

Oak Bank School Policy

Attendance Policy



Prepared By: Leanne Titcomb

Review and Amendment						
By	LT					
Date	1/3/18					
Signed						
Governor						
Date						
Signed						

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1. Introduction

Rationale

This is a successful school and every student plays their part in making it so. For our students to gain the greatest benefit and reach their full potential, a high level of school attendance is essential. Here at Oak Bank we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. Every child has a right to access education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children; however as a school our minimum acceptance is 95% attendance. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good school attendance.

The school displays a positive and pro-active ethos that places high value on attendance and punctuality, as was as working well with parents and carers to promote good attendance.

Aims

It is recognised that:

- All children of statutory school age have an equal right to access education in accordance with the National Curriculum guidelines.
- No child should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- Situations beyond the control of students and/or parents/carers may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents/carers, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.

Oak Bank School 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. This policy also takes into account the:

- Human Rights Act 1998
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Race Relations Act 2000

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Our attendance policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Behaviour Policy
- Behaviour Management Handbook

What is good attendance?

The school target for attendance is 95%. In discussions with the Attendance Officer we have introduced the following guide for parents;

100%	No Risk – Outstanding
97 - 99%	Excellent
95 - 97%	Good
92 - 95%	Advise Improvement
90 – 92%	Cause for Concern
Below 90%	Serious cause for concern

It should be remembered that 90% attendance is equivalent to one day absence every fortnight. Over an academic year this amounts to four weeks of absence.

Promoting good attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carer and the child. The home school agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents/carers and our expectations of what parents/carers will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance. To help us all focus on this we will:

- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates and school trips;
- Set attendance targets for the whole school;

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Oak Bank School believe that improved good attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, Parents/Carers and the wider school community.

To ensure we promote good attendance and achieve the best Oak Bank School's attendance officer will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the schools work in promoting regular and improved attendance. This person will also ensure attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with difficulties. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the reasons for their child's absence and will encourage the, to keep these to a minimum.

Governors

- Ensure compliance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended;
- Adopt an Attendance Policy and Review it annually, and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy;
- Agree targets for Attendance at School;
- Ensure the attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and families as required and on time;
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings;
- To promote the strong link between attendance and educational attainment to parents and students where appropriate and to ensure that the school attendance policy and procedures are communicated effectively;
- Hold the Assistant Head (Welfare) to account on matters of attendance;
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off site;
- 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;
- Works with the Head Teacher in establishing criteria against which leave request will be considered. This is important to ensure the process is equitable and consistent;

Leadership Team

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their Parents/Carers;
- Form positive relationships with pupils and Parents/Carers;

- Ensure there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance;
- Monitor the attendance policy and that it is adhered to;
- Contribute to the whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences what encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve;
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address issues;
- Ensure that the Assistant Head teacher (Welfare) to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource;
- Report the schools attendance and related issues through half termly reporting to the Governing Body via Welfare team;
- Develop a multi - agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families;
- Document interventions used to a high standard required should legal proceedings be instigated;

All Staff

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their Parents/Carers;
- Form positive relationships with Pupils and Parents/Carers;
- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately;
- Promote and reward good attendance with pupils at all appropriate opportunities;
- Liaise with the Attendance Officer on matters of absence and punctuality;
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a pupils absence so that school can support and put in place the right measures;
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families;
- Contribute to the whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences what encourage all pupils to attend and achieve;
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off site;
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be required;

Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 7 Education Act 1996) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

A 'Parent' is defined in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and is defined as follows;

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that the child lives with and is looked after by that person, irrespective of what their relationship is).

Parents

- Inform the school on the first day of absence , and any subsequent days after;
- Discuss with the Head Teacher and or Attendance officer any planned absences well in advance;
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year;
- Avoid taking their child out of school for no urgent medical or dental appointments
- Only request leave of absence if it is for exceptional circumstances;
- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress;
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by email /letter upon the child's return;
- Inform the school of any change of circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance;
- To work with the school and Attendance Officer to resolve/alleviate any attendance problems or protracted absence;
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment;
- 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;
- To attend meetings as required in relation to their child's attendance;

Pupils

- Pupils are expected to attend school regularly and to arrive punctually at school by 09.45am and to start of lessons;
- If late pupils must report to the front office where they will be met by a member of staff;
- Arrive at school in full uniform;
- Pupils must inform their key workers if there is a problem that may lead to their absences, e.g. bullying, long term medical issues, etc.;
- If pupils are required to leave the premises during the school day they must sign in and out at Reception. (This is for their safety as well as administrative purposes);

3. Recording Attendance

Legally the register must be taken twice daily, once at the beginning of the school day at 10.00am and again in the afternoon at 1.15pm at lesson registration.

