

ORCHARD PRIMARY SCHOOL and NURSERY



ATTENDANCE POLICY

This Attendance Policy has been approved by the Governing Body in December 2024 and will be reviewed in December 2027.

Signed by Chair of Governors:

Signed by Headteacher:

At Orchard Primary School we expect good attendance and punctuality from all our pupils, for them to make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer.

We believe that regular attendance is vitally important as it promotes successful learning as well as development of the habits needed for the responsibilities of adult life, especially in the workplace.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives Orchard Primary School will establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

KEY AIMS.

1. To improve the overall attendance of children in school.
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for everyone associated with the school.
3. To develop a clear framework of responsibilities to ensure actions to promote attendance are completed.
4. To promote a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality amongst pupils and families providing support and advice where needed.
5. To ensure safeguarding systems are in place in relation to attendance and punctuality.

Index

| | Page |
|---|------|
| 1 PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES | 4 |
| 2 SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES | 4 |
| 3 REGISTRATION | 4 |
| 4 LATENESS | 4 |
| 5 ABSENCE | 5 |
| 6 APPOINTMENTS/SICKNESS DURING THE DAY | 6 |
| 7 LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME | 6 |
| 8 UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE | 7 |
| 9 SNOW AND OTHER NON-EMERGENCIES | 7 |
| 10 ISSUING EDUCATION ATTENDANCE PENALTY NOTICES | 8 |
| 11 ATTENDANCE MONITORING | 8 |
| 12 CONTINUOUS PERSISTENT ABSENCE | 8 |
| 13 RELIGIOUS LEAVE OF ABSENCE | 9 |
| 14 CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION | 9 |

1. PARENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Under section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, a parent is responsible for ensuring a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs that a child might have.

2. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the school's responsibility to regularly check and effectively monitor school attendance and to inform parents and governors of their findings.

3. REGISTRATION

Our school day starts at 8.45am. Registers are marked shortly after this using the SIMS system. Classroom staff will only use the following codes:

- / - present at morning registration
 - \ - present at afternoon registration
 - N - reason for absence not yet established
 - L - arrived late at the classroom but here before the register closes. Staff will indicate the number of minutes a child has arrived late in the appropriate section of the SIMS register.
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- Staff will not continue codes entered by the office, such as I or M, they will mark it as code N. The Office will enter the appropriate code.
 - The register closes at 9.00am and 1.15pm.
 - Individual pupils who arrive in class after 8.45am or 1:00pm but before 9.00am or 1.15pm will be marked as 'Late' with the registration code 'L'.
 - Pupils who arrive in school after 9.00am and 1.15pm will be marked, by the school office, as a half days absence, indicated by a 'U' (present but late, unauthorised) in the register. Minutes late will be recorded
 - If the reason for lateness beyond the close of the register is an exceptional circumstance, agreed by the Head teacher/Deputy Head teacher, then code L will be used and minutes late recorded.
 - Teachers will advise the office of absence notifications received directly from parents/carers.

4. LATENESS

We recognize that persistent lateness is:

- i. Detrimental to a child's education.
- ii. Administratively disruptive.
- iii. A poor preparation for future schooling and adult life

- All staff will record minutes late as described in the Registration section of this policy, section 3.
- Lateness will be monitored weekly by the school office
- Every Friday, notification of minutes late will be emailed to parents of children who have accrued any lateness during the current week.
- Parents will receive a further email if persistent lateness (more than 10 sessions in a 10-week period) is being recorded within the SIMS registration system.
- The situation will be closely monitored over the following 6-week period. If improvements are not made, then a meeting will be held to discuss the issues around persistent lateness.
- Extreme cases may be referred to the Early Help Unit for enforcement/Local Authority.

5. ABSENCE

We ask parents/carers to help the school by notifying us of all absences on the first day by email office@orchard-pri.notts.sch.uk or by telephone 01623 455939. The school office will record the notified absence and the reason given for the absence, using the appropriate registration code on the SIMS registration system. The Office will also record more detailed reasons in a logbook.

- If no notification has been given regarding the child's absence, the temporary registration code N (reasons for absence not yet established) will be used.
- On day one of the absence, admin staff will contact the parent/carer to seek a reason for absence.
- If no response, or an unsatisfactory response, has been received then, if the staff believe or know that the child is subject to safeguarding a home visit will take place.
- If contact is not made on day 1, contact again will be attempted on day 2.
- On day 3 emergency contacts will be contacted, and the school may feel a home visit is required.
- Once a reason for absence is established the school office will change code N to the appropriate registration code.
- When a reason for absence has not been explained, then the following procedures will occur:
 - i. A letter will be sent by the admin staff to the parents/carers of the child, asking for a reason for the absence giving 4 days to respond from date of letter.

- ii. If school do not receive an adequate explanation, within the timeframe, the absence will be unauthorised and registration code O (unauthorised absence) will be used to replace code N.

