



Pupils' Attendance & Punctuality Policy

OAK LODGE SCHOOL

Update January 2025

Policy Date	January 2025	Review January 2027
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*This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the Oak Lodge Safeguarding policy, Behaviour Welfare Policy, National Guidance – Working together to improve school attendance DfE (**August 2024**) and Oak Lodge School' homework policy. Our school will additionally use protocols outlined by the Local Authority; Oak Lodge will monitor any pupil who may be missing from education in accordance to the protocols determined by the relevant Local Authority*

Expectation

Oak Lodge School is committed to providing all pupils with a full-time, appropriate and effective education in a safe and happy environment.

Each student is welcomed, valued and respected. They are actively encouraged to respect themselves and others. We aim to empower all pupils to gain the essential academic and social skills that will support them for life. All school staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

All partners should work together to:

Expect = Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor = Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand = When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support = Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support = Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in

place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order. **Enforce** = Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Legal Framework:

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states, that children of the compulsory school ages (5 – 16) should attend school regularly. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. The Education and Skills Act 2008 increased the minimum age at which young people in England can leave learning.

Education Act 2008 states; from 2015, young people are required to continue in learning or training until age 18.

Raising the participation age (RPA) does not mean young people must stay in school; they can choose one of the following options:

- full-time education, such as school, college or home education
- apprenticeships, work-based learning
- Part-time education or training if they are employed, self-employed or volunteering for at least 20 hours a week.

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parent/carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Legal Requirements for all Schools:

- Schools must keep 2 registers: an admission register which serves as the school roll, and an attendance register.
- Attendance registers must be called in each lesson.
- The register must show whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity, off-site or absent.
- When a pupil is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised.
- Authorised absence means either the school has given approval in advance, or that a satisfactory explanation was given afterwards.

Aim

The aim of Oak Lodge School's Attendance and Punctuality Policy is to:

- Assist each student to obtain maximum benefit from the opportunities offered by the school, in line with our Mission Statement.
- Ensure the safeguarding of all students.

Good attendance and punctuality are vital for educational progress. Although SOME absence will be inevitable for some students, and is outside the control of Oak Lodge the school has a key role in encouraging and sustaining good attendance patterns. Attendance is the responsibility of students, parents/carers and all members of staff. The role of each in attendance and punctuality is made clear at all admission interviews. Non-attendance at school for any reason is an important issue that must be treated

promptly and seriously. In all cases of non-attendance, early action is taken in collaboration with the pupil's home Local Authority. At Oak Lodge School, as in many other special schools, attendance can be affected by medical issues, surgery and medical appointments

Roles and responsibility

The aim of this policy is to promote the most effective education for pupils at Oak Lodge. To achieve this, it is vital that pupils attend school consistently and on time.

- The school informs all parents/carers annually of the school's requirement on attendance.
- All pupils' and students' contact details are recorded on ARBOR, the school's database, on admission to school. These are checked annually.
- The school will request a minimum of three contact numbers for each child. This is a protective measure for children, to enable swift contact with families when necessary. It is the responsibility of parents to update the school if contact details change.

Parental responsibility

Parents / carers have a primary role in supporting the attendance of pupils. They are notified regularly via letters and newsletters about the importance of attendance and timekeeping. They are informed that it is their responsibility to ensure their child attends regularly and that they notify the school of absences.

As part of the induction process for new families, parents are informed of their responsibility in relation to their child's attendance.

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school office before 8.30am if their child is ill. Registration closes at 9.15am. Every day a child is ill, contact with the school Attendance Administrator is required by parents/ carers before 8.30 am. A note explaining the absence will be required on the child's return to school.

School

Office Based Systems (office team):

- Use the school information management system (ARBOR) to monitor attendance/pupil absence on a daily basis, maintaining this to a high standard.
- Be the first point of contact to support to school-based staff with operational issues in the use of ARBOR/ARBOR related issues
- Track pupil attendance by collecting and analysing attendance data daily, formulating this in a report/email to the DSL/DDSL (HT/DHT) by 10.00am at the latest
- Ensure school/office based records are maintained to a high quality and in accordance with Oak Lodge's attendance policy (three parent/carer contact numbers)
- Provide accurate termly/yearly attendance data / information for school based reports (Assistant Headteacher (DHT), Headteacher, Full Governing Body (FGB)) and the annual report to parents.
- Produce individual attendance data when requested by the HOS / AHT/ Designated Safeguarding lead (DSL)/ Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).
- Advise all agencies on pupil attendance information as appropriate to any identified changes
- To be responsible for the daily fire register in case of any emergency (paper-based register).

- To be responsible for the evacuation list (staff/volunteers/school based visitors etc.) in case of any evacuation of the school.