Procedure	Person responsible
Register must be taken at the start of the morning session at the school gate	SLT (Hard copy & Behaviour watch) Office (Integris/ Hard copy)
Register must be taken each lesson	Teacher (Behaviour Watch)
Afternoon Register must be taken during lesson 5, by 1:30. This includes Enrichment	Teacher (Behaviour Watch) Office (Integris/ Hard copy)
On each occasion a school must record whether a child was present, absent or present at approved educational activity.	Teacher (Behaviour Watch) Office (Integris/ Hard copy)
Spaces must not be left in the register – staff need to ensure the correct recording of students attendance. The comments box on Behaviour Watch should indicate their location if it different from the class. The teacher MUST confirm presence in person or via radio communication.	Teacher (Behaviour Watch)

Taking the register

Registers are treated as legal documents – indeed they may be used as evidence in court cases. For this reason they are retained for a minimum of three years.

- For each student, the register must be marked either as present or absent.
 - / - is entered to show the student is present in the morning session.
 - \ - is entered to show the student is present in the afternoon session.
 - N – is entered to show the student is absent until the reason is known.

O – is entered to show the students absence is unauthorised.

- Once the school has been officially notified of the reason for the absence, the appropriate registration code will be inserted by the front office.
- The register must clearly differentiate between whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised by the school;
- It is the policy of the school that no absences are accounted for;

4. Lateness and Punctuality

The school actively discourage late arrival by staff setting a good example and by challenging it whenever it occurs.

Due to transport, pupil registration begins at 9.45am and ends at 9.55am. The register will close at 10.15am, pupils arriving after the register will be recorded as late, this will not be recorded and will count as an absence for that school session.

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss out on time with their key worker getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

- A pupil will be registered late in the morning if they arrive after 10.15am, the scheduled start of the day.
- We have a duty to ensure every pupils safety and therefore will telephone home after 3 recorded lates.
- Our level of contact will be increased if lateness continues until after 10 lates when the school Attendance Officer will be informed, this could result in a fine
- Arrival after the close of register will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded U in line with the Department of Education guidance. This mark shows the pupil to be on site, but is legally recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated absence lates (U code) are unauthorised absences and **maybe be subject to legal action**. Parents or guardians of students who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 12 week period, the school may ask Central Bedfordshire Council to issue parents with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

5. Understanding Types of Absences

Authorised Absence

- Authorised absence is absence with permission from the Head Teacher and/or Attendance Officer. This includes absence for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided, e.g. ill health;
- Even when students are engaged in Approved Educational Activity off site, they must not be marked as present, as good Health and Safety practice requires that the school needs to know who is on the premises in the case of a fire drill or real emergency.
- The school **may** authorise absence if the following circumstances;
 1. Personal Illness (excessive or extended absences **will require medical evidence**)
 2. Medical Appointment (Copy of appointment to be seen and copied)
 3. Family bereavement
 4. Conditions rendering attendance impossible or hazardous to a child's health and safety
 5. Religious observation (1 Day limitation Apply)
 6. A travelling child's absence

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised Absence is absence without permission from the Head Teacher and/or Attendance Officer. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

The school will not authorise absence in the following circumstances;

1. No explanation is offered by the parent/guardian
2. The explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, etc.)
3. Leave of absence which are taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge and/or are in excess of the time agreed by the school.
4. Specials occasions, such as birthdays
5. Minding siblings
6. Parent/Guardian or sibling illness
7. Family holidays in term time

- Unauthorised absence from school is considered truancy. This can take the form of absence from school for complete days, lateness and absenteeism from individual lessons. Each of these is as serious as the other, but the strategies effecting change may need to be different;
- When parents are unaware of such absences there may be significant danger to a young person's safety as it is likely that their whereabouts are unknown by a responsible adult;
- Unfortunately, there may be occasions when truancy is condoned by parents. If such collusion occurs it is the duty of the Attendance Officer to work with the pupil and family to change their attitudes towards school, thus encouraging full attendance.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

- Persistent Absenteeism are students whose attendance falls below 90%;
- While discretion may be deployed (e.g. in cases of long term illness), Oak Bank School will refer any individual child whose attendance has not improved after Intervention's have been put in place by the Attendance Officer, to Central Bedfordshire's Access and Inclusion Service. At this point legal proceedings could follow;
- All PA's are tracked and monitored by the schools Attendance Officer

Temporary Schools Closure

Where a school has to close due to severe weather conditions, problems with amenities such as water or heating, fire, structural damage or in-service training, no attendance registers are needed. This will be coded appropriately.

