



Inclusive Attendance

Oakhill Primary School Attendance Policy

Introduction & Vision

At Oakhill Primary School, we are proudly recognised as an Inclusive Attendance School. We are committed to ensuring that every child has the best possible chance of success through excellent attendance and punctuality. Good attendance is defined as 97% or above, with the aim that all pupils achieve 100% wherever possible. Our approach combines the Inclusive Attendance Framework with our localised procedures and support to ensure every child is supported to attend, engage, and thrive.

The Importance of Attendance

Regular attendance is essential for academic success, social development, safeguarding, and future opportunities. Poor attendance can lead to gaps in learning, social difficulties, safeguarding concerns, and reduced attainment. Research shows that children with high attendance achieve higher academic outcomes and form stronger social connections.

Inclusive Attendance Framework



Oakhill's approach is underpinned by the Inclusive Attendance Framework. This includes:

- A 7-month professional development programme for staff.
- Continuous reflection and improvement of attendance practice.
- A recognition-based approach which celebrates attendance improvements and sustained high attendance.
- A focus on shared responsibility across pupils, parents, staff, governors, and external agencies.

Attendance Expectations

All pupils are expected to attend school every day, on time. The school day begins at 8.40am and all children must be in school by 8.50am. Registers close at 9.10am. Pupils arriving after this will be marked late or absent. School ends at 3.10pm.

Why Children Might Miss School

Sometimes children are absent for reasons beyond their control. These might include health or wellbeing issues, family circumstances, caring responsibilities, bullying or worries about feeling safe, transport problems, financial difficulties, or challenges with learning and motivation. Language or cultural barriers, friendship issues, or levels of parental involvement can also affect how regularly a child comes to school.

If you ever have concerns that may affect your child's attendance, please talk to us as soon as possible. By working together, we can find the right support, so your child feels happy, safe, and ready to learn.

Our Attendance Team can be found on Page 6 and are there to support all parents and carers.

Reporting Absence

Parents must report all absences by 9am on the first day. Absences can be reported via Arbor, by telephone, by email, in person at the school office or via Class Dojo. Oakhill follows a 'First Day Contact' process to ensure all absences are accounted for.

Authorised & Unauthorised Absences

Absences will only be authorised in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance and Stoke-on-Trent Local Authority policy. Authorised absences may include:

Other reasons for absence: Medical and dental appointments

We expect parents to make medical and dental appointments for their children before or after school or during school holidays whenever possible. If this is not possible then authorisation will be given where confirmation of the appointment is received through an appointment card or hospital letter. Children are expected to attend school prior to the appointment and parents are expected to return their children to school following the appointment whenever possible. Half a day absence is much better than a full day in these circumstances.

Other reasons for absence: Special occasions

A request to attend a special occasion during school time e.g. family wedding must be made in advance and the Headteacher will make the decision as to whether to authorise the absence. Parents will be notified of the head's decision. This will not be authorised for more than one day in any circumstance.

Other reasons for absence: Bereavement

The school is sensitive to family requests for a child's attendance at funerals or associated events. The Headteacher will offer the family advice over absence in this instance.

Other reasons for absence: Days of religious observance

Attendance at a religious observance held by a religious body will be granted as authorised absence. The Headteacher should be consulted in advance of the event. It is at the Headteacher's discretion as to how long will be granted as authorised absence. School must be informed of this absence in advance.

Holidays

Taking holidays in term time **will** affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Holidays will almost always be classed as unauthorised leave and fines will be issued as per the Stoke on Trent Local Authority guidance found at the end of this policy. Parents must complete a leave of absence form (obtained from the school office) and give this into the school office at least 4 weeks prior to the planned holiday.

- There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. A parent must obtain prior written permission from the head teacher of the school where the child is registered as a pupil if they want to take their child out of school during term time. They can only do this if:
- A parent the child normally lives with makes a written application to the head teacher at least four weeks in advance of the proposed absence during term time.
- The head teacher (or an authorised deputy) has absolute discretion regarding whether or not a child's absence from school is to be permitted during term time and if so, the period of absence to be permitted.
- The Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher will discuss each case requesting holiday in term time with the school's Education Welfare Officer. Absence will always be unauthorised for holiday in term time but when the holiday is 4 days or less, the school will not issue a penalty notice.

- Parents can be fined for taking a child on holiday during term time without the prior written permission of the head teacher (or an authorised deputy or assistant head teacher) at the school where the child is registered as a pupil.
- Where school believe a child is on holiday, doorstep visits will be completed.
- If we feel we have reasonable grounds to believe that a child has been on holiday, and parents/carers have not been honest about this, we may issue a fine inline with Stoke-on-Trent's Local Authority Guidance.

Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances

The law states that parents do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school in term-time. However, parents apply for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances if needed. This will be considered in line with Government and Local Authority guidance. The parent/carer should apply for a leave of absence by completing and returning an Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances in Term Time form, available from the school office. This form needs to be returned to school at least 4 term-time weeks prior to requested leave and will then be considered.

What do we offer in terms of attendance?