Registers are recorded by teachers on ARBOR at the start of each lesson.

See [Appendix A](#) for Absence and Attendance codes.

It is important that registers are accurate, with correct codes used. They are checked once a term by Wandsworth Borough Council. Detailed statistics are published by the school, Wandsworth Local Authority and the DfE.

All correspondence between school and home, and vice versa, in relation to absences needs to be recorded by the Attendance Administrator on ARBOR.

First day absence calls are made by the Attendance Administrator as soon as registers are submitted. The Pastoral teacher, the Headteacher and the Designated Safeguarding Lead are informed. A message will be left on the home phone/mobile phone if we are unable to speak to parents/carers about their child's absence.

If no contact is made by parents on the second day further calls will be made to family, extended family or any external agencies that are involved with the child e.g. social worker. On the third day the Attendance Administrator will contact the Local Authority SEN case manager and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Once class registers are completed, the office team will identify any pupil that has been marked absent and where absence has not been reported directly by the parent/carer, the office team will contact the parent/carer to clarify/confirm the reason for absence. Pupils non-attendance reported by passenger assistants will not be accepted. The school will remind all parents on an annual basis the protocols which need to be followed by them in reporting their child's absence from school.

If a child returns to school after a period of absence during which there has been no contact between parents/carers and school, parents/carers will receive a letter from the AHT seeking reasons for the absence and reiterating the school absence procedures.

If pupils are absent for long periods due to genuine ill-health, which is supported by medical evidence, they will be provided with appropriate learning support.

Pupils who arrive late to school because of organised transport difficulties will be marked as present. Where patterns of consistent late running by contractors is recorded, the Education Transport Department will be informed.

Independent travellers are expected to arrive on time. If late, they must report their arrival to the admin office where their late mark will be recorded. Patterns of lateness will be investigated and managed on an individual basis.

If, during a phone call to the family/carer to enquire about an independent travelling pupil's unexplained absence, we are informed that the pupil is expected at school, we will negotiate a period of time to allow for transport problems and then contact the family and Local Authority of the pupil to ensure a resolution and that robust safeguarding checks are in place.

Monitoring

A weekly report is produced by the school attendance officer. This report on pupil attendance and lateness is monitored weekly at the welfare meeting with an extended attendance monitoring each half term.

Action from these meetings will be sent to the Pastoral Teachers through a 'My Concerns' Task. My Concerns is a secure safeguarding platform where all pupil concerns are kept.

The school attendance officer keeps records of all contact made regarding attendance. Where a student's absence gives cause for concern, contact will be made with home and a meeting may be arranged with parents/carers.

Each term attendance reports, regarding the whole school, are compiled and through the regular scrutiny of attendance records (registers and ARBOR) the Headteacher, the (DSL) and (DDSL) will be able to identify any concerns in relation to attendance particularly in relation to any aspects of the safeguarding chronology held by the school.

If a pupil is beginning to show a sporadic attendance record and this is not linked to any on-going medical complaint or additional reason of which the school is aware, the school will attempt to rectify this with the parents. The Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher wellbeing Lead or mentor will contact the parents initially via a telephone call to discuss and clarify reasons for lower attendance (all telephone conversations will be logged by the school on ARBOR). This will always be followed up with a letter outlining what has been discussed / agreed. If any issues continue, the Deputy Headteacher will write to the parents / carers inviting them to a meeting (alongside social care colleagues if / as appropriate) to discuss the reason(s) why attendance continues to decline and agree a support plan to rectify this.

If the child concerned continues to attend school sporadically following these measures this will be discussed with Multi-Agency-Safeguarding-Hub (MASH) / the Education Welfare Team for their advice and guidance, as outlined within our Safeguarding Policy, and presented to Governors.

6th Form students

Students whose attendance falls below 96% will speak to the Head of 6th Form to discuss the reasons for their absences and agree a plan of action to improve their attendance (if the reasons are linked to health or personal issues the student will be provided with the appropriate support).

Authorised and Unauthorised absence from school

Registration is completed each morning and afternoon by teaching staff.

It is for the school, not the parent, to decide whether or not to authorise any absences. The school will not authorise absences in the following circumstances:

- Where no parental explanation is given.
- For extended visits overseas where no approval has been given.
- For holidays in term time (unless there are exceptional circumstances which **MUST** be agreed by the Headteacher)
- For shopping trips.
- For leisure days out.
- In other cases where it is deemed there is no reasonable explanation.

Exceptional circumstances (Appendix F):

The school recognises the pressures placed upon families which contain a child with disabilities and/or special educational needs and the need for respite. In many cases, the only option is to request exceptional

circumstances for a holiday when destinations are available or quieter (for ASC pupils) / for the family/child specifically relating to their SEN and or social care circumstances (e.g. – short break/ respite availability) within school term times. Without condoning it, the school recognises that this is sometimes the only option available to some families.