6. Reporting Absence

First Day

A child not arriving at school where the parents have not informed the school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the reason for any absence is always required. If your child is absent you must:

- On the first day of absence parents/guardians are expected to contact the school, preferably by telephone before 10.10am
- The parent/guardian reporting the absence should give the reason for the absence and the expected date of return;
- If the date of the return is unknown, regular contact on a daily basis should be kept with the school; if the school receives no contact a member of the office team will; i. Arrange to check if the student is in the lesson that they should be

in. If he/she is present, the register will be marked accordingly. If he/she is absent they will: ii. Telephone or text the parent/guardian;

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer, and or pastoral leaders and assistant head teacher if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to Central Bedfordshire Council's Access and Inclusion Service if absence is unauthorised and doesn't meet school expectations.

Third Day Absence

Please note: if your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/guardian, after three days of absence the school is required to consider implementing the child missing in education procedures as set down by Central Bedfordshire Council. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents/guardians and the child, including making enquiries to know friends, wider family. We will also ensure that Home visits with our Attendance Officer are completed where practicable.

Ten Days Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named Parent/guardian then the local authority is notified and the Child is Missing Education. Staff from the Access and Inclusion Service will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help us and your child by making sure we always have an up-to date contact number and home address. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or on-going absence

If your child misses 39 or more sessions of absence across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as a persistent absentee. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child, by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows that these gaps at whatever level affect attainment. We monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department of Education.

All our persistent absentee students and their parents are subject to an Attendance Plan or home school contract.

7. Holidays within Term Time

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated in September 2013:

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that head teachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. Circumstances where absences may be regarded as **exceptional** will vary from school to school and family to family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/guardians wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from Attendance Officer in advance and before making any travel arrangements. If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions of absence reaches the thresholds in Central Bedfordshire Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct (10 sessions of absence on 12 school weeks), parents/guardians may be issued with a penalty notice or other legal action in accordance with the code. Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

- The Principal will use discretion to grant authorised absence in a school year if both the following apply:
 - i. There are '**exceptional circumstances**' for the holiday
- Special reasons or exceptional circumstances that may be agreed to are:
 - i. A dying relative in a different country;
 - ii. A family funeral in another country/ part of the country;
 - iii. Holidays for fostering or adoption purposes; iv. Religious observance;
 - iv. Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during normal school holiday times. (Evidence must be provided to this effect)
- The school is therefore unable to authorise absence because of:
 - i. Availability of cheap holidays; ii.
 - ii. Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; iii.
 - iii. Shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings:
 - iv. Overlap with the beginning or end of term;
 - v. Another sibling in another school where the holidays do not coincide;

- vi. A special treat for the child;
- vii. Absences which have not been explained

- Authorisation will not be considered during assessment times for Years 10 to 12. This may also include during the preparation period leading up to the examinations;
- When deciding on the authorisation the following will also be taken into account:
 - i. If the child's attendance is above the school's target of 95%;
 - ii. If there have been any other holiday requests during the same school year. (There must be only one request for the academic year);
- Should the application not be authorised and the holiday is taken, the Education Welfare Service in consultation with the school may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Parents can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Head teacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

For national guidance please refer to:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance

8. Monitoring and Protocols for dealing with Absences

- The Attendance Officer will monitor absences via electronic registers on a week to week basis;
- If a student's attendance falls below our school target of 95%, 'Trigger Point 1' will be activated as per our system protocol.
- If the attendance rate continues to deteriorate, the school will begin to follow the protocol for subsequent trigger points;
- All actions will be recorded electronically by the Attendance Officer depending on the level of trigger point;
- At the start of the school year, any student who had been referred to the Educational Welfare Officer in the previous academic year will be expected to attend an attendance meeting with their parents/guardians, Attendance Officer, Assistant Head Teacher (Welfare) and Education Welfare Officer. If attendance becomes an issue they will be contacted further by the Educational Welfare Officer.

9. Legal procedures

Legal Measures for failing to ensure regular school attendance (including penalty notices)

Section 7 of The Education Act 1996 requires parents to secure the education of their children of compulsory school age.

