



Olive Hill Primary School  
Stour Vale Academy Trust



# Attendance Policy

## September 2018

Policy Tracker - Responsibility for monitoring this policy: Local Governing Body (Reviewed Annually or in response to changes in legislation or LSCB operating procedures)			
Date	Reviewed By:	Role	Date Approved by the Governing Board
19/9/18	H Grasby, Lynn Bird	Head teacher, Learning Mentor	01/10/18

## Attendance Policy

Our core value is the belief that we are here for each and every child. We believe that fairness is giving every child what they need to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

In delivering our core value, we demonstrate a commitment to excellence and continuous growth through developing leadership in every role, trust and transparency. Our school motto is: learning together, achieving success.

At Olive Hill we deliver a broad and balanced curriculum that incorporates:

- Character development
- Academic achievement
- Oracy

We are rigorous, robust and relentless in our pursuit of excellence through having the highest expectations of the children and ourselves.

We believe in learning without limits.

### Introduction:

At Olive Hill Primary Academy, we are committed to providing all of our children with the best possible education and care. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. Every child should be at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for the absence is authorised by the school.

It is very important therefore that parents make sure that their child attends regularly and this policy sets out how we will achieve this by working together.

### The Importance of Regular Attendance:

**Learning:** - Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

**Safeguarding:** - Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and school staff are committed to: Working together to Safeguard Children (July 2018), Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018) and School's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

**Failing to attend Olive Hill on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.**

## Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

### To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular Newsletter;
- Report to you at on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through verbal recognition and badges.

### The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

*(a) to age ability and aptitude and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he / she may have*

*Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'*

### The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

### Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as genuine illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Unauthorised leave of absence/holiday or day trips in term time.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend for any reason, please speak to your child's teacher who will work with you to resolve any concerns.

Any student at Olive Hill School identified as having poor attendance will have all further absence unauthorised on school's register.

The school's medical policy allows us to administer prescribed medicines with written consent which may allow an earlier return to school.

When absence is causing concern the school may involve the School Health Advisor or you may be asked to attend a meeting with the school's Attendance Support Officer to discuss how to improve your child's attendance. Further unauthorised absences may be referred to the Education Investigation Service and you may be issued with a warning notice.

However, should parent(s) provide evidence from a medical practitioner advising that the period of absence was necessary, the absence for the evidenced period will be authorised.

### **Children Who Go Missing from Education:**

Children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. Our procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education are based on the LA and DCSB procedures. We will ensure that we follow these procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. We will ensure that we report children missing education to the LA CME officer, in line with statutory procedures.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (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 is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

### **Absence Procedures:**

#### **If your child is absent you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible and before 9.30 on the first day of absence;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

#### **If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Support Officer and/or a member of the senior management team if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to our Attendance Support Officer and/or the Local Authority if attendance becomes a concern.
- Report to child missing from education.

### **Telephone Numbers:**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence. We need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we do not then something important may be missed. **You have a duty to notify school as soon as possible of any changes to contact details.**

**School is expected to hold two contact numbers for every child.**

## The School Attendance Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved this way, the school may discuss matters with our appointed Attendance Support Officer. He/she will discuss matters and try to resolve the situation by agreement. However, if your child's attendance does not improve and unauthorized absences persist school may refer the case to Dudley Council, Education Investigation Service (EIS). They are a statutory service who issue sanctions such as Penalty Notices or refer the case for prosecution in the Magistrates Court, based on the evidence provided by the school.

## Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons.

**If your child is late (after 8.55am) they will need to be signed in at the office by a parent, carer or adult and a reason for the lateness must be given.**

## How we manage lateness:

We expect children to arrive at school between 8.45-8.55am.

The school day starts at 8.55am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers will be marked at that time and your child will receive a 'L' late mark if they are not present in the class.