To address this, the school has developed a protocol on how it manages pupil leave of absence in exceptional circumstances (Appendix F); to support this process our schools will undertake a risk assessment to secure safeguarding. If the school has any doubt in regard to the safety of any pupil whose parent has requested an exceptional circumstance this will be discussed with the Wellbeing Team/Social Care/MASH with immediate effect. In accordance with established protocols any Child in Care will not be authorised for any leave of absence from the school without discussing this with their allocated social worker.

Parents/carers are asked not to book a family holiday during term time. Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday. For unavoidable family circumstances, parents/carers need to ask the school for an application form "**for leave of absence in exceptional circumstances request form**". The form needs to be completed and returned to the Headteacher at least two weeks before the first day of the planned absence.

The school will consider each case individually, taking into account the pupil's overall attendance and the reason for the holiday. A letter will be returned to the family either authorising the absence with an agreed return date to school or giving a reason as to why it has been unauthorised.

If authorisation is given for a specific period of time and the family do not return on the agreed date, a follow up letter explaining what action the school now will be taking is sent. The letter is sent by the school attendance administrator in agreement with the Head Teacher.

Religious Observance:

Pupils will be granted 2 days per year to attend any religious observance; parents will be expected to request such non-attendance via the exceptional circumstances form published on our web site.

Children at risk of Missing in Education (See CME appendix in Safeguarding policy)

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Oak Lodge will follow their established procedure for unauthorised absence and follow up with children who go missing from education.

In line with the safeguarding duties of the school all unexplained pupil absence will be investigated. The school must inform the Local Authority and the child's SEN Case worker of any pupil who fails to attend school, or has been absent without permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more. Established procedures will be followed, but each case needs to be examined individually, taking into account all the facts of the case. Some children are at particular risk, and may also need referral to social care.

Oak Lodge must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is

removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided.

Oak Lodge notifies the local authority when pupils leave and start school. The following information is shared when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- the name of pupil's other or future school and the pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable; and
- the ground prescribed in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.
- We will notify the local authority within five days when a pupil's name is added to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. We will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil.

Safeguarding:

All registers are scrutinised with the attendance information collated by the Office Team (this includes any non-attendance recorded as such by the class teacher). The Office Team will email the Designated/Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead details of any pupil's absence from the school each day by 10.00 a.m.

The Office Team will additionally record the measures taken to contact parents/carers in relation to pupil non-attendance via the email sent. All such measures will be recorded by the school – e.g. – telephone message left/text message sent by the Office Team in the telephone log.

Through the receipt of the daily attendance information the DSL/DDSL is able to secure safeguarding; trends over time can be identified through such means and appropriate actions taken if necessary.

Role of the Designated/Deputy Safeguarding (DSL/DDSL) lead:

The DSL/DDSL will scrutinise the attendance information emailed via the Office Team **each** morning; any unauthorised absence will be immediately addressed – (**Attendance flowchart B**):

Pupils leaving the premises without authority

Oak Lodge is a small school with small classes and activity groups. Staff members have in depth knowledge of the pupils and their whereabouts at all times. On the very rare occasions when a pupil has left the premises without permission, either during the school day or during the evening for residential pupils - the following procedures will apply:

1. The Headteacher, or in her absence an Assistant Headteacher (daytime) or Head of Care/Senior RSW (evening), will be informed immediately.
2. An initial search of the building and grounds will be made.
3. One member of staff will drive around the immediate area, there is staff capacity.
4. Another member of staff will discretely and sensitively ask that pupil's friends or classmates for information (this can be a source of good information, since generally pupils have good relationships with staff and are concerned for their peers).
5. If, after 30 minutes, the pupil cannot be located, parents/carers will be informed by telephone.

6. Police will be informed by a member of the leadership team no later than 90 minutes after pupil's departure.
7. Appropriate authorities will be informed following contact with the police, i.e. Social Service Departments and the Local Authority.
8. The above will be escalated quickly dependent on the age and vulnerability of the pupil. For example if they are one of our younger pupils.

Following any such incident, our pupil welfare procedures would be used to provide appropriate support and guidance to the pupil involved, emphasising our concern for his/her safety. We are able to offer a range of support services to pupils in difficulty.

NB. It is not possible for a pupil to leave the premises during the night without triggering our security alarm, which would alert staff on duty overnight.

Communication

The end of year student reports include attendance and punctuality percentages. Where attendance is a concern for individuals the attendance record is discussed as part of the annual review of a student's Educational Health Care Plan and a printout of the year's record attached to the Review paperwork.

