

Orleans Primary School



Attendance and Lateness Policy

Governor's Committee Responsible	PC&C	
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Signed (Chair of Governors / Committee)		Date
Signed (Headteacher)		Date

1. Aims of the Policy

At Orleans Primary School, it is our aim that all of our pupils achieve their full potential throughout their time at our school. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and should be at Orleans Primary on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We believe that pupils need to attend school every day to give each of them the chance to take advantage of the educational opportunities we offer. We strive to work with both parents, pupils and where appropriate the Educational Welfare Service to achieve every pupil's best attendance throughout each academic year. Ultimately, missing lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind; research demonstrates that children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. It is our expectation at Orleans Primary School that pupils will have at least 96% attendance each year each year.

This policy has been written in conjunction with the DfE Guidance on School Attendance and outlines our procedures for supporting and improving good attendance and punctuality.

2. Principles

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to ensure that their child attends school regularly and it is an offence to condone absence from school without just cause.

3. Our objectives are as follows:

1. To follow an effective, efficient yet supportive system for monitoring attendance, including persistent absence.
2. To maintain high levels of attendance throughout the school, identifying any concerns early on and acting to improve attendance and lateness.
3. To recognise the external factors which influence pupil attendance and to work with parents and the Education Welfare Officer to achieve a higher level of attendance for identified families.
4. To encourage all our pupils and parents to understand the importance of coming to school on time, every day.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring the level of attendance as reported in the Headteachers report each term.

4.2 The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Ensuring parents are fully aware of this policy and the school expectations of

attendance

- Communicating with parents when attendance becomes a concern
- Making referrals to the Educational Welfare Officer regarding pupil attendance

4.3 The Admin Team carry out the following duties;

- Monitor daily attendance across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

5. Attendance

5.1 Punctuality - Good time keeping is an important life skill. It is the expectation at our school that all pupils, including those who attend the Nursery, are in school on time every day. If a child is not present at the start of the day, they can miss the input for the lesson as well as disrupting the lesson for others, as the teacher has to explain what the class are doing to the child who arrives late. The self-esteem of the pupil can also be affected as all their peers notice their late entry into the classroom.

If, within a half term, a child is late more than once a week a letter will be sent home explaining the problems which lateness can cause and asking parents to ensure their child is in school on time.

The expectation is that punctuality will improve rapidly after the initial lateness letter is sent. If however, it continues then the Head teacher will request a meeting with the parents to identify ways of ensuring the child is in school on time, every day. If the lateness continues then a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Under normal circumstances, at Orleans Primary School, class registers are marked immediately at the start of each morning and afternoon session.

Pupils who arrive at school after the register has started are marked as late; this will be recorded as an L. If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, they will be marked with a U, which denotes an unauthorised absence for the morning session. The Department for Education guidance states clearly that a child must not be marked present if they are not in school during registration.

5.2 Authorised and unauthorised absence from school - The expectation of the staff and Governors at Orleans Primary School is that every child will attend school unless they are not well enough to do so. Absence from school for reasons other than illness may also be authorised if they are for one of the following reasons:

- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance (up to 2 days only)
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as a family bereavement / funeral.
- Secondary transfer School visits
- Covid-19 related. I.e. self-isolating

We do require sight of appointment cards for medical and dental appointments. These should be shown to a member of the administrative team in the school office who will note this on our attendance monitoring system.

5.3 Holidays during term-time - Parents must avoid booking family holidays during term time. The pupils have 13 weeks holiday each year and the expectation is that family holidays will be booked during these times. Pupils who miss weeks of school due to a holiday being taken during term time lose out on key aspects of the planned learning. It is our policy that class teachers do not set 'catch up' work for pupils to take on holiday.

5.4 Exceptional Leave - Very occasionally, parents may request an extended period of leave for their child. If parents need to remove their child from school during term time, they must complete a "Leave of Absence form" which will be passed to the Headteacher. The Headteacher considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

For each leave of absence request advice will be sought from the Educational Welfare Officer. If the Head teacher agrees the request, the parents must be aware that robust procedures, including the possible removal of the child's name from the school register, will be enforced if the child does not return to school by the agreed date.

Please note **Family holidays and excursions will not be authorised. If the request is refused but the leave of absence nonetheless taken, it will be marked as unauthorised and will be referred to the EWO.**

5.5 Persistent Absence – If an individual pupil's absence rate is 10% or higher, he/she is classified as a persistent absentee. Persistent absence will be dealt with by the Headteacher who will contact parents in order to see if there is a specific difficulty for the family which the school may be able to help with. If parents are having difficulties in getting a child to school, it is helpful that the school knows about it as soon as possible so that we may be able to assist where appropriate, this may involve meetings with the School Nurse, Educational Welfare Officer or the Headteacher.

Where attendance falls below 90%, parents/guardians will be issued with an attendance letter. Any further absence without there being an acceptable reason (e.g. long-term sickness) will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer.

Where there is a notable pattern of absence e.g. every Monday or Friday, with no obvious explanation, the Education Welfare Officer will be consulted.

If, in spite of the support of the school and Education Welfare Officer, attendance does not improve, there may be a need to send a letter warning of legal action. Any such action will be in accordance with Section 3 of the DFE School Attendance Guidance.

