

NAME OF POLICY:	Attendance Policy
STATUS:	Non - Statutory
DATE ISSUED:	September 2016
REVIEW DATE:	September 2019
APPROVED BY:	Governing Body
APPROVED DATE:	September 2016

## 1. Introduction

At Orchard Primary School, we want the whole school community – governors, staff, parents and pupils to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality. Good attendance helps the children to maximise their learning. This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Legal Duty: Section 7 of Education Act 1996 states

*Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.*

*The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—*

*(a )to his age, ability and aptitude, and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise*

## 2. Target Setting

The Department for Education (DfE) expects all schools and local authorities to focus on reducing overall absence, particularly unauthorised absence and persistent absence. Absence will be monitored closely via the pupil level school census and the Secretary of State's power to require an individual school to set absence targets where a school's absence record is of particular concern is being retained.

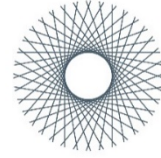
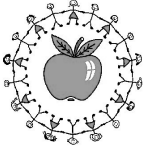
The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) has set a measure for Good attendance at 95% and considers children to be persistently absent if children are less than 90% present. The quality of teaching and learning judgement relates to attendance because, however good the teaching, it does not benefit pupils if they are not present.

## 3. Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils. All these groups need to understand the expectations which the policy makes of them. Orchard Primary School:

- will provide a safe learning environment
- will ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis
- will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality

The expectations for parents:



- Parents are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped, according to the school's uniform policy and in a fit condition to learn
- Parents will strive for their child to gain a 'good' level of attendance
- Parents will inform school on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school
- Parents will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary
- Parents will ensure that school are informed of any changes of contact details

The expectations for pupils:

- All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually
- Pupils must remember to hand any note giving reasons for absence to the relevant person
- Pupils are expected to be ready to learn.

#### **4. Day to day procedures**

##### **Registration**

- If the class doors are closed in the morning you will need to sign in your child at the main school office. Parents are reminded that if a child arrives in school after the registers have closed they are marked as being late. If an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming, the child has to be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.

##### **Lateness**

- A log of lateness is kept for all children arriving late with reasons given for the lateness.
- Parents, whose children are regularly late for school, will be contacted by the Headteacher, to make an appointment to discuss why the child is regularly late. The school will work with the parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality. Strategies to improve punctuality may include individual charts or rewards, individual signing in books etc. The Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) is informed and appropriate action taken.

Leaving and returning to school during the school day

- When pupils leave or return to school during the school day, parents must sign their children in at the office

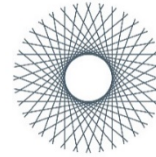
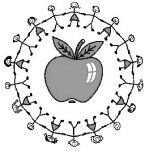
#### **5. Absences**

Parents are responsible for informing the school if their child is absent. This should be done on the first day of absence and at the time should also provide an explanation for the absence.

On a daily basis, if your child is going to be absent from school for any reason, we ask parents to do one of the following:

- Telephone the school as soon as possible before 9.15am
- E-mail [admin@orchard.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@orchard.herts.sch.uk)
- Inform the School Office in person
- Send a written note to the school in advance of the absence
- Provide an appointment card for medical appointments

Absences are authorised by designated staff within the school, children will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the school. The school may decide not to authorise absence,



even when a reason is provided. Parents should avoid if at all possible making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours. Pupils who have been sick at home are to be kept home for 48 hrs from the last time of sickness.

#### Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

It is vital that all staff adhere to the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence.

At Orchard absences are recorded according to 'School Attendance: Policy and Practice of Categorisation of Absence' (DfES 1994). This states that absence can be authorised if:

- the pupil was absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the Governing Body or proprietor of the school' )
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body of which the pupil's parent belongs
- there is a family bereavement
- the pupil is participating in an exceptional special occasion (e.g. the graduation of an older sibling )

Absence should be unauthorised if: ( NB: Only the school can authorise absence)

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home due to a parent being unwell
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or look after siblings
- the pupil is shopping during school hours
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. birthday)
- the pupil is away from school on a family holiday for a period of time longer than that negotiated with the school
- the pupil is on family holiday without permission or if the parents have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday, and instead seek retrospective approval on their return.

#### Following up Absence - First Day Response

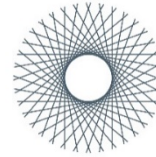
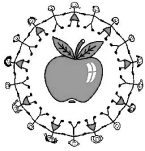
- If after the close of registration there is no explanation for a child's absence, the priority 1 and /or 2 contact will be called.
- If a reason for the non-attendance is not established the other contacts on the child's file will be contacted.
- Please inform the office of any weekly patterns which would require a different priority contact to be called.

### **6. Request for leave**

Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for a holiday or any other reason. If in exceptional circumstances parents apply to the Headteacher, in writing, at least 2 weeks in advance, the school may grant authorised absence. Requests for absences will be considered individually.

When making the decision the Headteacher will consider the following factors:

- the amount of time requested
- age of the child
- the child's general absence/attendance record
- proximity to SATs and assessment periods
- child's ability to catch up with their work
- child's educational needs
- general welfare of the child



- circumstances of the request / purpose of the leave
- frequency of the activity
- when the request was made

#### 7. Penalty Notices (see Appendix A for more information)

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers schools to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence of pupils of statutory school age. At Orchard School we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence, in the current and / or previous term, the head teacher may ask the LA to issue a Penalty Notice.

The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the penalty notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

#### 8. Rewards

Orchard School rewards good attendance. Certificates may be awarded for:

- Best House attendance each week
- Best Class attendance each week
- Children who achieve 100%
- Children who have tried really hard to gain 100%
- Children whose punctuality or attendance improves significantly

#### 9. Integrated Working

Orchard School works with other agencies and professionals to ensure that our pupils receive all the support available to achieve good attendance. We will demonstrate full commitment to integrated working by:

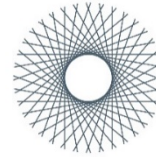
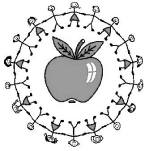
- Using the Common Assessment Framework
- Sharing information
- Working with other agencies and being part of 'teams around the family'

#### 10. Working with the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)

Orchard School works in partnership with the allocated AIO to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school. The School works with individual children and their parents to improve poor attendance. When attendance does not improve sufficiently, and after discussion with the AIO the school will make a formal referral.

#### 11. Publication of Information

Parents, pupils, staff and governors are informed of whole school attendance issues and statistics on a regular basis. The school shares information on individual pupils' attendance as necessary with parents, pupils and staff.



## **Appendix A :**

### **Local Code of Conduct – Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence (Truancy)**

#### **Introduction**

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers the police, designated Local Authority Officers and Headteachers and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence (truancy) of pupils of statutory school age.

The government requires Local Authorities to issue a Code of Conduct to which all parties involved must adhere. Penalty notices may be issued only in accordance with the terms of the Code of Conduct.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that:

- the powers are applied consistently and fairly
- duplicate notices are not issued
- issuing a notice does not conflict with proceedings proposed or being taken by the Local Authority under section 444 of the Education Act 1996
- suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the penalty notice scheme.

#### **The Law**

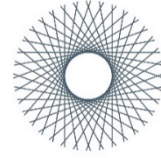
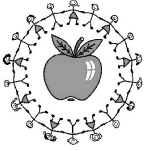
Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added sections 444A and 444B to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for that offence by paying a penalty. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 set out the framework for the operation of the scheme.

All those defined as a parent under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 are considered to be parents for the purpose of these provisions.

As with prosecutions under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 a penalty notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence in respect of each child.

Penalty notices apply to parents of children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at maintained schools, academies, Pupil Referral Units (Education Support Centres), City Technology Colleges, Studio Schools, UTCs and any other alternative education provision arranged under section 19 of The Education Act 1996.

Parents cannot be prosecuted for the offence for which the penalty notice was issued until after the final deadline for payment has passed and the penalty remains unpaid. Parents cannot be convicted of that offence if the penalty is paid in accordance with the notice.



The Local Authority will retain any revenue from penalty notices to cover the administration of the scheme and any legal actions arising from it.

## **Rationale**

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for pupils registered at schools, academies or other maintained or alternative provision.

A penalty notice may be a suitable intervention in circumstances of unauthorised absence where the school considers a parent is capable of securing their child's regular attendance. It may be particularly effective at an early stage before attendance problems become entrenched.

## **Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued**

- Penalty notices may only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence
- The pupil must have at least 15 sessions (half days) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term
- The school must have sent a formal warning to the parent
- The school/academy/police or Attendance Improvement Officer considers that issuing a penalty notice could avoid further absence
- Issuing a penalty notice does not conflict with any other legal action being taken
- A maximum of two separate penalty notices will be issued to a parent within any twelve month period
- Penalty notices will be issued for pupils of compulsory school age, up to the end of the spring term of year 11
- A penalty notice will not be issued in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the Local Authority without the prior agreement of the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Attendance

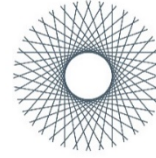
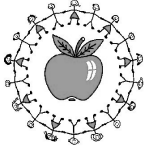
## **Responsibilities of the Local Authority for issuing penalty notices**

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority and may not be delegated. Schools, academies and the police may issue penalty notices if they wish to do so but any notices issued by them must comply with the Local Authority Code of Conduct and a copy of any penalty notice issued must be provided to the Local Authority.

In Hertfordshire all parties agree that the Integrated Service for Learning Attendance Teams administer the scheme and issue penalty notices on behalf of police, schools, academies and other settings to ensure fairness and consistency and in the event that subsequent legal action may need to be taken.

The Local Authority receives applications to issue penalty notices from schools, academies and the police. Penalty notices will be issued provided that:

- the circumstances of the absence meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct
- the information is provided in the specified manner
- the request is received not more than 10 school days after the final absence cited



The Local Authority retains revenue from the scheme to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices and prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

### **Appealing against the issue of penalty notices**

There is no statutory right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued. The Local Authority may withdraw a notice if it has been issued incorrectly. If the penalty notice has been issued in accordance with Hertfordshire's Code of Conduct there is no facility to overturn the decision to issue the notice.

### **Effect of issuing penalty notices**

If the penalty is not paid in full before the expiry of the period for paying it the Local Authority named in the notice shall either institute proceedings against the recipient for the offence or shall withdraw the notice.

### **Payment of penalty notices**

The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.

Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.

Penalty notices are sent by first class post and are deemed to have been received on the second day after posting.

Arrangements for payment are detailed on the penalty notice and payment by cheque, postal order and by debit/credit card is accepted.

### **Withdrawal of penalty notices**

The Local Authority may only withdraw penalty notices in circumstances where it determines that the notice:

- has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct
- ought not to have been issued
- ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient
- has not been paid but it is not appropriate to prosecute the recipient for the offence

### **Prosecution of unpaid penalty notices**

If the notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

All decisions to prosecute (or not) rest with the Local Authority