



Attendance Policy

Academic Year 2013 – 2014

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1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. At Oxford Academy we believe that regular attendance is paramount to the development and academic achievement of all our pupils. From the date that your child joins the school the Attendance protocol and expectations will be enforced.

We believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

Oxford Academy recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

2. Legal Framework

The Private Education Ministry states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude through regular attendance at school for a minimum of 160 school days each academic year. We are duty bound to report to the Education Ministry any child that exceeds more than **15** unauthorised absences in any one academic year. Children who fail to meet the schools attendance requirements risk not being **re-enrolled**.

The Ministry requires schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- **Present or Absent** - If Absent whether it is an authorised or unauthorised absence
- If the child has arrived **Late or Left Early** - whether the Lateness or Early departure was authorised.

3. Reporting Absence

We expect Parents to telephone the Schools Front Office (22980598) before 08.00 am on the morning of each absence and to send in a letter on your child's return which will be kept on their student file. The letter should explain the reason and dates of absence, giving the full name of the child and class/year.

4. Categorising absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents should therefore advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

- **Illness:** In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.
- **Medical/Dental Appointments:** Parent are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to the schools Front Office secretary to allow the school to release your child
- **Other Authorised Circumstances:** This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement or for events such as religious observance.

- **Excluded Absence:** Exclusion from attending school i.e when a child is suspended for in-proper behaviour, is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher will make arrangements for work to be sent home.
- **Family Holidays and Extended Leave:** Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. The School holiday dates are published a year in advance and we ask that you plan your holidays during school holidays. Parents **do not** have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of extending a weekend or taking additional holiday.

5. Procedure for requesting Leave of Absence for Exceptional Circumstances:

In the first instance Parents wishing leave of absence for their child/ren during term time must send a **written request** to the relevant Head teacher before arrangements are made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually on its own merits and will take the following factors into account:

- Length of the proposed leave
- Age of the pupil
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity to any internal test, assessment or public examinations
- Pupil's ability to catch up the work missed
- Pupil's educational needs & their current performance
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Previous term time holidays taken
- When the request was made

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to either by phone or in writing by the Head teacher. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parent must contact school should any delays occur
- That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may send a report to the Private Education Ministry.

Only in **exceptional circumstances** will extended leave of absence of more than 10 school days be agreed. In such cases, consideration will also be given to cultural needs and family circumstances. In all cases though, parent/carers will be required to justify why the holiday needs to be taken during term time.

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, no more than three days in total in any academic year will be authorised. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

6. Late Arrival & Registration times

Registers are taken in the classroom at 07.45 am for all classes and completed by 08.00 am. Pupils arriving after 07.45 will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 08.00 am. Pupils arriving after the close of registration will be marked in the Register but the lateness will not be authorised and will count as an unauthorised absence for that school day.

All pupils arriving after 07.45 am must immediately report to the Schools Front Office where they will be issued with a **Late Slip**. Pupils arriving after the close of register will be given an attendance mark (unauthorised) to ensure school can be responsible for their Health and Safety, whilst on the school premises.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment. The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without a justifiable reason and for Secondary Pupils will count towards an afterschool detention. Registers will be taken on a **second** occasion at the following times each day:

Foundation: KG and REC 12.00 noon

Primary: Yrs 1 and 2 at 12.15 daily / Yrs 3 to 6 at 13.30 daily

Secondary: Yrs 7 to 9 - a floating register will be completed every lesson. For years 10 and 11 requests for early departures will be authorised by the relevant Form Tutor and Head of Secondary with attendance registers updated accordingly.

7. Unauthorised absence: examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms or any other items
- Having their hair cut
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school

8. Children who Leave School Early

Parents who wish to remove children early before the end of the day must first submit a 'Remove Child From Class Request Form' with supporting evidence, for example a hospital appointment card. In such circumstances we request that you give the school at least one days notice so the absence can be recorded as authorised.

Only Head teachers can authorise a child leaving school early. Children who are drawn from class before the end of the day, for example on a Thursday to go camping at the weekend will have the absence recorded as unauthorised for the full day. This is to act as deterrent because when children leave school early it affects not only their learning but also disrupts the classroom dynamic for the children remaining.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

Oxford Academy believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, parents, pupils and the wider school community. As such the,

School will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy

- Identify a member of the Office Staff to audit termly the attendance registers for compliance
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Principal within the agreed timescale each year.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting and at weekly Senior Management Meetings.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The Senior Management Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually or more frequently if required
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

All Class teachers and Form tutors will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parent/carers
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Follow systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils,
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions

Request that Parents will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let us know the reason why and the expected date of return.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours.
- Avoid at all costs taking children out of school before the end of the school day unless absolutely necessary
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing the school bag and uniform, the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking Leave of Absence during term-time, where this is unavoidable, send a written request to the Head Teacher in advance of the Leave of Absence as per school procedure .

10. Using Attendance Data

Every half term all class /form teachers will be provided with attendance data for each pupil within their class. The list will be presented in numerical descending order with the highest attendees at the top.

| | |
|--------------|---|
| GREEN | pupils with attendance between 100% and 95% |
| AMBER | pupils with attendance between 94% and 85% |
| RED | pupils with attendance of 84% and below |

This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the schools sanctions and rewards policy. Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

11. Support Systems

Oxford Academy recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parent/carers should make the School aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child/ren's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation. The school will follow a stepped, staged approach to dealing with habitual lateness or repeated unauthorised absence as detailed below:

Stage 1

Frequent reminders are included in Parent newsletters regarding attendance expectations and punctuality. For repeat offenders reminder letters will be sent to individual Parents and kept on their child's school file, for secondary pupils repeated lateness results in an afterschool detention.

Stage 2

Once, two afterschool detentions have been served, the Parents will be called in to discuss the matter with the relevant Head teacher and advised that immediate improvement is required. A contract will be agreed outlining the schools expectations and a timeline for improvement.

Stage 3

If repeated unauthorised absences are recorded and the total number approaches 15 unauthorised absences, then the Parents will be sent a final written warning by recorded delivery.

Stage 4

If 15 unauthorised absences are accrued, the Head teacher informs the Principal who reports the pupils name to the Private Education Ministry and blocks re-enrolment of the child. A recorded letter to this effect is sent to Parents.

To support the above procedure the school will at all times wish to work with Parents and Pupils to effect the outcome required, through :

- A Home –School Partnership Agreement
 - Lessons in Personal Social and Health Education
 - Parent contracts - The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target.
 - Reward systems – pupils awarded for full attendance
 - Behaviour support – Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parent/carer and pupils.
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Policy details

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