ATTENDANCE POLICY

SCOPE:	Trust Policy
AUTHOR/ORIGINATOR:	Vice Principal
NAME OF RESPONSIBLE DIRECTOR/PRINCIPAL:	Mr J Webb, Sector Director & Mrs H Richley, Academy Principal
APPROVING COMMITTEE:	Trust Board
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Outstanding Achievement for All

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Attendance Policy Oak Academy

1. Statement of intent

Oak Academy believes that to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The academy's attendance officer is Mrs Michele Evans, and can be contacted via the following email: michele.evans@oak-academy.co.uk. Staff, parents and pupils will be expected to contact the attendance officer for queries or concerns about attendance

2. Legal Framework
This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children with Health Needs who cannot Attend School Policy

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trust Board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the Trust.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the Trust's ethos and policies.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help academy leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the Trust's Complaints Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Principal is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the academy.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The attendance team is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

4. Introduction

At Oak Academy we believe it is of vital importance that our students have good attendance at school. This is a successful Academy, and all students play their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to be proud to belong and to achieve of their best. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be on time, every day the Academy is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly, and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment[1]. Any absence affects the pattern of a student's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at Oak Academy is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from Oak Academy without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

5. Aims

An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities. To ensure all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand these expectations, and how they apply at Oak Academy this policy sets out:

- Section 1: the practical procedures to be followed at Oak Academy in relation to attendance.

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[1] Working together to improve school attendance

- Section 2: the measures in place at Oak Academy to promote regular attendance by its registered pupils.
- Section 3: the responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance.
- Section 4: the action to be taken by staff if a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly.

6. Section 1: Practical Procedures

This section sets out the practical procedures to be followed at Oak Academy in relation to attendance are as follows:

- The attendance and punctuality expectations of pupils and parents, including start and close of the day, register closing times and the processes for requesting leaves of absence and informing the academy of the reason for an unexpected absence.

- Information and contact details of the academy staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis (such as a form tutor / class teacher, attendance officer, admin team etc) and for more detailed support on attendance (such as a head of year, pastoral lead or family liaison officer etc).

- The academies day to day processes for managing attendance, for example first day calling and processes to follow up on unexplained absence.

There are clear links from this policy to our safeguarding and child protection duties as set out KCSIE.

The Admissions Register (or "school roll")

1. As an academy, we are responsible for keeping the Admissions Register up to date. This contains specific personal details of every pupil along with the date of admission or readmission to the academy, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the last school attended.

2. We also hold emergency contact numbers for each pupil. It is our policy to hold more than one such number, so that we have options to contact a responsible adult should the need arise.

3. A pupil's name can only be lawfully deleted from the admissions register in very limited circumstances.

The Attendance Register

4. The register will be taken at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion, the academy will record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

5. These records will be kept electronically to ensure accuracy and the timely sharing and analysis of information – all of which is critical to ensure good attendance.

Punctuality and Regular Attendance

6. The Academy Day starts at 8.30 a.m. and finishes at 3.00 p.m.

Lateness

Students are expected to arrive to school by 8.25 a.m.

Class teachers will record a late mark to the register on SIMS, adding the minutes late which is monitored.

- If a student arrives after the register has been taken, the student will be marked late.
- Students who receive 3 or more late marks in one week will receive a 2 hour after school detention on a Friday.
- A late letter will be sent to the parent/carers of a student who continues to be late.
- Students who are consistently late will be placed on a Family Liaison officer Attendance report and will be mentored. Parent/carers will be met or spoken to regarding the academy's concerns over this lateness.
- If a student arrives after the register has closed, the student will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this does not count as a present mark, and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This is in accordance with Government Regulations.
  Unauthorised late marks could lead to parent/carer being prosecuted.

7. Registers will be kept open until 9.30am, after which a pupil will be marked absent.

Absence

8. Parents must contact the academy when their child is absent to explain that absence. This can be done as follows:
   - Telephone: 01202 242300
   - E mail: michele.evans@oak-academy.co.uk

   giving the following details:

   - full name of pupil;
   - pupil's Year group or Form;
   - Full name of person reporting absence and relation to child;
   - Reason for absence.