5.6 Appointments during the school day - Parents are expected to make appointments outside school hours. Where a child has an appointment during a school day s/he should

come to school for the remainder of the day, leaving only for the time of the appointment. Written notification is required when a child is to go off site during the day. Sight of the appointment card is acceptable.

5.7 The Final Week of Term Pupils at Orleans Primary School work up to and including the last day of each term. It is not our policy to occupy pupils with DVDs and playing board games in the final few days of term. Every single teaching day is used for just that; to teach in order to maximise learning. All pupils are therefore expected to attend everyday including the last day of each term.

5.8 The last day of half term and the last day of term - The school finishes at the following times throughout the school term;

Age Group	Finish time at the end of the day
Nursery	AM session: 11.45am PM session: 3.30pm
Reception	3.10pm
Key Stage One	3.15pm
Lower Key Stage Two	3.20pm
Upper Key Stage Two	3.20pm

At the end of each full term i.e., Christmas, Easter and Summer school finishes at 2pm for all classes. The Nursery class is open for the afternoon up to 2pm.

6. Communication of Absences

6.1 Notifying the School of a child's absence - If a child is going to be absent from school, the Parent/Carer must either telephone school, use the OPPTA App or email the school on info@orleans.richmond.sch.uk by 9.00am on **each** day that their child is absent. Parents are required to give a specific reason for their child's absence, rather than just a communication about being a child being ill.

6.2 Year 6 Absence Notifications - The school office **must** be informed of a Year 6 pupil's absence before 8.55am as this year group have permission to walk to school independently. For Safeguarding purposes, we must be informed that the pupil is absent by their parent/carers so that we know they are genuinely ill and that the parent/carers is aware their child is not at school.

The school has a Missing Child Policy that is utilised in the event of an unexplained absence of a Year 6 pupil. Any child who is absent without an explanation will be followed up by the school admin team and reported to the Headteacher. If we are unable to locate a parent/carers to confirm their Year 6 child is ill, it may be necessary to contact the police to confirm that the child is at home.

7. Monitoring of Attendance - The School Office monitors attendance daily; all absences and their reasons are recorded. The school operates a system where when a child's absence falls

below 96%, this results in a phone call from the Headteacher to the parent to ascertain strategies to rapidly improve their child's attendance. Further absences may result in a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer.

The Head teacher is informed of absences of vulnerable children and their parents are contacted to check the reason for absence. Where necessary, social services are then informed.

The Head teacher meets regularly with the Educational Welfare Officer to review attendance within the school. The Educational Welfare Officer, in consultation with the school, will contact parents where there is a difficulty.

During the Spring Term, letters are sent to parents informing them of their child's attendance.

When the school does not receive a reason for absence, there will be a follow up phone call to ascertain the reason. If the parents cannot be contacted a letter will be emailed requesting a written response.

7.1 Educational Welfare Officer - The Educational Welfare Officer comes into school once every half term. The EWO will look at the registers to check absences of individual children whose attendance is below 95%. During these meetings, the Head teacher and EWO discuss any concerns over individual pupils' attendance and the actions, which have already been taken. The Head teacher will refer to the EWO if there are concerns over the attendance of a pupil.

8. Pupils transferring to and from other schools – When pupils join Orleans Primary School from other schools during the school year, we expect that there will be a minimal gap between the date they finish at their previous school and when they start at Orleans. This will be agreed with parents when they accept the place and the admissions team at the Local Authority will be notified. In the event that a pupil is not present on the agreed start date, the admin team will contact both the child's parents that day and the previous school to ascertain the reasons for the non-attendance. If they are unable to contact the parents and have no explanation, advice will be sought from the Educational Welfare Officer.

When a pupil leaves to join another school, the school must be provided with the name, address and contact details for the school. A date will be agreed for the last day at Orleans Primary School and the new school will be contacted to inform them of the day that the child will be starting.

9. Children in Entertainment – Pupils who are taking part in a performance will need to have a licence granted by the Local Authority. As part of this, the Headteacher of the school the child attends will be consulted to decide whether or not to issue the license. Licences are granted where the Local Authority is satisfied about the child's fitness and about the provisions made for the child's safety and education. If the Headteacher is concerned that having a license will be detrimental to the education of a child, it will not be granted. If an application for a license is made for a child whose attendance is under 95% the Headteacher may refuse the license. The school attendance of pupils in entertainment is closely

monitored by the Educational Welfare Officer.

10. Long Term Absence - When children are likely to be absent for more than one week on medical grounds, a valid sick certificate or doctors' letter is required.

11. Strategies for promoting attendance – At Orleans Primary School we believe it is important to celebrate good attendance. A cup is also presented, on a weekly basis, to the class with the best attendance and the winning class is announced in the weekly newsletter to parents.

12. Home Educated Pupils/Removal of pupils from the school register - If a parent decides to home educate their child, they are required to put this in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will inform the Local Authority. The school will, first and foremost, seek to work with parents prior to any such decision taking place, however the school does recognise that parents do have the right to home education without the agreement of either the school or the Local Authority. The DFE guidance states clearly that parents have a duty to ensure their child receives suitable full-time education but this does not have to be at school.

13. Reduced timetable protocol - All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full site education; in very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs for example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full time education and a part time timetable is considered necessary to reintegrate the child into school.

Within any such circumstances the school will follow the local authority's guidance using the Reduced Timetable Protocol and follow its guidance in how this is recorded on the register.