



## **Overstone Combined School**

### **Attendance Policy (Children)**

Updated November 2021

To be reviewed annually

## **Principles**

The staff and Governors at Overstone Combined School work to ensure that each child is able to reach their educational and social potential.

Parents can best support their children by ensuring that they attend school regularly and are well prepared for the school day.

Even short absences can have a detrimental effect on a child's learning. Being mindful of this, only in **exceptional** circumstances will the school grant leave of absence for holidays during school time

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent. Extended periods of leave or frequent short periods of absence can result in insufficient coverage of the National Curriculum and pupils failing to reach their potential

All children may sometimes be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable cause.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (half an hour after the register has been taken)
- Holidays in term time unless authorised by the school

## **Procedure for absence from school**

If a child is absent from school, due to illness or any other unavoidable reason, parents should notify the school by phone or e-mail as soon as possible. If no notification is received by the end of the first morning the school will then contact parents.

Where absences are planned in advance, for example medical appointments which are for 1 day or less, the school office should be notified in advance either by letter, telephone or e-mail.

Parents should not normally take pupils on holiday in term time. If parents chose to apply for this a leave of absence form should be filled in and returned to school two weeks in advance. This is available from the school office.

An application for leave of absence for a holiday will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, such as a parent having military leave or the family have experienced trauma.

Levels of attendance are monitored by the school and by the Local Authority through the County Attendance Team. These are also reported to the DfES.

If a child's absence falls below 90% without any good reason parents will be contacted and if difficulties cannot be sorted out in discussion, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team from the Local Education Authority. The team will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, this Officer can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. Parents who take their children on holiday in term time without prior authorisation by the school may be fined under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act.

### **Traveller Children**

Where a family of traveller children migrates but gives reasonable indication that they intend to return this absence may be authorised if the family provides evidence of migrating for work. The Headteacher will look at each case individually as dual registration may be more appropriate. The Traveller Liaison Officer will be approached for advice with this if needed.

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

This policy applies to children of statutory school age.