attendance Awards:

At the end of every term in the Celebration Assembly, there will be a special mention of pupils who have consistently shown strong attendance and punctuality.

Class Attendance Monitor

The aim of the Class Attendance Monitor is to actively engage pupils with 'all things' attendance.

The role offers the pupil the opportunity to take on responsibilities and to celebrate with their classmates when pupils have achieved strong attendance or improvements have been made.

6. Attendance monitoring

OAP will monitor student absence daily, scrutinising patterns on a weekly basis using the SOL Consulting / OCL Best Practice approaches to promoting attendance. However, where attendance is not yet in line with the national average then Academy leaders will scrutinise attendance each day.

Analysis of attendance data will include data for each group (e.g., boy, girl, SEND, Disadvantaged, Others, EAL, ethnic groups), year group, subgroups within each year group (where this is statistically useful).

Particular weeks of the academic year are analysed as well to identify sources of poor attendance (e.g., days close to periods of holidays or days of religious celebrations). We implement systems to reduce the impact of regular low points of attendance during the academic year. These could include rewards, alterations to term dates and targeted use of staff training days.

Student-level absence data is regularly shared with the Regional Director, CEO and National Directors through the Monitoring and Standards Team. Academies whose attendance is below the previous year's national average for the phase must report their attendance to the Regional Director weekly. The Trust has the ability to monitor academy attendance nationally through its data management systems.

The CEO and RDs will regularly discuss academy attendance data through the OCL line management structure. In addition, the Education Welfare Officer, Attendance Officer and Executive Principal meet on a fortnightly basis to review data and intervention.

7. Children at Risk of Missing Education

All Academies must inform the local authority (LA) of any student who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. As this could be a safeguarding issue leaders should ensure that regular follow up contact is made with the LA if the whereabouts of the student is not known or communicated to the Academy. If a vulnerable child cannot be contacted on the first day of absence a home visit should be completed, a non-vulnerable by the third day of absence. This should continue until the information has been secured. Leaders should follow the guidance issued by the Department for

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

8. Students leaving the academy and off-rolling

OAP vision is driven through a passion and commitment to include everyone. We believe all our children and young people are precious and as such, we are keen to ensure that we track the destinations of pupils who leave each academy.

Academy leaders must ensure that detailed records are kept for students who stop attending the academy and are removed from the roll/admissions register.

Details must include (but not exclusive to):

- the student's reason for leaving,
- their destination and the destination's educational provision (e.g., name of school, home schooling arrangements)
- group (disadvantaged, SEND, EAL, gender)
- ethnicity

Where a student moves abroad, leaders must take all reasonable steps to assure themselves that the student is moving to another school. This may include support from the Hub. This is to ensure that all students are safe and in full time education as necessary.

The Principal must meet with the student and their family, if off rolling is likely to take place. This is in order to ensure that an effective level of support has been offered to the student and family as well as ensuring that the destination of the student is known.

Leaders must ensure that students are only removed from the academy's roll/admissions register if one or more of the criteria (defined by The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006; paragraph 8) are met and as describe in the Department for Education's guidance

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance).

Leaders should inform their Regional Director and follow their local authority's procedures for off rolling a student wishing to elective home educate, which will always involve officially notifying the local authority of the reasoning and intention to do so.

On receipt of written notification to home educate, Academies must inform the Regional Director and the student's Local Authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. Parents and carers have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education, but this does not have to be at a school.