**Oaktree Nursery and Primary School**

**Attendance Policy**

**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, disability or religion. We want all our students and staff to feel valued as we celebrate their uniqueness. ‘

*Regular school attendance has always been important. Without it the efforts of the best teachers and the best schools will come to nothing. Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage. It places children at risk and in some cases it can result in pupils being drawn into patterns of anti-social or criminal behaviour.*

*(Extract from Department for Education Booklet 'School Attendance' May 1994)*

**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 valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a 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 will be 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 absence below 95%
* regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
* regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
* regular attenders find learning more satisfying
* regular 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 prizes at end of school year

- Good attenders to be placed in a draw to win a bike

- Class attendance competition (termly)

- Extra play on a Friday for classes with over 96% attendance.

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

**Reporting Absences**

It is parents’ responsibility to inform schools of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible. Contact the School Office by phone on the first day of absence. If the absence is prolonged, regular contact (every 2-3 days) would be appreciated, 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 9.20am, the parents will be contacted by the school office. If unexplained absence continues, or the school is concerned regarding irregular 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 9.00am and it is important that children arrive on time. Doors open at 8.55am to allow children to come into the building, sort their belongings and be ready to begin working in class at 9.00am. “L” for late will be given for children arriving at 9.10am, if arriving at 9.20am or later, a “U” will be marked on the register.

Please collect your 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 your child, please ensure that the teacher or the office know and provide the person collecting your child with the password.

**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.

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. 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 in line with DfE guidance.

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 no longer be granted for holidays and can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. This is at the Headteacher’s discretion.

**Dealing with unsatisfactory attendance**

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.

**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.

• **Absences 90% or below**

- personal letter to home stating our concerns.

• **Absences 80% or below from regular absentee**

- Family referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

**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 and court proceedings will be sought.

Fixed penalty notices will also be issued for unauthorised absence.

**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. Visits to the home may be made in person, either by the class teacher or a member of the safeguarding team. If the whereabouts of the child is not known after 10 days, the borough are contacted and a CME (Child Missing in Education) form completed.

**End of Academic Year Memo/report**

During handover of information at the end of the academic year, staff are given a brief resume of pupils that have a propensity to be late or have poor attendance. School report to parents shows attendance level and percentage. Attendance rates are also reported.

**Family Support Offered**

• Clear expectations of attendance in School Prospectus and Foundation Stage Welcome Packs.

• Help to sort out problems that may have occurred in school.

• General Advice on how the school runs regarding medicine, asthma, and

medical support. Referral to School Nurse if necessary.

• After school clubs for pupils etc

• Rainbow Rooms support for children having any issues at school or home

• Offer of support with Health Advisors

• Offer of support from Parent Support Advisor.

• 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.

**Covid-19 amendments**

* Non-Covid related absence needs to be followed up as usual in line with the policy.
* Any absence due to a positive Covid test, or contact with a person testing positive, will be an authorised absence.
* Rewards and incentives for attendance have been suspended during the pandemic as we need to support pupils in isolating and in seeking a test if they are showing any symptoms.
* Work will be provided for those children at home due to Covid-19.
* Staggered starts mean some classes start at 8.45am and finish at 2.45pm. These classes will need to mark “L” for late at 8.55am and “U” at 9.05am. First day calling will also be done earlier.

Date agreed: March 2021

Date of Review: September 2022