9. By 8.30am, where no reason for the absence has been provided for that day, the academy will contact the parents via text message - within 30 minutes - to understand the reason for the absence.
   A phone call home is made between 9.45 and 10.15am if there has been no response from the text.
   Safeguarding is a priority at Oak Academy, and we need to ensure all our students are safe and well. This is also an expectation from the local authority.

10. If no communication has been received from home, a 'Safe and Well' home visit will be completed by one of the Family Liaison officers on either Day 1 or Day 3 of absence. A list of students requiring home visits will be emailed to the FLO's by 10.30am each day from the Attendance Officer.

11. If further unexplained absences occur, the academy will continue to try and contact the parent (including foster parents and/ or social workers where appropriate). This should be with the aim of understanding **why** the absence has occurred, and **when** the pupil will return.

12. The correct absence code will be inputted into the Attendance Register as soon as the reason is ascertained. No later than 5 working days after the session.

13. Granting a leave of absence will only be made in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted it is for the Principal to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from academy. It is extremely unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. To request a leave of absence please follow the procedures below:

- Parent/carers must either write or email the Principal Mrs Hayley Richley, if such a request is to be made. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

- Any holidays must be taken out of term time, there is no automatic entitlement in law to take time off during academy time.

If the unauthorised holiday is taken and results in your child having 5 or more days off throughout the academic year a penalty notice will be issued through Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole local authority.

The Penalty Notice can be a fine of up to £120 per parent per child.

7. Section 2: Promoting Regular Attendance

This section sets out the measures in place at Oak Academy to **promote** regular attendance by its registered pupils.

The Academy provides termly presentations on our website to remind parents/carers about the importance of positive attendance at school. It also signposts the support available to ensure that any barriers to punctuality/attendance can be supported and overcome. The school is keen to build strong relationships with parent/carers and holds regular attendance drop-in sessions and has a very 'open door' policy of support.

Weekly 100% texts are sent to parents to recognise 100% Attendance. Parent/carers are kept informed of their child's percentage as students write their Attendance data, weekly, into their planners.

Family Liaison Officers utilise our social media page to support the promotion of positive attendance and to celebrate students who demonstrate positive punctuality and attendance.

The Attendance team monitor absence, identify trends and then target these individual students/groups of students to ensure they have the correct interventions to support them attending school.

Oak Academy will refer students to the relevant support agencies including BCP Council Inclusion Services and School Transport to remove barriers to school attendance.

Oak Academy adheres to the legal guidelines outlined for non-attendance including following the Fast Track to Attendance process and the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices or Prosecution where appropriate.

Promoting and incentivising

14. The Academy will:
    a) Treat all students and parents with dignity. Our staff will always seek to model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.
    b) Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels when a progress report is sent home.
    c) Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the academy (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
    d) Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
    e) Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority.
    f) Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps. Re-integration programmes are formulated with the key stage Family Liaison Officer and/or Head of Year. Each individual pupils' circumstances are taken into consideration.
    g) Rewards We promote 'Be In To Win'. Positive Attendance is encouraged consistently, and rewards are shared with students. This includes 100% Attendance family raffle prizes and other weekly and end of term rewards.
       Oak Academy takes students on Attendance Rewards trip at the end of T2 and T6.

Data Strategy

15. The Academy understands that as poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early detection is crucial. We will therefore undertake regular data analysis to:
    - both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils and/ or pupil cohorts that need it;
    - look at historic and emerging patterns across the academy and develop strategies to address them.

16. The Academy will typically carry out the following analysis:
    a) Monitoring and analysing weekly attendance (including punctuality) patterns and trends, including whether there are issues for some children on certain days;
    b) Patterns of attendance within sessions, to ensure that all pupils are attending all timetabled lessons
    c) Half-termly, termly and full-year data analysis of patterns and trends, including analysis of pupils and cohorts, identifying patterns in use of certain codes, days where attendance is typically poor and (where appropriate) subjects with low lesson attendance
    d) Benchmarking attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against Trust-level, local, regional and national data.

17. We will use this analysis to identify pupils who need support so that we can focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those students and to identify any common themes to support improvement planning. We will use the data to inform us regarding the

impact of academy-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented, to evaluate approaches or inform action. We will also provide weekly attendance data to tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and more in-depth data to academy leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).