The register will be closed 30 minutes after school's start time. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a 'U' mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. If unauthorised lateness persists it could result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or enforcement proceedings against you.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with a member of school staff and/or Attendance Support Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

## Holidays in Term Time:

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents not to take children on holiday in school time. **Term time holidays will not be authorised by the school.**

## Leave of Absence:

It is an expectation of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are exceptional reasons, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the head teacher (not the Local Authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made on a form provided by the school. Where a parent takes a leave of absence to which the application was refused or takes a leave of absence where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty fine (upon a return from such leave) by the Local Authority may be requested. When requesting a fixed penalty fine the school may calculate the period of days taken within a 12-month period.

**There is no automatic entitlement in law to leave of absence** and the government made an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 in September 2013 to reflect this.

Leave of absence shall not be granted unless –

- (a) an application has been made in advance to the proprietor by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides: and
- (b) the proprietor, or a person authorised by the proprietor in accordance with paragraph (1), considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

**In light of the changes to the Pupil Registration Regulations, Olive Hill Primary Academy will only grant leave where parents can prove exceptional circumstances.**

**Only in the case of emergency should these requests be made less than 5 days in advance of leave.**

**Where the decision is made not to authorise leave in term time, school will inform parent/carers in writing. A general guide for parent's, is leave for any holiday, activity or event that could be arranged during the annual 13 week holiday time would not be authorised.**

**On any occasion that school refuses a request for leave in term time, should parent/carers proceed with the leave it will be recorded as a (G) (family holiday not agreed or in excess of agreement), on schools register.**

**Failure to notify and/or request leave of absence in term time, providing at least 5 day notice will result in all absence being recorded as (O) (unauthorised absence not covered by any other description).**

**If a pupil does not return to school after the leave of absence date, school will investigate the reasons surrounding the absence, refer to the Local Authority and under Regulation 8, 1 (f) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 consider removal from the school register.**

### **Summary:**

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to guarantee as high a level of attendance as possible and that through good attendance ensure every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

## APPENDIX 1

### Attendance Descriptions

Percentage Attendance	Descriptor
98- 100%	Excellent
96 – 97.9%	Good
95 – 95.9%	Expected
90 – 94.9%	Requires Improvement
Below 90%	Persistent Absentee

## APPENDIX 2

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### PUPILS

- To attend school regularly and punctually
- To arrive at school by 8.55am each morning and if going home for lunch, to return in good time for the afternoon session

#### PARENTS / CARER

- To ensure their child attends school regularly, punctually (by 8.55am), properly equipped and in a fit state to learn
- To notify the school every day of absence by 9.30am
- To take family holidays in the school holiday period
- To provide the school with up to date contact details and telephone numbers for every adult with parental responsibility. If contact details change then we must be informed of the change in writing as soon as reasonably possible.

#### TEACHERS

- To keep an accurate attendance register
- To praise pupils for punctuality and good attendance
- To inform the phase leader and learning mentor when absence is impacting on achievement so that appropriate action can be taken.

#### LEARNING MENTOR

- To monitor late arrivals and absentees (usually daily)
- To monitor contact made with regard to absence and pass relevant information to the class teacher
- To telephone parents when no reason has been given for absence by 9.30am on the first day of absence
- To monitor attendance and punctuality weekly, liaising with the Head teacher so that we can intervene as soon as absence gives cause for concern
- To monitor register coding and alert staff of inconsistencies
- To liaise with the Education Investigation Service (EIS) and Attendance support workers and make referrals and attend clinics/meetings as needed
- To liaise with the Head teacher with responsibility for medical needs and the School Health Advisor as needed
- To monitor register coding and alert staff to inconsistencies
- To produce individual or class summary sheets upon request of the Education Investigation Service (EIS)
- To produce attendance figures for end of year reports

#### HEADTEACHER

- To be responsible for attendance
- To set clear and challenging attendance targets as part of school self-evaluation
- To intervene early when individual pupil absence gives cause for concern
- To develop a multi-agency response to the attendance agenda
- To utilise the support of available specialists in relation to the attendance agenda

#### OFFICE

- To forward phone messages to class teachers regarding absences

## APPENDIX 3

### Register Codes

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
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 sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorized absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances