

September 2016

INTRODUCTION

At Oldfields Hall Middle School we:

- **respect others**
- **enrich lives**
- **make a difference**

We are a Rights Respecting School. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is at the heart of everything we do.

The UNCRC articles which are particularly relevant to this policy are:

Article 19: Your right to be kept safe.

Article 28: Your right to learn and go to school.

Article 29: Your right to be the best you can be.

This policy takes account of the legislation set out in the Equality Act 2010.

The school believes that in order to enable effective teaching and learning to take place, and for each pupil to achieve their full potential, good attendance and punctuality is vital. It seeks to create an inclusive, caring learning environment in the school by:

- providing a climate where all pupils feel secure and happy;
- promoting desired behaviour;
- promoting self-esteem, self-discipline, proper regard for authority and positive relationships based on mutual respect;
- ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all;
- promoting and celebrating excellent attendance at school;
- providing a safe environment, free from disruption, violence, bullying and any form of harassment;
- encouraging a positive relationship with parents and carers to develop a shared approach which involves them in the implementation of the school's policy and procedures;
- promoting a culture of praise and encouragement in which all pupils can achieve;
- promoting early
- intervention when there are issues.

POLICY ARRANGEMENTS

The Assistant Headteacher has lead responsibility in the school for the Attendance Policy which is developed in consultation with pupils, staff, parents, the lead governor for Behaviour and Attendance and the Local Authority.

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Oldfields Hall
Middle School

The policy will be reviewed annually; the Assistant Headteacher is responsible for leading the review and consulting representatives from the school community.

The policy directly links with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding
- E-safety
- Anti-bullying
- Equality
- Behaviour

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the school community as a whole.

The Governing Body should:

- formally approve the policy;
- in liaison with the Head Teacher, ensure that the policy operates to promote equality for all pupils in line with the Equality Act 2010.

The Head Teacher and senior staff should:

- encourage an environment that emphasises the importance of regular attendance and excellent punctuality, discourages bullying and promotes equality;
- monitor rewards and interventions to ensure that their use is in keeping with equality principles;
- organise support for implementing the policy, including regular reminders of key aspects;

All staff, including support staff and volunteers should:

- apply the policy consistently and fairly to all groups and communities;
- be role models of good attendance and punctuality.

Pupils should:

- be encouraged by staff to attend punctually and regularly;
- attend school as often as they possibly can;
- be punctual to school in the mornings and to each lesson;
- be involved in shaping and promoting the policy and supporting staff and pupils – for example, by contributing to the School Council.

Parents and carers should:

- be encouraged to take responsibility for their child's school attendance and punctuality and act as good role models;
- work in partnership with the school to promote good attendance and punctuality.



WHAT WE EXPECT OF MEMBERS OF OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

- We expect members of our school community to attend school as often as they can.
- We expect members of our school community to be punctual.
- We expect that pupils should be rewarded for good attendance.
- We expect all members of our school community to contribute to a safe and caring environment that makes attendance at school a very positive experience.
- We expect staff and pupils to build positive relationships with each other.

The School Vision statement and the Home-School Agreement set out clear expectations. Pupils, parents and form teachers (on behalf of the school) are asked to sign the Home-School agreement at the beginning of each academic year.

PROCEDURES

The procedures arising from this policy will be developed by the Senior Leadership Team in consultation with the staff. Pupils will be consulted through the School Council, parents will be consulted through parent voice sessions and governors will be consulted through meetings.

The procedures will be made explicit to all members of the school community and the ideas of personal responsibility and responsibility towards the whole community will be promoted. The procedures will be made clear to the pupils so that they know how acceptable standards of behaviour can be achieved. The procedures will be monitored by the Senior Leadership Team in liaison with Progress Managers to ensure they are consistently and fairly applied.

The procedures will be reviewed regularly to ensure they are fit for purpose.

PROCEDURES

Regular attendance of pupils will be encouraged by ensuring that a secure, happy and caring environment is provided by the school.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any issues regarding attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is not acceptable 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.



Legal Registration Procedure:

- This takes place at the beginning of each school session (8:55am during Registration Period and 1.15 pm at the beginning of Lesson 4) in the appropriate room.
- Registers should be completed electronically in SIMS by the teacher using the appropriate symbols (either / or N). Marks entered by the office, for example illness, medical or holiday marks, should not be overwritten. Accurate registers are the responsibility of the member of staff taking the register.
- Paper registers in folders should also be collected from the school office and returned at the end of registration and additionally at the beginning of afternoon form time as these contain letters for distribution and important information and emergency registration sheets.
- The Office Manager will initiate First Day Absence procedures using the text messaging service for all children whose absence remains unexplained by 9:15am each day.
- Afternoon register closes at 1:35pm.
- Absentee pupils, upon their return, are required to provide notification from parents/carers, outlining the reason for their absence.
- Absence notes should be filed in the school register folder.
- Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, not by the parents/carers, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**.
- Requests for leave of absence will not be authorised except in exceptional circumstances.
- **It will interrupt a child's education if they go on holiday during school term time and this absence will not be authorised.**
- **No authorisation of absence will be given during the administration of National Tests (SATs).**
- Children arriving over 20 minutes late for registration without good reason are classified as late and marked as unauthorised absent.
- Registers should also be taken during each lesson so that attendance at lessons can be monitored and so that Achievement and Behaviour points can be issued where necessary.