In addition to the contact described above meetings are arranged for parents/carers when a student's attendance and/or punctuality is a particular concern. A plan is agreed for those students and support given from one of the school's Learning Mentors.

See [appendix B](#) for Attendance action and procedures.

Attendance Data

It is recognised that there are no national attendance data sets to benchmark our pupil's attendance, although through research we have identified the following averages:

National average absence rate special schools for autumn 2024	12.7%	Oak Lodge aspirational absence rate: 8%
National average absence rate mainstream schools for autumn 2024	5.3%	

It is our aim therefore to scrutinise our attendance data to determine reasons for non-attendance and ensure we do not exceed the data benchmark.

It will be the responsibility of the office team to collate all attendance data recorded in pupil's registration certificates found within ARBOR and present this in an attendance data report to the Head teacher each term end. This data will enable the Attendance Officer to determine two aspects:

Raw data (ACTUAL attendance data recorded via registration certificates / ARBOR)

VERIFIED data (data which has been scrutinised to determine reasons/codes for any absenteeism)

Benchmark 88%	This term:	Last academic year:
Pupil RAW attendance data (%) before analysis		
Pupil Data (%) after analysis		

It is a truism that children with a disability and those with special educational needs have greater levels of absence from school than their mainstream peers. This is usually as a direct result of their impairments (such as attending medical appointments, surgery, which are more common in the deaf pupils with cochlear implants and hearing aids.) it can also be the result of an indirect consequence of their 'condition'.

Through the scrutiny of attendance codes and SEN needs the Attendance Officer and wellbeing team will identify percentages to inform verified data; such data will be supported by a commentary which demonstrates how the data has been analysed providing the reader with further context.

The Attendance administrator has the responsibility for monitoring progress data, alongside the AHT and Wellbeing Team for any pupil who may experience a prolonged absence from school and is not meeting the schools attendance benchmark. Data associated with progress over time will be scrutinised and where this has slowed, opportunities will be identified to 'close the gap'. Such measures will be discussed / reviewed with the pastoral teacher / welfare team and the parents / carers will be contacted to discuss further; follow up discussions (if/as required) will take place in Pupil Progress meetings and will include parents/carers if/as necessary.

The school will therefore work closely with parents / carers to ensure the continuation of targets – e.g. – IEPs, therapy and academia can be addressed as much as possible whilst the pupil is at home. The school will endeavour to provide any additional resources – e.g. – iPad, notebooks, and therapy plans that the parents would need to address targets identified

Using such measures, the following groups/cohorts' attendance data can be examined to identify if there are any trends over time which the school needs to address, or if further clarification is needed to explain non-attendance at the school:

- Boys/girls
- Needs type
- PP/Non PP
- Ethnicity
- LAC

The attendance of all pupils will be formally discussed at each pupil's Annual Review with parents / carers and recorded via our Annual Report to parents. Attendance data will be formally recorded within the review paperwork provided by the Local Authority. Attendance data will additionally be recorded in the electronic e-PEPs paperwork for all Children in Care; this will be the responsibility of the designated Child in Care Lead.

Persistent absences:

As identified every term the office team will provide the HoS/DSL/DDSL/ Head of Sixth Form with a summary of the attendance data for any pupil who has been recognised as falling below the attendance data sets identified within our schools. As outlined the Attendance Officer will scrutinise all such data to identify reasons to verify data; following such scrutiny if reasons do not relate to specified attendance codes or there appears to be emerging patterns/themes an alert will be created to trigger school action (MASH/EWO).

To inform our working practice we will use the protocols/steps identified within the attendance intervention strategy aimed at addressing such concerns in an informed way (APPENDIX E).

Recognition of Good Attendance

Oak Lodge recognises and encourages good and excellent attendance.

All pupils and students achieving a 98%-100% attendance each term will receive a certificate and special breakfast. Pupils receiving 100% attendance throughout the year will receive a certificate & reward / prize at Oak Lodge prize giving in July.

School Lead for Attendance:

Karen Duggan-Stevens

Assistant Head/SENCO and Deputy Designated Safeguarding lead (DDSL)

kdugganstevens@oaklodge.wandsworth.sch.uk

Attendance Administrator:

Lola Lindfield

llindfield@oaklodge.wandsworth.sch.uk

Appendix A:

School attendance codes

Present codes

/ \ present during registration

B educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes

K attending provision arranged by the local authority

L arrived after the register has started but before it has closed

P Sporting activity with prior agreement from school

V educational visit or trip

W work experience

Authorised absences

C exceptional circumstances

C1 in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad

C2 absent due to part-time timetable

D dual registered

E suspended or permanently excluded

I illness (not medical or dental appointments)

J1 job/school/college interview

M medical or dental appointment

Q unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements

R religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)

S study leave

T parent travelling for occupational purposes

X non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

Y1 unable to attend due to transport provided not being available

Y2 unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption

Y3 unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Y4 unable to attend due to whole school closure

Y5 unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Y6 unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Y7 unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)

Unauthorised absence

G holiday (not agreed)

N reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)

O absent in other or unknown circumstances

U late after register has closed

Z pupil not yet on register

planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days)

Appendix B

Oak Lodge School: Attendance Procedures and action			
Attendance Group	Attendance % Verified	Administrator Action /MyConcerns Alert	Outcome
No Concern-Green	88%-100%	Attendance Administrator: text home and give term attendance data to well-being team Well-being Mentor: use data to get certificates attendance for the end of term Celebration of Achievement. Prepare for assembly, certificates.	End of Term <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Administrator Text home to parents & prepare certificates Well-being Mentor: Thursday end of term Celebration of achievement Assembly: 88% - 100% attendance Prize giving reward for pupils with 100% attendance.
Risk of underachievement -Amber	87.9% - 80%	Attendance Administrator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MyConcerns Alert to pastoral teacher that attendance is 87.9% -80% Remind pastoral to communicate with home to organise a parent meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pastoral teacher and parent meeting to inform parents that the student's attendance is now between 87.9% - 80% which is a concern and is posing a risk to underachievement. Discuss reasons for absence and support to be offered. Contract signed and placed in file
Increased risk of underachievement-RED	79.9% -75%	Attendance Administrator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant Head alerted when a student attendance is between 79.9% - 75% asked to call home Attendance Administrator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EWO, Wellbeing mentor and Assistant head alerted when a student reaches attendance lower than 79.9% School Attendance panel needs to take place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistant head calls home to inform parents that the pupils' attendance means they are at increased risk of underachieving. Discuss reasons for absence and support Attendance panel 1 with attendance officer and EWO. Attendance panel 2 EWO & Head if this below 84.9% attendance for over 4 weeks Attendance Panel 3 EWO, Head and assistant head meeting with parent reminding that student's attendance has been consistently below 84.9% for 12 and court proceedings should take place. <p>School Attendance Panel with EWO and school staff followed by close monitoring. Referral to school EWO if attendance continues to deteriorate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Court processes/ actions may be taken by school EWO if the attendance remains unsatisfactory.
High Risk of Under-achievement-White	74.9% - 0%	Attendance Administrator <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EWO, Wellbeing mentor and Assistant Head alerted when a student reaches attendance lower than 74% School Attendance panel needs to take place. <p>See Outcome</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance panel 1 with attendance officer and EWO. Attendance panel 2 EWO & Head if this below 74.9% attendance for over 4 weeks Attendance Panel 3 EWO, Head and assistant Head meeting with parent reminding that student's attendance has been consistently below 74.9% for 12 weeks and court proceedings should take place. <p>School Attendance Panel with EWO and school staff followed by close monitoring. Referral to school EWO if attendance continues to deteriorate. Court processes/ actions may be taken by school EWO if the attendance remains unsatisfactory.</p>

Appendix C

Attendance Case Study Template

Attendance Case Study			
Pupil Name:	Pupil Needs: Main area of need: Other information:	Attendance data: 201_ - 202_ XX%	School Benchmark 93%
Context:			
Actions/interventions taken by the school:			
Impact:			
Attendance: Autumn Term 201_ - 202_ XX%	Attendance: Spring Term 201_ - 202_ XX%	Attendance: Summer Term 201_ - 202_ XX%	

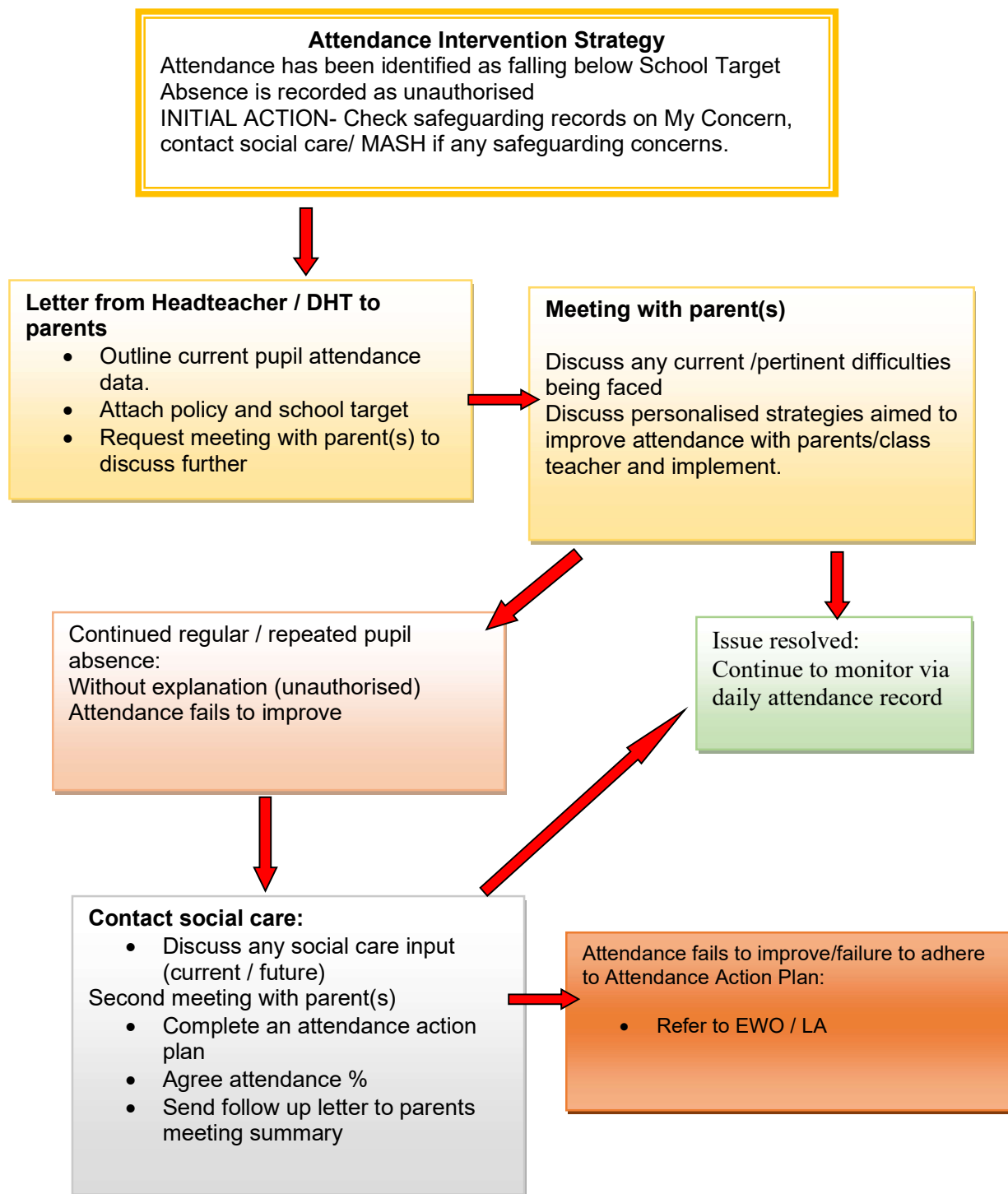
Appendix D

Pupil leave of absence/ exceptional circumstances – Risk Assessment – Key questions to consider helping inform decision.

Question	Yes / No	Comments (if /as appropriate)
Are there any current safeguarding concerns*		
Have there been any previous safeguarding concerns*		
Is attendance at least good (above 85%)		
The parent provides adequate reason following agreed school protocols for any absenteeism		
Has the parent made any previous request(s) over this academic year.		
Have any previous requests been declined by the school		
Progress – is the pupil making at least the expected progress over time		
Has the parent provided sufficient information to support this request (is the form complete)		
Has the parent noted who will accompany the pupil?		
Has the parent outlined how they will counteract missed school work.		

- Social Care – if yes- please contact social care manager/social worker/MASH to discuss further.

Appendix E





Appendix E

Dear Parent/Carer

School Attendance

Regular attendance at school is extremely important if your child is to make progress and we need to work together to ensure that this happens.

Starting this term, pupils who attend school for more than 93% of sessions will receive a certificate at the end of term. The class which has the best attendance every half term will be awarded the "Attendance Cup" and will get to keep it in their pastoral classroom for the next half term. If attendance falls below 93% we will be in contact to support your child meeting our school target. Please see the reverse of this letter for further information.

We would like to remind parents/carers of the procedure that must be taken if their child is absent or going to be absent from school.

Where notice of absence is possible (e.g. a medical appointment) please notify the school in advance. Please note that if you feel that the reason for absence will require Headteacher approval, for example requesting holiday during term time, you should request and complete a 'Request for Exceptional Leave of Absence' form.

If absence is 'unforeseeable' then:

Day 1 of absence: Please telephone the school office by 8.30am giving details of the reason for absence. The school is required to keep full details of pupil absence and information has to be conveyed directly between home and school, so please do not rely on the transport staff to convey any messages. Failure to notify us of the reason for absence will result in your child receiving an unauthorised absence mark.

Day 2 onwards: Please keep us informed before 8.30 as to the current situation and if possible, notify us of an expected return to school date.

On return to school: Please send written confirmation of the reason for your child's absence, either by separate letter or in your child's home/school book.

We have support procedures which are designed to help with regular or repeated absence without explanation. In the first instance you will be offered a visit from the Home School Liaison worker to see if there is any support that can be offered to you. If attendance does not improve, then you will be invited into school to complete an Attendance Action Plan in which attendance targets are set. If attendance still does not improve then the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service (EWO). If attendance still does not improve after input from the EWO, it can lead to prosecution and a fine or even imprisonment. Please refer to the updated Attendance Policy on the school website for further details.

We very much appreciate the support we receive from families in ensuring that pupils attend school regularly. This letter seeks to clarify our procedures and outline the help available to those families who may find aspects of attendance difficult.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Attendance %		Attendance and punctuality will improve learning opportunities and are vital employability skills.
No Concern-Green	88%-100%	Excellent Attendance: text/ letter home and certificate to celebrate good attendance.
Risk of underachievement - Amber	87.9% - 80%	At Risk; letter home and meeting with wellbeing team to find ways to support improved attendance.
Increased risk of underachievement- RED	80% -75%	High Risk; letter home and meeting with AHT & wellbeing team to find ways to support improved attendance.
High Risk of Underachievement- RED	74.9% - 0%	Very High Risk; Letter home & LA informed and meeting with AHT & EWO to find ways to support improved attendance.

Reminders:

- Three up to date contact details are needed so we can contact you if there is a concern or emergency.
- Call the school before 8.30am if your child is ill or has a medical appointment.
- Call the school by 8.30am every day that your child is away from school.
- If no contact is heard from home – we will mark it as unauthorised. School will contact you daily to find out the reason for absence.
- Ensure prompt response to absence enquiries, either by letter/text or phone.
- Inform the school as soon as possible regarding medical appointments.
- Holidays must not be taken during term time.
- Requests for exceptional leave of absence must be provided using the appropriate form on request from your child's pastoral teacher or reception. The Headteacher will assess the risk and level of attendance prior to granting exceptional leave.

Thank you for working in partnership with Oak Lodge School.

TEMPLATES

Date:

Dear Parent/carers

Here is your child's 'Traffic Light' attendance certificate for this half-term. The meaning for each colour is explained below:

- **GREEN – Congratulations! Your child's attendance is in the acceptable range for Oak Lodge School**
- **AMBER** – Your child is attending below acceptable range for Oak Lodge School. If you would like an appointment to discuss ways to improve this with the Education Welfare Officer, please contact the school.
- **RED** – Your child's attendance is below 80% and an appointment has been made for you to meet with XXXX, Education Welfare Officer (please see below).

This attendance level may include times when your child is ill or attending routine appointments. We understand that there are exceptional circumstances that affect a child's attendance. However, the school has a statutory duty to improve attendance. We appreciate your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

AMBER TEMPLATE

Date:

Dear Parent/carer

Here is your child's 'Traffic Light' attendance certificate for this half-term. The meaning for each colour is explained below:

- GREEN – Congratulations! Your child's attendance is at national average or above.
- **AMBER – Your child is attending below the national average. We would like to invite you to an appointment to discuss ways to improve this with the Welfare Team a School please contact the school to arrange a suitable time.**
- RED – Your child's attendance is below 85% and an appointment has been made for you to meet with XXXX, Education Welfare Officer (please see below).

This attendance level may include times when your child is ill or attending routine appointments. We understand that there are exceptional circumstances that affect a child's attendance. However, the school has a statutory duty to improve attendance. We appreciate your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely

RED TEMPLATE

Date:

Dear Parent/carers

Here is your child's 'Traffic Light' attendance certificate for this half-term. The meaning for each colour is explained below:

- GREEN – Congratulations! Your child's attendance is at national average or above.
- AMBER – Your child is attending below the national average. If you would like an appointment to discuss ways to improve this with the Education Welfare Officer, please contact the school.
- **RED – Your child's attendance is below 85% and an appointment has been made for you to meet with (EWO name), Education Welfare Officer (please see below) to discuss ways to support attendance improvement.**

Day, month, time and place of appointment.

This attendance level may include times when your child is ill or attending routine appointments. We understand that there are exceptional circumstances that affect a child's attendance. However, the school has a statutory duty to improve attendance. We appreciate your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely



**PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE
IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES
Request form**

Parents/Carers

Please read these guidance notes prior to completing the form overleaf which needs to be returned to the Assistant Head-teacher – Karen Duggan-Stevens

Holidays during school time (Guidance from the Department of education)

The Department of education has made amendments to the 2006 regulations. These make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. In the light of these changes parents and carers need to be aware that it will no longer be possible to authorise leave of absence unless the 'exceptional circumstances' have been explained. Reasons such as "cheaper in term time" or "more convenient" are no longer acceptable.

For more information please see: <http://www.education.gov.uk/popularquestions/a005551/can-i-take-my-child-on-holiday-in-term-time?>

Within Oak Lodge School we believe for children/students to learn most effectively, it is essential that they attend on a regular basis, and the role of the school is to ensure that this occurs. Regular attendance is extremely important if your child is to make progress and we need to work together to ensure this happens.

The school recognises the pressures placed upon families which contain a child with disabilities and/or special educational needs, and the need for a family holiday and respite offer from Social Care. In many cases, the only option is to take the holiday within school term times. Without condoning it, the school recognises that this is sometimes the only option available to some families.

Oak Lodge School recognises that some holidays can be viewed as 'exceptional circumstances' and interprets this as '*being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time*'; therefore the 'exceptional circumstance' is much more likely to be a one off unique situation. As an example, some families are given holidays by charitable organisations and they would have little control over the date; this would be viewed as an 'exceptional circumstance'.

To address this, Oak Lodge School has developed a protocol via a 'leave of absence' request form (in exceptional circumstances) in how it addresses family holidays requested to be taken in school time. Families will be able to access this form via the **school's web site** and are asked to send it back to the Assistant Head Teacher Caroline Rowlandson. When completing this form the school asks parents/carers to give some thought to the 'exceptional circumstances' that they feel make it necessary for their child to be taken out of school during term time. This may include a child's behaviour, medical condition or complex needs.

The school acknowledges that Children in Care should not be taken out of school for holidays; any request made by the carers responsible for the child will be discussed with the allocated social worker. The Social worker will advise the school on the outcome agreed.

In order to minimise the effects of missed teaching and learning, the school asks parents to suggest some activities that their child would enjoy completing whilst they are away. This may involve anything from bringing back a memento of a place they have visited, to keeping a diary of their time away, etc. If parents would like homework set by the school they need to make this request via the pastoral teacher.

The school will require additional information in order to risk assess/authorise exceptional circumstances, to ensure the safety of any pupil as they will not be in school. The form to be returned to the school therefore will need to contain all the information requested. If parents/carers do not provide such information the exceptional circumstance request will be declined and any absenteeism will be recorded as unauthorised.

Oak Lodge School needs to make parents/carers aware that, if the Headteacher **does not** authorise the requested leave of absence, and parents continue to remove their child on the requested dates, the school is legally required to notify the Local Authority who can potentially impose a maximum £100 penalty. If the Headteacher has not authorised the requested leave parents will be notified that their child has been recorded in the electronic register as an unauthorised absence.

If the school agrees to the exceptional circumstances outlined and the information provided by parents helps inform the schools risk assessment/does not identify any safeguarding risks, parents will be notified of the permitted authorised absence via the school office. The school will make a record of all exceptional circumstances requests made retaining such information in the child's educational record; the register will be recorded using the code C.

If you require any further information please contact the school office in the first instance.

Policy approved by the FGB of Oak Lodge School	January 2025
Policy to be reviewed	Every 2 years
Responsibility	Head Teacher/Assistant Head Teacher



PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE - IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES - Request form

Parents/Carers - Please return this request form to Headteacher : C Rowlandson

SCHOOL:	Oak Lodge School	
NAME OF PUPIL:		CLASS:
		Pastoral TEACHER:
DATES REQUESTED – FROM (Insert first date of absence):		
DATES REQUESTED – TO (Insert last date of absence):		
TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOL DAYS:		

I request leave of absence for the above-named child due to the following exceptional circumstance(s):-	
Please state destination:	
Accompanying adults & their relationship to child:	

In order to counteract any missed teaching and learning, my child will:-	
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I/ we agree to the terms and conditions outlined within the Exceptional Circumstances policy of the Oak Lodge School I/we understand if we do not provide sufficient information to support the application the school can decline this request	Signed (Parent/carer):
FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY: Attendance % to date: AHT: Recommendation :	Signed (AHT – wellbeing & attendance): C Rowlandson. I support the application for authorisation I am unable to support the application because



LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

To the parents/carers of:		
Request approved/not approved for your child to have a leave of absence (exceptional circumstances):	APPROVED	NOT APPROVED
If exceptional circumstances have been declined (reasons) – <i>if you would like an appointment to discuss any aspect please telephone the office manager to request an appointment with the HT:</i>		
FROM (first day of absence):		
TO (last day of absence):		
Request/destination:		
Head of Schools signature:		
Date:		

COPY – School file
ARBOR