**Oaktree Nursery and Primary School**

**Attendance Policy**

This policy has been developed in consultation with staff, parents and pupils at Oaktree Nursery and Primary School and follows updated DFE guidance ‘Working together to improve school attendance’ published May 2022.

It is always our aim to work in partnership with our families to ensure good attendance and identify any barriers to this, so that we can work together to address any issues. Our school ethos is based on the deeply-held belief that all children need to feel ‘safe enough to achieve well’ and good school attendance is key to this. Good attendance builds a sense of community and belonging and helps children to develop the social skills and social relationships that they will need throughout life.

**At Oaktree Nursery and Primary School it is our Aim to:**

**‘**Engender positive attitudes among our Oaktree community so that everyone respects the rights of all people and challenges inequalities based on ability, gender, ethnicity, language, culture, age, class, sexual orientation, disability or religion. We aim for all of our students and staff to feel valued as we celebrate their uniqueness. ‘

**‘Improving attendance is everyone’s business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn’.**  *‘Working together to improve school attendance’ DFE Guidance published May 2022.*

The Attendance Leads are Sue Rees, Headteacher, and Lisa Maslin, Designated Safeguarding Lead. The Governors of Oaktree Nursery and Primary School recognise the importance of good school attendance and are rigorous in their monitoring of it. Attendance rates are monitored by the Governing Body at each FGB meeting (termly).

**Home/School Partnership**

Regular school attendance is crucial if children and young people are to achieve their potential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel safe, valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a significant part in making our school so successful. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity is used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Parents are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education. (Section 36, 1944 Education Act). In most cases children attend school and therefore parents should ensure that their children attend, and stay at school. School will liaise with parents to support them in ensuring this. Parents must update the school with any changes in contact details and telephone numbers.

**Good attendance is important because:**

* statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and attendance below 95%
* good attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
* good attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
* good attenders find learning more satisfying
* good attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

**Promoting good attendance**

The school promotes good attendance in a variety of ways:

- 100% attendance rewards at end of the school year

- Good attenders to be placed in a draw to win various rewards

- Class attendance competition (termly)

- Extra play on a Friday for classes with over 95% attendance.

- Attendance has a high profile amongst the staff, children and parents.

**Reporting Absences**

It is parents’ responsibility to inform schools of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible. They should contact the School Office by phone on the first day of absence. If the absence is prolonged, regular contact (every 2-3 days) is expected, so that the school can help with homework or make other necessary arrangements. In the event of no contact having been made regarding a child's absence by 9.00am, the parents will be contacted by the school office. If unexplained absence continues, or the school is concerned regarding Persistent or Severe attendance the Education Welfare Officer will be contacted.

**Registration**

All schools must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. School registers must make clear whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The school day starts at 8.45am and it is important that children arrive on time. Doors open at 8.40am to allow children to come into the building, sort their belongings and be ready to begin working in class at 8.45am. Children who arrive late but before 9.00am will be marked with an L code on the register. Children who arrive after the register has closed at 9.00am will be marked as a U code which counts as a missed session.

**Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents.**

Most absences fall into one of the following categories:

a. **Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments** - If the school is satisfied that a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the absence will be treated as authorised. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be given (ie. the absence may be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parents (either in person, in writing or by a telephone call) or on production of an appointments card. Appointments should, where possible, be made out of school hours. If a period of absence through illness falls either side of a school holiday, proof of illness such as a doctor’s prescription, will be required.

b. **Lateness** - The school policy is to encourage punctuality. When a child arrives late they not only miss an important part of the lesson, but also disrupt the lesson for the rest of the class. A late mark will be recorded if he/she arrives late without a good reason. If however a pattern of lateness starts to emerge, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the class teacher /headteacher in order to reach a satisfactory solution. Late means any arrival after the register has closed. It is worth noting that lateness will affect a child’s overall attendance percentage, even if they are in school every day.

c. **Family Bereavements** - The death of a family member can be a particularly traumatic event in any young person's life. Schools have discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events and any request would be dealt with sympathetically.

d. **Religious Observance** - Absence of a pupil for participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observation by the religious body to which the parents belong should always be requested in advance and may be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher. One day off to celebrate their main annual religious holiday will not prevent a child being awarded a place on the 100% attendance trip.

e. **School trips and educational visits** will be recorded on the register to show attendance.

**Family Holidays** –From the 1st September 2013 the Government made a change in the law relating to children’s attendance at school. This means that requests for term time absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. This is at the Headteacher’s discretion.

Parents are asked to collect their child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies. If someone else is collecting a child, parents must ensure that the teacher or the office know and provide the person collecting the child with the password.

**Dealing with unsatisfactory attendance**

**The new DFE Guidance (2022) defines Persistent Absence as that below 90% and Severe Absence as that below 50%.**

Measures that are taken to continue the good practice of punctuality and to reach a high standard of attendance that is required by Oaktree Nursery and Primary School to obtain a 95% attendance and above are listed below:

**Unauthorised absences:**

-Telephone call chasing up absences daily.

-Teachers provided with termly print out of attendance rates for pupils in their class.

- Absences to be discussed with parents at parent consultations.

* Attendance below 95% - see Appendix 1 – Attendance Action Flowchart

**Persistent Absentees –** ‘Referred’to EWO after all the above areas have been covered. This involves a home visit and follow up by the EWO department. Further continued absences or lack of co-operation from the family or breakdown of communication, we then proceed to a fixed penalty notice and/or court proceedings will be sought.

Fixed penalty notices will also be issued for unauthorised absence.

**Severe Absence** refers to an absence rate of 50% or less.

**Children Missing in Education**

If children are absent and the parent has not contacted the school with a reason, first day calling will pick up the majority of cases and find out the reason for the absence. If a parent cannot be contacted, further attempts will be made to find out where the child is. This will include contacting other family members that are on the contact details. If the whereabouts of the child is not known after 10 days, the borough council are contacted and a CME (Child Missing in Education) form completed.

**End of Academic Year Report**

During transition handover staff are given a brief update of pupils that have a propensity to be late or have poor attendance so that this can continue to be monitored in the new academic year. The school report to parents shows attendance level and percentage and comments reflect how this may have impacted on academic progress.

**Support for families**

If a child has poor or falling attendance the school acts quickly to work closely with the family to identify the possible barriers to good attendance.

* Clear expectations of attendance are communicated to all families
* Help to resolve any issues that may have occurred in school
* Advice on how the school runs regarding medicine, asthma, and medical support. Referral to School Nurse if necessary.
* Breakfast Club and After school clubs for pupils
* Attendance Plan drawn up with identified actions for school, parents/carers and LA if appropriate
* Rainbow Room support for children having any issues at school or home
* Offer of support with Health Advisers
* Offer of support from Parent Support Adviser
* Staff welcome children whenever they arrive in school, regardless of any lateness.
* Offer of someone to speak to with any future problems that may occur.

Signed: Sue Rees Headteacher Date:

Signed: Erica Milsom Chair of Governors Date:

Date of Review: September 2023