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient fulltime education suitable—

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

The following legal measures may be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school and are not attending regularly:

Penalty Notices: The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

Magistrates Court Action under Sec 444 (1) and (1a) of the Education Act 1996

Penalty Notices

Central Bedfordshire Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices states that where a child has had 10 unauthorised absences in a 12 school week period, the school may request a penalty notice be issued. The code of conduct is a statutory document that ensures that the powers for this legal sanction are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority.

Penalty Notices can be issued when

- a pupil has taken holiday during term-time and the absence has not been authorised by the school, providing the school has taken into account DfE guidance to inform its decision-making
- where the school believes that the sanction will lead to an improvement in attendance, e.g. persistent late arrival at school; parents failure to attend/cooperate at a parenting contract meeting

Parents and carers will be alerted about the possibility of a penalty notice being requested for unauthorised absence, via a letter to the parent/s.

If more than one parent has parental responsibility, both parents will receive a Penalty Notice. In situations where there is more than one pupil in a family with irregular school attendance, multiple penalty notices can be issued to the same parents during the year. However, this action must be subject to careful consideration and co-ordination.

Legal Action taken under Section 444 (1) and (1a) Education Act 1996

Where the school has tried to address a pupil's unauthorised absences but the measures taken have been unsuccessful, it can then refer on to the Local Authority School Attendance Officer. If there is either no improvement in the attendance nor satisfactory evidence provided for the absences following their intervention, then it is likely legal action at Magistrates Court will be initiated.

Sanctions available to the court are as follows;

- a fine of up to £2,500
- a conditional discharge – you will be given a set amount of time in which to improve your child's attendance. Should you fail the Council may bring a further prosecution against you and, if found guilty, you will be sentenced for both offences
- an absolute discharge – the case is proved but you will not be subject to a penalty, although you will receive a conviction
- a community order such as unpaid work, curfew or tagging imprisonment - for up to three months

10. Support for parents

My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/guardians and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend then it is better not to cover up their absence or to give into pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may also make things worse. Contact your child's Achievement Leader immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems or family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

For example:

A parent can seek leave of absence from a school for their child to take part in a performance. They must however contact the head teacher to discuss the nature and frequency of this, the impact that this may have on their child's education, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to

the head teacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Head teacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the head teacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching. The regulations related to children participating in public performances are separate to those around authorising leave of absence. Head teachers can authorise this absence. For further advice and guidance on Child Employment and Performance Licenses contact Central Bedfordshire Council on 0300 300 4953

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

The absence of a child from a Traveller family who has left the area can be authorised if the absence is for the parent's work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. A school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll whilst they are travelling. When the child is travelling the school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised by using the T code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school although may offer support to the student whilst they are away. Please note that students must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12-month period to be able to use travelling for work purposes as a defence against prosecution. For further advice and guidance on attendance and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families, contact Central Bedfordshire Council on 0300 300 4953.

To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration at two schools is allowed.

Amendments to the Admission Register and Attendance Register

Every amendment to the admission register and the attendance register must include: the original entry; the amended entry; the reason for the amendment; the

date on which the amendment was made; and the name of the person who made an amendment.

Preservation of the Admission Register and Attendance Register

Every entry in the admission register and attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date shown on which the entry was made.

11. Study leave

We believe that students/students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. No study leave will be granted during this period, therefore, and students/students will be expected to attend school in the usual way. Study leave may only be granted to Year 11 students/students during the time of the GCSE examination period. Should any students/students wish to attend school (or should their parents wish them to) on the days and at times when they are not sitting examinations, arrangements will be made for them to do so. The school will work within the legal requirements, i.e.:

- study leave should only be granted to Year 11 students and never to those in other year groups
- it should never exceed 15 school days in a year and is most appropriately granted during the examination period itself, i.e. not before the beginning of that period
- it should always be granted sparingly, taking account of an individual student/student's ability to manage and benefit from unsupervised study
- any student has the right to attend school during study leave and a parent has the right to insist

Appendix A

Legislation

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002

Places a duty on government bodies to have a 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.

It is not statutory for schools to have an attendance policy.

The following pieces of legislation should be included in your attendance policy and referred to in your letters to parents

Section 7 of The Education Act 1996

Requires parents to secure the education of their children of compulsory school age.

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive full time education suitable-

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise*

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/7>

Section 576 Education Act 1996

Meaning of “parent”.