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, day trips or events or courses which require recurring or regular absence. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement), for public examinations such as practical music examinations or for medical appointments in school time, for example hospital outpatient appointments. However, where possible, medical appointments (including those with the dentist and optician) should be made out of school time.

The registers are regularly monitored by the Education Welfare Worker (EWW), who also

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Oldfields Hall
Middle School

compiles reports from time to time for school leaders.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or another 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 before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- Leave of absence which is not authorised by the Headteacher, for example holidays.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful.

Attendance is closely monitored by the Administration Officer, Form Teachers and Progress Managers. It is overseen by the Assistant Headteacher.

Good attendance is rewarded. Pupils will receive a certificate for each full term in which they achieve 100% attendance. They become members of the '100 club' which will entitle them to a reward such as free entry to a disco, a film afternoon or a lunchtime pizza party. In addition, 100% attendance over the academic year will be monitored and special certificates awarded to those pupils who achieve this over the full year.

In accordance with Local Authority policy, the school monitors all attendance. Attendance which falls below the threshold of 90% is classed as persistent absence. The school is required to take action if attendance is a cause for concern. In the first instance, parents will be contacted by their child's Progress Manager and if necessary invited in for meetings. If absence continues to be a cause for concern a formal letter will be sent to parents by Progress Managers informing them of this. Our threshold for sending this letter out is attendance which falls below 94%. If attendance continues to fall below this threshold, a further letter will be sent explaining that absence can no longer be authorised without medical evidence. An Early Help Action Plan will be set up to support families in improving attendance. Copies of all correspondence will be placed in the child's file. The school will refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker (EWW) if they amass 20 sessions (equivalent to 10 days) of unauthorised absence.

The EWW will try to resolve the situation by agreement between the school, the parents and themselves but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. Court proceedings may result in the application of a Fixed Penalty Notice and a fine (currently £60 per child and per parent if paid within 21 days rising to £120 per child and per parent if paid after 21 days but within 28 days).



Fixed Penalty Notices

Following changes to the law in 2014, the Local Authority has reviewed their criteria for issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for those pupils who miss school without permission, and where the Local Authority is, therefore, required by law to take appropriate action.

Penalty Notices for Leave of absence (holiday) in term time

Penalty Notices for leave in term time may be considered appropriate if the following criteria is met:

- For unauthorised leave of absence, there must be a minimum of 20 sessions (10 school days) of unauthorised absence from school during the period of two consecutive half terms.
- This absence must include at least 10 sessions of unauthorised leave (G-code) in the specified time period. However, the remaining 10 sessions may relate to other unauthorised absence. The absences do not have to be consecutive.

Penalty Notices for persistent absence

- If the school sees no improvement in attendance following the initial information letter and the second letter requiring medical evidence for the authorisation of absence, a referral will be made to the EWW who represents the Local Authority.
- Parents whose child is repeatedly absent will now only receive one warning notice period from the Local Authority to bring about improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again, no further formal warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.

Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from Staffordshire County Council's website

<http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/home.aspx>

Punctuality

Punctuality is monitored in a similar way to attendance. Pupils who are late for school are monitored closely and if the lateness becomes persistent, a letter will be sent home inviting parents in for a meeting. The EWW monitors punctuality and will work with the school and families to promote this. The school does accept that lateness due to issues with school transport organised by Staffordshire County Council is a separate issue and one which is out of the control of parents and pupils. Late marks recorded because of this are taken into account before letters are sent.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWW themselves to ask for help or information. The EWW is independent of the school and will give impartial advice. The EWW telephone number is available from the school office.

MONITORING

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Oldfields Hall
Middle School

The elements of the attendance policy should be monitored at regular intervals by senior staff, looking in particular at age, gender, ability, pupil premium and vulnerable groups.

In addition statutory attendance returns and feedback from the Education Welfare Worker will be monitored.

Feedback will be reported to the Governing Body via the Headteacher's Report to the Governing Body termly.

TRAINING

The Head Teacher and Governing Body will ensure that appropriate high quality training on all aspects of attendance is provided to support the implementation of the policy.

INVOLVEMENT OF OUTSIDE AGENCIES

The school works positively with external agencies. It seeks appropriate support from them to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met by utilising the range of external support available.

Pupils needing support from external agencies are identified through liaison between the Office Manager and Progress Managers. An Early Help Action Plan document and meetings may be set up to support families.

PROMOTION OF EQUALITY

- All staff must actively promote the policy of equality.
- Due regard must be given to pupils with medical conditions so that procedures for monitoring and intervening in lower attendance do not discriminate against them.
- The school will work closely with medical professionals and other education agencies to ensure that absence from school due to long term medical conditions does not have any significant impact on a child's learning.

REVIEW

The Senior Leadership Team will consult with all members of the school community including staff (teaching and non-teaching), pupils, parents and Governors. The EWW is also consulted and any guidance from the Local Authority is adhered to.

The Governing Body will regularly review this policy and associated procedures to ensure its continuing appropriateness and effectiveness. The review will take place in consultation with the Head Teacher, staff, pupils and parents.

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Oldfields Hall
Middle School

The outcome of the review and changes to policy and procedures will be communicated to all those involved and incorporated into an amended Attendance Policy.

Policy reviewed	September 2016
Adopted by the OHMS Governing Body	17 th October 2016
Date of next review	October 2017
Chair of Governors	T.Moore.