Absence reduction strategy

18. We will devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils in a year group with higher-than-average absence or for specific groups of students. This includes:
    - Return to school support session(s)
    - Start of day support sessions with the FLOs
    - Individual and group mentoring sessions
    - Attendance reports
    - Parent Drop-In session(s)
    - Reward incentives and trips

19. Data and reports will be shared with the Local Governing Body.
20. As part of promoting regular attendance the academy will consider the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

21. The Academy recognises that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as they are for any other pupil.

22. That said, in working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This will include:
    a) Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has special educational needs and disabilities or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.
    b) Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
    c) Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, the academy will work with families to help support routines where academy transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day. Please see the Academy's SEN policy for further details on SEN support.

d) Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers pupils may face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.

e) Ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance, recognising that such arrangements can be for a limited time only.

f) Ensuring data is regularly monitored for these groups including at Trust and Academy Advisory Committee meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.

23. Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

24. In co-ordination with External agencies; for example CAHMS/Dorset Healthcare/ School nursing team, and Inclusion staff, appropriate timetabling and support is put in place and reviewed monthly.

25. In all cases, the academy will be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents; and talk to pupils and parents and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

Part-time timetables

26. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. Please note that a part-time timetable cannot be used as a reasonable adjustment for SEND, unless this is on a temporary basis and as advised by an external agency e.g., Educational Psychologist.

27. A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any Inclusion support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. Formal arrangements will also be put in place for regularly reviewing it (minimum fortnightly) with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will treat such absence as authorised. We will of course consider how best to support learning when a child is working on a part time timetable. These can be agreed by Emma Biles (Vice Principal) or Sarah Buxton (SENDCO)

8. Section 3: Responsibilities
This section outlines responsibilities of members of staff in relation to attendance.

- The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school is:

  Emma Biles Vice Principal emma.biles@oak-academy.co.uk

- Responsibility for identifying unexplained absences on "day 1" will fall to

  Michelle Evans – Attendance Officer

- Responsibility for identifying further unexplained absences will fall to the above staff member

  Information and contact details of the academy staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are:

  Cassie Emery – KS3 Family Liaison Officer Cassie.Emery-Tyler@oak-academy.co.uk

  Keisha Pretty – KS4 Family Liaison Officer Keisha.Pretty@oak-academy.co.uk

  Kate Trott – Inclusion Manager Kate.Trott@oak-academy.co.uk

  More detailed support on attendance can also be requested from the above members of staff.

9. Section 4: Specific Action for Failure to Attend Regularly

This section sets out the action to be taken by staff if a registered pupil fails to attend the academy regularly.

28. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the academy works with and supports the family. Wherever possible, we will keep this person consistent.

29. Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic the academy will draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, the academy will take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support.

30. In the first instance, the academy will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.

31. Where barriers are outside of the academy's control, we endeavour to work together with all partners to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need. As a minimum, this will include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school, agreeing actions or interventions to address them and keeping those actions under regular review in discussion with pupils and families. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support.

These referrals can include a request for a BCP Reintegration Officer to support attendance or an inter-agency request to support the family and pupil(s).
Oak Academy will communicate and attend meetings with all professionals where relevant.

Where a student is attending an unauthorised setting, Oak academy will ensure that appropriate agencies are contacted.

Where absence intensifies, so will the support provided, which will require us to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners, as follows:

- If the needs and barriers are individual to the pupil this may include provision of mentoring, careers advice, college placements, 1-2-1 tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision.
- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment.
- Where engagement in support is proving challenging, the academy will hold more formal conversations with the parents (and pupil where they are old enough to understand). This is likely to be led by the senior leader responsible for attendance and may include the academy's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team. The aim of these meetings will be to clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future but will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences.
- Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with the academy will work with the local authority to:
  - o Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order.
  - o Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance).
  - o Issue a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour. A fixed penalty notice, or prosecution will be referred to the local authority when unauthorised absence is at 10%, or for other specific unauthorised absences e.g. holiday taken in term time. The local authority will issue and manage the payment of the fine or prosecution.
  - o Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support.

32. In all cases, the academy will monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and adjust where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family. Where interventions are failing, the academy will work together with all parties to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.