- (1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, ‘parent’, in relation to a child or young person, includes any person –
 - (a) Who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or
 - (b) Who has care of him,
- (3) In subsection (1) ‘parental responsibility’ has the same meaning as in the Children Act 1989.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/576>

Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2009

Penalty notices for parents in cases of truancy

- (1) After Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 (c.56) (failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil) insert – ‘444A Penalty notice in respect of failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil
 - (1) Where an authorised officer has reason to believe –
 - (a) That a person has committed an offence under section 444(1), and

- (b) That the school to which the offence relates is a relevant school in England, he may give the person a penalty notice in respect of the offence.
- (2) A penalty notice is a notice offering a person the option of discharging any liability to conviction of the offence under section 444(1) to which the notice relates by payment of a penalty in accordance with the notice.
- (3) Where a person is given a penalty notice, proceedings for the offence to which the notice relates (or an offence under section 444(1) arising out of the circumstances) may not be instituted before the end of such a period as may be prescribed.
- (4) Where a person is given a penalty notice, he cannot be convicted of the offence to which this section shall be payable to local education authorities in England.
- (5) Sums received by a local education authority under this section may be used by the authority for the purposes of any of its functions which may be specified in regulations.

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/38/contents>

The notice relates (or an offence under section 444(1A) arising out of the same circumstances) if he pays in accordance with the notice.

- (6) Penalties under

Section 444(1) Education Act 1996

Offence: failure to secure regular attendance at school of registered pupil.

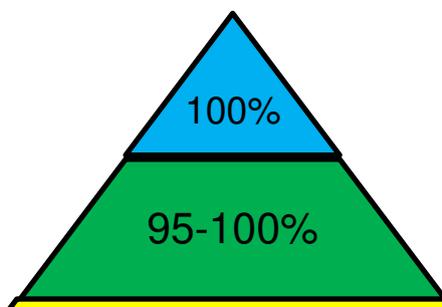
- (1) If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/444>

Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996

(1A) If in the circumstances mentioned in subsection (1) the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails without reasonable justification to cause him to do so, he is guilty of an offence

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/444>

Appendix B



Action Flow Chart

No action required. Key Workers to support ensuring that attendance is maintained.
Weekly and Termly rewards issued.

No action required. Key Workers to support ensuring that attendance is maintained.
Termly rewards issued. Attendance Officer responsible for the weekly monitoring of attendance.

Key Worker to look at reasons for absence eg blocks of illness, medical appointments and any potential patterns in absence. Key worker to contact home and explain attendance is looking low. Offer support from school if needed. No further action may be needed following contact if low attendance is due to blocks of absence for illness etc however this should still be noted. Notes of contact made to be kept contact section in BehaviourWatch. Attendance officer to be CC'd. If attendance drops below 95% the Attendance Officer will send out Trigger Letter 1 to Parents/Carer. Attendance will be monitored over 3 weeks from the date of the letter sent, with an improvement expected.

Attendance Officer to open Attendance File.

If attendance continues to drop and figures fall below 92%, Attendance Officer will make further contact with home and explore reasons for continued absence. Outcomes of contact will be logged on contact (Behaviour Watch) with actions noted to improve attendance.

Trigger Letter 2 to be sent to Parent/Carer.

Request Medical Evidence for all future absences of illness. Where this is not available all absences to be deemed as unauthorised.

Attendance drops below 90%

School Attendance Officer to arrange meeting with Parents/Carer.

Request Medical Proof for all future absences. Where this is not available, absences deemed to be unauthorised.

Referral to Central Bedfordshire Access & Inclusion in Attendance continues to drop below 90% after school interventions.

Trigger Letter 1

Pupils Name

DOB

I am writing to you with reference to the attendance of your son/daughter. The attendance register (copy enclosed) shows that his/her attendance currently stands at XX% I am concerned that this attendance level may seriously impact upon his/her ability to access the curriculum.

The school's minimum attendance target is **95%** and we would appreciate your support in ensuring that your son/daughter's attendance improves to at least our minimum school target.

Whilst writing I would also advise you that it is a parent's responsibility to ensure a pupil attends, even when they have been excluded from transport.

