



OPPICE Performing Arts School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of Policy:	November 2010
Staff responsible:	Mrs K. Lane (Assistant Headteacher), Mr J. Brabbins (Attendance Officer)
Initial discussion with Governors	December 2010
Approval of policy by Governors	December 2010
Review Date:	November 2011

PRINCIPLES

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority (LA).

All children are sometimes unhappy about attending school. Families can sometimes be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child, at an early stage. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that school attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

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

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- **parents keeping children off school unnecessarily**
- **truancy before or during the school day**
- **absences which have never been properly explained**
- **children who arrive at school too late to get a mark**

Parents are expected to contact relevant school staff and to work with them in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may offer parents a formal Parenting Contract or refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), from the LA. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement wherever possible but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use legal proceedings if required, including Fixed Penalty Notices, fines or prosecution.

Alternatively, parents or pupils may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

PROCEDURES

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences.

Parents are requested:

- to phone/notify school on the first day of absence (and again if absence is more than three days) and provide a letter to the Academic Tutor or return the 'Reason for Absence' slip from the child's planner. The Attendance Officer may make enquiries if no information is received. In exceptional circumstances further evidence of a child's illness may be required such as a doctor's note.
- to notify the Academic Tutor in advance of medical/dental appointments and other future absences.
- to complete Holidays forms in advance and return to the Academic Tutor/Attendance Officer.

Holidays of up to 10 days in any academic year are authorised according to LA policy. Further days will not be authorised unless sanctioned directly by the Headteacher.

Concerns about absence will be followed up by the Attendance Officer, Academic Tutors, House Managers, Assistant Head of House or Head of House and the EWO Service.

Lateness: All arrivals after 8.50am and 1.45pm must go directly to lesson, where they will be registered as late on the SIMs lesson monitor system. Persistent lateness will be followed up by Academic Tutors, House Managers, Assistant Head of House and the EWO service.

It is not usually possible for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, minding the house, birthdays, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. after the death of a close relative). In these extenuating circumstances parents should keep in regular contact with the school.

Parents are asked to make medical/dental appointments outside school time wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, a "present" mark can still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day. Parents are asked to tell the school in advance of any such appointments wherever possible.

Working Together

Regular attendance at school is a prerequisite to good education. However, the school recognises that occasionally disruptions occur in family life. It is the school's policy to support students through difficult or challenging times. We ask parents to inform us of any circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and we will endeavour to support students and parents by offering advice and making referrals to relevant agencies that may be able to help. However, the school has a legal responsibility to register students twice daily and report any student who has poor attendance and punctuality to the Local Authority. By working together, parents, students and the school can ensure that the students will benefit from a good attendance record and a consistent approach to his/her learning.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance target set by the DFES for 2010 - 11: 92.64%

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Assistant Headteacher	Mrs K Lane
Attendance Officer	Mr J Brabbins
Heads of House	Mrs K Rhodes, Mr M Dodd, Mr M Dowson & Ms S McKenna
Assistant Head of House	Mrs S Smith, Miss L Willetts, Mrs L Holdcroft, Mr C Rowley
Education Welfare Officer	Mrs D Rowe
House Managers	Ms R Carnall & Mr R Wheeler
Academic Tutors	

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure a high a level of attendance as possible.