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)

Our MTSS provides a structured framework to support all pupils:

Tier 1 – Universal Offer:

Applies to all pupils and includes:

- Clear expectations and routines.
- First Day Contact and safeguarding checks.
- Recognition systems (Attend to Achieve, Dojo points, class rewards).
- Half-termly attendance reports to parents.
- Positive recognition for excellent and improving attendance.
- Access to breakfast/after-school clubs to reduce barriers.

Tier 2 – Targeted Support:

For pupils with emerging concerns. Strategies may include Early Help, personalised support plans considering individual need, meetings with parents, and targeted mentoring.

Tier 3 – Specialist/Intensive Support:

For persistent or severe absence. This involves multi-agency work, referrals to the Education Welfare Officer, formal attendance contracts, and possible legal interventions.

Data & Monitoring

Attendance is monitored daily, weekly, and half-termly. The Senior Attendance Champion (Mrs Dodd) provides updates to parents, and formal letters are issued when attendance falls below key thresholds (97%, 95%, 92%). Parents receive a half termly attendance certificate for their child, informing them of their current attendance. The Attendance Team meets regularly to track data, intervene early, and escalate where necessary.

Pupils subject to Child in Need or Child Protection plans may receive a 'doorstep' visit from a member of the pupil support team if they are absent for 2 or more days. This is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the pupils and families.

The following information explains how we collect data on attendance and what we do with this.

In managing the attendance and punctuality of its pupils, the school will:

1. **Keep appropriate records:** registers are taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session on the Scholar Pack. Marks are automatically transferred on to the computerised register on the office computer. 'First Day Contacts' are completed by the pupil support team each day for any absence that has not been reported. Accurate information on attendance is available to designated employees and data gathered will be used to inform the governing body of attendance and punctuality trends. This information will enable governors and senior staff to effectively target attendance and punctuality as necessary. The Attendance Team will monitor and review the requests for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances in Term Time.
2. **Monitor patterns of attendance.** The Attendance Team regularly review registers to support families whose patterns of attendance or punctuality are unsatisfactory.
3. **Working together.** The attendance team meet regularly to discuss issues surrounding attendance and punctuality and work together to prevent children becoming Persistent Absentees (PA) with attendances of below 90% (this means missing more than 18 days over the academic year). To prevent children becoming PA and to involve parents and keep them informed the following framework will be followed:
 - In the first instance an attendance 'letter 1' will be sent when a child's attendance drops below 97%
 - 'Letter 2' will be sent once a child's attendance drops below 95%.
 - Early Helps will be used to support parents as needed.

- If a child's attendance drops below 92% the education welfare officer will make contact with parents either by phone or inviting them to attend a meeting in school.
- Attendance contracts will be discussed and agreed with parents and the EWO should attendance continue to be a concern.
- If issues have not been resolved and a child's attendance continues to fall a Notice to Improve letter will be sent
- Once the Educational Welfare Officer is involved the parents may incur fines for non-attendance of their child at school.
- The Local Authority will be informed where pupils have been absent due to illness for 15 or more days.

Safeguarding & Children Missing Education (CME)

Attendance and safeguarding are closely linked. Unexplained or extended absence triggers safeguarding checks, including home visits and referrals to relevant agencies. Oakhill follows the Stoke-on-Trent CME procedures.

Recognition & Incentives

Attendance is celebrated through a range of incentives:

- Attend to Achieve whole-class reward system.
- Dojo points linked to attendance, behaviour, and uniform.
- Individual rewards for recognition of attendance.

Roles & Responsibilities: Attendance Team

Name of staff member	Designated role
Mrs H Dodd	Deputy Headteacher/Attendance Champion
Ms. J Somogy	Lead Learning Mentor
Mrs Nicola Hill	Family Support Worker
Mr. J Toft	Chair of Governors
Mrs T Middleweek	Educational Welfare Officer

Holiday Requests. Penalty Notices & Legal Framework

Families are expected to avoid holidays in term time and to schedule medical appointments outside of school hours where possible. Holidays will not be authorised in term time. Oakhill follows Stoke-on-Trent LA guidance and the national DfE framework. Penalty notices may be issued for unauthorised absence, **including holidays**. Further legal interventions, such as Education Supervision Orders or prosecution, may be applied in cases of persistent non-attendance.

Attendance Definitions

Persistent Absence (PA)

Attendance of **90% or below** = around **19 days or more absent in a school year** (missing the equivalent of one day every two weeks).

Risk of Persistent Absence

If your child has already missed **10 days or more** in a school year, they are at risk of becoming persistently absent. At this stage, we will work with you to improve attendance.

Severe Absence

Attendance of **50% or below** = around **95 days or more absent in a school year** (missing half of all lessons).

Types of Absence

Authorised Absence (agreed with the school)

- Illness or medical needs (with communication from parents/carers).
- Medical or dental appointments that cannot be made outside school hours.
- Religious or cultural observances.
- Family emergencies (agreed with the school).

Unauthorised Absence (not agreed with the school)

- Keeping children off school without a valid reason.
- Absences that are not explained.
- Arriving late after the register has closed.
- Days off for shopping, birthdays, or looking after siblings.
- Holidays taken in term time without prior permission.
- Leaving school during the day without permission.

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Attendance Champion and governing body. Next review due: September 2026.