I do hope that we shall see an improvement in **XXXX**'s attendance in the coming weeks. If you have any concerns regarding attendance or if there is anything the school can do to support your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact me, either at school on the above telephone number, or email XXXX@oakbank.beds.sch.uk

The local authority request that school ensure that parents are made aware of both the definition of who is a parent and also what the law says parents must do with regards to their child's education. Please see our attendance policy ***hyperlink to schools attendance policy***

Yours sincerely,

Attendance Officer

APPENDIX D

Trigger letter 2

Pupils Name

DOB

I am writing to you with reference to the attendance of your son/daughter. The attendance register (copy enclosed) shows that his/her attendance currently stands at XX% **with XX number of unauthorised absences**. I am concerned that this attendance level may seriously impact upon his/her ability to fully access the curriculum.

The schools minimum attendance target is 95% and we would appreciate your support in ensuring that your son/daughter's attendance improves to at least our minimum school target.

Unfortunately we will be unable to unauthorise any further absences **as illness from the date of this letter onwards unless satisfactory** medical evidence is provided to support these absences. Medical evidence is provided to support these absences. Medical evidence can take the form of copies of prescriptions, appointment cards or sight of medication. In certain cases a letter from the GP or consultant would be required so that extra support to help a child access their education because of a medical need can be arranged.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/school_attendance.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachmentatachment_data/attachment_data/file/361237/school_attendance.pdf)

Should **XXXX** level of attendance fail to improve or the school doesn't receive satisfactory evidence to support the absences, the school may need to consider requesting that you attend a joint meeting with the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer or request that a Penalty Notice is issued in line with Central Bedfordshire Councils Code of Conduct.

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schoolsportal/administration/inclusion/referrals.aspx>

Please contact us if you wish to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Attendance Officer

APPENDIX E

Formal Meeting Letter

Dear

Pupils Name

DOB

As you are aware we continue to work hard to improve our student's attendance levels thus improving the life chances of your child and enabling them to achieve their full potential. As part of the School's Attendance Policy we are arranging meetings for all those students who have had attendance levels of 90% or below (at the end of the previous academic year) and who would be at risk of becoming a persistent absentee.

The aim of this meeting is to discuss the reasons for the previous absences and offer advice and support to enable your child to achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for the new academic year.

The meeting will be held at:

On

At:

It is very important that you attend this meeting however if you are unable to make the above time or date please inform the School as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Attendance Officer

APPENDIX F

PN Notification Letter

Dear

Pupils Name

DOB

I am writing to inform you that due to YOUR CHILDs irregular attendance I have requested that the Local Authority issues you with a Penalty Notice

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schoolsportal/administration/inclusion/referrals.aspx>

Or have made a formal referral to the Local School Attendance Officer who will be in contact with you in the near future.

Should you have any further information that would support YOUR CHILD'S level of absence than I would ask that this is shared with me or the Assistant Head (Welfare).

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

APPENDIX G

Punctuality Letter

Dear

Pupils Name

DOB

As you may be aware the School is working very hard to improve both attendance and punctuality. X has been identified as having been late on X occasions since XXXXXX

It is understandable and acceptable that any child can be late on an odd occasion for any number of reasons, all of which should be verified by the Parent/guardian. However, I am sure you will agree that excessive lateness is unacceptable.

Lateness in school causes immense disruption and inconvenience, plus actively disadvantages the progress of students whose lessons are constantly interrupted by the arrival of latecomers. It is also often very embarrassing for the student to be constantly arriving late.

I must advise you to make certain that your child resumes a punctual attendance pattern as soon as possible. Registration is between 9.45am and 9.55am. If a child arrives at school after the registers have closed without an adequate reason, we will have to record this as an unauthorised absence. 10 unauthorised absences may render parents liable to a Penalty Notice.

Please make every effort to improve this situation. We will continue to monitor your child's attendance and hope to see an improvement in the coming weeks. If there is no improvement, it is likely the School Attendance Officer will wish to make contact with you.

If we can support you in any way to do this please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Attendance Officer

APPENDIX H

Dear

Pupils Name

DOB

Re: Persistent Lateness

I am writing to inform you that your child _____ is persistently late for school. Between date and date he/she was late on _____ occasions and missed _____ hours of education.

When students arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one student arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher – everyone's education is compromised.

5 minutes late every day = 3 DAYS OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR
10 minutes late every day = 6.5 DAYS OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR
15 minutes late every day = 10 DAYS OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR
20 minutes late every day – 13 DAYS OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR
30 minutes late every day = 19 DAYS OF SCHOOL LOST A YEAR

Further lateness may result in you being served with a Penalty Notice. Parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. .

Meanwhile, if anything can be done to support _____ getting to school on time, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer