



Oldbury Wells School
Member of the Bridgnorth Area Schools' Trust
Attendance Policy

FREQUENCY OF REVIEW:	Annually
COMMITTEE:	Local Governing Body
APPROVED:	Summer 2018
DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:	Summer 2019 unless there is a material change

Rationale/statement of intent:

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential.

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. Every pupil has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. 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. For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital your child arrives at school on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The routines pupils develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

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 foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the pupil. The Home School Agreement contains details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- celebrate good attendance
- reward good or improving attendance and
- set targets for the school and sometimes for classes.

Roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities of the school's attendance leader:

A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. He/she will work closely with pastoral staff to ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a pupil is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum.

A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Responsibilities of classroom staff:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance of students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leader or pastoral staff (for example, Heads of Year and Student Support Workers) on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a pupil's absence.
- Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

Responsibilities of students:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time – which is especially important due to the large site at OWS.
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Responsibilities of parents/carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law. Parents will:

- inform the school on the first day of absence
- discuss with the tutor/class teacher any planned absences well in advance
- support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable
- avoid, whenever possible, taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- Record reason for absence in the child's planner for them to show their form tutor on return to school.

Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, between 08.45 and 09.00, and at the start of period 4 at 12.05 pm. Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded in-line with Department of Education guidance. This mark shows the pupil to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence. This information may be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary. If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, with the appropriate code. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. Pupils who are consistently late can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information. They are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils and it can be embarrassing, leading to possible further absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers may be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered.

Education Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) enforces the law regarding school attendance. She meets regularly with the Pastoral Support Assistants and Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral Lead) to monitor all pupils whose attendance is less than 93%. If a Form Tutor has any suspicions or concerns regarding a pupils' attendance, he/she is required to inform the Head of Year who liaises with the Pastoral Lead and EWO.

Pupil Absence

A pupil not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If your child is absent you must:

- contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Send a note into school on the first day they return (as stated, complete space in the planner) with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned the school - or you can call into school and report to reception.

If your child is absent we will usually:

- telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance
- invite you in to school to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders/Assistant Headteacher if absences persist
- refer the matter to Shropshire Council's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence, the school is required to start Child Missing Education procedures as set down by Shropshire Council guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the pupil, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family and the school EWO may visit the family home to try to establish contact.

Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral Lead) meets with the EWO regularly to analyse relevant attendance data and to ensure students who are failing to attend school regularly are dealt with promptly and effectively. Planning meetings will be held to address poor attendance if attendance drops below 85%. The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral Lead), Head of Year, Pastoral Support Assistant and the EWO will work jointly to support poor/non-attenders.

Request for leave of absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that head teachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining exceptional are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an Application for Pupil Leave of Absence (available from both school offices and to download from our website, www.oldburywells.com) in advance and before making any travel arrangements. If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and a penalty notice may be issued. Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence.

The following legal measures may be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at Oldbury Wells School:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty Notices or prosecution

For national guidance, refer to: Parental responsibility measures for behaviour and attendance, which covers legal measures for non-attendance:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-andattendance.

Signed _____
Chair of Local Governing Body

Dated _____

Signed _____
Headteacher

Dated _____