

**Oxford Grove Primary School**  
**Attendance and Punctuality Policy Statement**  
**September 2019**

**The Mission Statement**

Oxford Grove Primary School aims to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality, with the intention of enabling them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities which are available.

**Justification.**

At Oxford Grove we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important too, that children arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important that children should not be at school if they are unwell. Oxford Grove is a happy school and we believe children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All staff show concern and care about each child's welfare. As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, we place great emphasis on this in our communication with parents.

**Statutory Framework**

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between 'authorised' and 'unauthorised' absence. A letter or a telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter /message will the absence be authorised.

**The Head teacher, or Deputy Head teacher in charge, is responsible for the determination of authorisation and parents receive a written response outlining the possible consequences of any absence in term time, which are not the result of unavoidable illness or injury.**

**Sanctions**

If a pupil at Oxford Grove School fails to attend regularly and on time the parents may be guilty of an offence under Education law. In law, an offence occurs if a parent or carer fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school and that absence is not authorised by the Head Teacher. From 1st September 2018, the Local Authority's criteria for issuing a penalty notice (attendance fines) was reduced and **a fine will be considered where a pupil has had 10 sessions (equivalent of five days - consecutive or otherwise) of unauthorised absence over the period of two consecutive half terms.** Parents/carers will receive a Warning Notice from school if it appears that a child's absence may reach the 10 sessions. If there is no improvement, the details will be passed on to the Local Authority and a Penalty Notice will be issued. Each parent/carers is then required to pay £60 within 28 days or £120 within 42 days. Failure to pay the notice renders the parents/carers liable to prosecution and a fine of up to £1000. More information about penalty notices can be found on Bolton Council's website: <http://www.bolton.gov.uk/website/pages/Truancy.aspx>

**Rights and Responsibilities**

Improving attendance at Oxford Grove School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents and staff.

**Pupils**

All pupils are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year and be on time.

**Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. Parents/carers are also responsible for informing school of the reason for any absence by phone call or personal visit.

**School**

Oxford Grove School will encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate all absenteeism and lateness. The LA is responsible for dealing with statutory referrals.

## **Aims**

Poor attendance disadvantages children. We aim to ensure that the children in our school attend regularly and on time, and where this is not the case, staff follow a staged procedure designed to encourage consistent attendance.

The performance indicator by which we judge the success of our efforts is set each year by our average attendance figure. Information about attendance and punctuality will be published each week on the school website and a reminder is put on each newsletter that is sent out termly.

## **Registration Procedures**

As a legal document, registers are kept updated at all times. Teachers are required to complete the paper register during the set periods: 8.40 - 9.00 a.m. and 1.00 - 1.05 a.m.

Each pupil should be called by name and should respond politely in English or in French. Before the close of registration the number of pupils marked present should be entered in the space provided and checked by a head count which will be recorded on the class headcount display sheet. This information is then transferred onto the electronic register by the School Administrator.

Where there is an absence, the School Administrator is required to enter the appropriate explanatory symbol. Registration Procedures are secured in the front of each class register.

## **Absence**

Under Educational Law the school is only able to authorise leave of absence in 'special or exceptional circumstances'.

There are two types of absence:

Authorised – where the school approves pupil absence;

Unauthorised – where the school will not approve pupil absence.

If a child is absent, parents or carers should call the school before 9:30am on the first day of the absence, stating the reason for absence and if possible indicate a length of absence where this is known e.g. an infectious illness. This information is recorded in daily electronic register. If the authorisation were to be refused e.g. a child was absent for a day out, the parents or carers will be informed. It is essential that the school be informed for all authorisation of absence. If no notification is received about a child's absence, parents and carers will be contacted by the school for an acceptable explanation.

### **Acceptable reasons for absence:**

Illness, illness with a risk to others/ infection, death in the immediate family, unavoidable medical/dental appointments, a day of religious observance.

### **Unacceptable reasons for absence:**

Holidays, weddings, shopping, truancy, minding the house, oversleeping, visiting friends or relatives, birthdays, looking after siblings or unwell parents or collecting/taking relatives from/to the airport.

Any child that the school has concerns about regarding absence, will be monitored to ascertain whether particular patterns of non-attendance are observed. Such children's attendance will be closely monitored by the Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher, the School's Educational Social Worker/Family Liaison Worker for Attendance and the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer. All unauthorised absence will be challenged. If an improvement is not forthcoming, a referral to the Early Intervention Team will be made.

Children with full or nearly full attendance will be awarded with appropriate certificates and classes will be encouraged to reach class targets and achieve whole class attendance awards. Children who are punctual for a term will receive a commendation on our school website.

## **Communication**

Information on procedures relating to lateness, illness and absence is given to parents/carers in the School Key Stage Starter Packs. This information highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.

At the pre-school induction meetings held each year for children about to enter the Nursery and Reception Class, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This information session also includes the importance of parents/carers and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being picked up on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only children left. Parents/carers are asked to share any worries their child might have about school so that the school can work with the family to ensure regular attendance.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents/carers requesting a place, are asked to make an appointment with a member of the Senior Leadership Team. At this meeting the importance of regular attendance is always highlighted along with other school routines.

### **Concerns**

If a child is regularly late for school or is often absent, then the Head teacher, Deputy Head, the School's Educational Social Worker/Family Liaison Worker for Attendance or the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer will contact the parent/carer concerned to have an informal discussion about this. This procedure will also be followed if a child is regularly collected late from school at the end of the day. If this persists or patterns of absence are also identified by the school, parents /carers will be asked to attend a meeting in school to discuss the concern further and establish a plan of action to bring about improved attendance.

### **Non collection**

In the event that a child is not collected from school by an authorised adult and no contact has been established with the parents/carers within forty five minutes to one hour of the usual collection time, the school will follow our child protection procedures, i.e. Police will be informed after this time. A safeguarding referral to Children's Services may be considered if non collection is persistently without a reasonable explanation. A letter will be sent to the parent/carer notifying them of the arrangements put into place for their child (Appendix 1) and to invite them in for a discussion about their individual circumstances and to ascertain whether there is anything that the school could reasonably do to avoid a recurrence of this situation.

### **Tuancy**

All the staff members at Oxford Grove are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. They are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although it is a very rare occurrence for a child to truant, if there is a concern that a child might be truanting then action is taken straight away.

If truancy is suspected, the Head Teacher or Deputy Head teacher will contact the parents /carers, either by phone, or by home visiting if possible with the Educational Social Worker/Family Liaison Worker, the Safeguarding and Wellbeing Officer or a member of the Early Intervention Team. Parents and carers are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent/carer, then the Head teacher or Deputy Head teacher will talk to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the class teacher and appropriate action is taken.

### **Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head teacher, staff and Governing Board.

Miss N. Harvey and Mrs. M. Day.  
To be reviewed in September 2020.

## Appendix 1

Dear [parent/carer],

As you are aware, [child] was collected late from school on [date]. I would like to remind you that, in order to keep your child/ren safe, the school is obliged to implement its Late Collection Procedure for children who are not collected on time. If you are regularly late to collect your child, fail to collect your child after within 45/60 minutes, or fail to make suitable alternative collection arrangements this may lead to school contacting the Police. If this matter is persistent and school assess this to be having an impact on your child's safety and wellbeing, our school will have no alternative than to follow our Child Protection & Safeguarding policy and contact Children services department for advice on this matter.

I hope that the reasons for your child not being collected are not serious, but would ask you to contact the school as soon as possible to discuss the matter further.

Yours sincerely,