6. APPOINTMENTS/SICKNESS DURING THE DAY

- When children are removed from school it is by negotiation with the Head or Deputy Head Teacher. They will decide if a child's absence is authorised. Absences which may be authorised are for sickness, and medical or dental appointments that cannot be arranged outside school hours. **Evidence of medical or dental appointments will be required.**
- Children who leave school with a parent/carer during the school day for an appointment or for illness must sign out electronically using the InVentry system in the reception area to satisfy fire regulations.
- If children have left school for an appointment, then parent's must sign them back in electronically, upon their return that day.
- It is expected that children return to school after their appointment except where the appointment finishes after the school day has ended.
- Children who leave school part way through the day for an appointment, and who do not return to school, will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless evidence has been provided that the appointment finishes beyond the school day. This will need to be agreed with the Head or Deputy Head teacher.

7. LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 came into force on 19th August 2024. The amendments make it clear that Head teachers may **not grant any leave of absence during term time** unless there are very exceptional circumstances.

- To avoid personal opinion and to ensure complete fairness for all, we refer all planned leave of absence during term time to the Local Authority.
- To request an exceptional leave of absence during term-time, parents will need to complete a Leave of Absence form, located in the school office.
- The form will be considered by the Head or Deputy head teacher.
- If the reason for absence is an exceptional circumstance, then the absence may be authorised and a letter sent to the parents to confirm this.
- The Head or Deputy Head teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

- If the absence is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance, then a letter will be sent to parents stating that the proposed leave, during term-time, will be classified as unauthorised and the appropriate registration code will be entered on the registration system. We operate a fair to all system
- Where a child has been marked as ill, but school believes this absence was due to a holiday, school will send a letter asking for proof of illness within 4 days of the date of the letter. Should no proof be provided, the registration code will be marked as G – family holiday – not agreed. Alternatively, the school may make the decision to visit the family home to see the child and afterwards mark the register with the appropriate.

8. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

- Unauthorised absences will be given for truancy, staying at home to look after younger children or sick relatives, overlaying, shopping trips, birthdays, hair appointments, family holiday's that do not meet the exceptional circumstances criteria, or regular illness where no medical evidence is forthcoming, this list is not exhaustive.
- The Local Authority follows the updated School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 which considers more than 10 unauthorised half day absences (5 days) within any given rolling 10 week period as persistent absence.
- Nottinghamshire Local Authority **will pursue** cases of poor attendance through the courts.
- On the tenth half day of unauthorised absence Notts LA will issue a fine.

9. SNOW AND OTHER NON-EMERGENCIES

Where school remains open in the event of snow or other exceptional circumstances, **all** children will be expected to attend school. If transporting your child to school is impossible then please speak with the Head or Deputy Head teacher, who will decide if the non-attendance can be accepted as an exceptional circumstance.

- Children, who arrive late in these circumstances will NOT be given a late mark.
- Children who do not attend, but do not have an agreed, exceptional circumstance, will be marked code O – other unauthorised circumstance

10. ISSUING EDUCATION ATTENDANCE PENALTY NOTICES

In line with Nottinghamshire Local Authority, an unauthorised leave of absence, whether for holidays, persistent lateness beyond 9am and 1.15pm, or any other form of unauthorised absence, of 5 or more days days/10 sessions (over a 10-week rolling period) may lead to parents/carers being issued with an Education Penalty Notice **per** child **per** parent.

- If paid within 21 days, the fine will be £80 per child.
- If paid after 28 days, the fine will be £160 per child.
- Where a fine remains unpaid the matter may be enforced at the Magistrates Court.
- Fines per parent will be capped to **two fines within any three-year period**. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

11. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

- Every week attendance figures are monitored. The school will offer support as required if attendance or punctuality becomes an issue. Attendance panel meetings will be used as part of the school's support to families. Where the need arises, we will offer attendance contracts
- Pupil Premium children will be identified on the SIMS system. The Pupil Premium Lead and Attendance Lead will collaborate at least once per term to scrutinise the attendance of all Pupil Premium children.

12. CONTINUOUS PERSISTENT ABSENCE

- If monitoring finds that children are continuously persistently absent and/or accepted proof of absence has not been provided by the parents/carers, then from the 20th session (10th day) of unauthorised absence all the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised from then on, until such time as attendance improves significantly. Attendance monitoring will be carried out according to this policy.
- Should attendance deteriorate again then all absences will be marked as unauthorised from the 10th session of absence, until such time as attendance, once again, improves significantly.
- Parents will be made aware of this at every occurrence by email.

13. RELIGIOUS LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- For a day set aside exclusively for religious observance, students will be granted one day for each occasion of religious observance for their religion, with a maximum of 3 days over one academic year.
- These absences, if granted, will be recorded as authorised using the 'R' code on SIMS. These are the codes as stipulated by the Department for Education and whilst absence is authorised, it does count against the child's attendance. This is the national policy.

14. CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator for abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in the future.

Schools are required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and why children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days.

The schools' Designated Safeguarding leads should work closely with other school staff (i.e. Attendance Lead, Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher) to manage risks, ensure appropriate multi-agency engagement where necessary, so that children and young people receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly.