



**Ocean Academy Poole**  
an Aspirations Academy

# **Ocean Academy Attendance Policy**

Last Reviewed	Sep 2021	Update	Sep 2023
Owner	Ocean Academy	Ratified	Sep 2021



## Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly within school, seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils. We encourage children to attend, and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- attainment and progress in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others
- enrichment experiences
- possible safeguarding

The Governors and Principal, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

## Parental Responsibility

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child who should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines a child's education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk. The school shares attendance percentages with parents within individual termly reports and more frequently via letter or face to face meeting where there are concerns.

**It is the parent/carer's responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding matter so that all parties know that all children are safe.**

Pupils are expected to arrive between 8.30 and 8.55am, when the academy entrance doors will be open and children go to class. All pupils who arrive late must report to the school office where they are registered and the reason for lateness is recorded. **It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to register their child as late.** Continued lateness also falls within this attendance policy as lateness also impacts negatively on a child's education and wellbeing. Parents/carers will be contacted to discuss continued lateness to ensure this is rectified as soon as possible.

## Illness and Medical Appointments

If a child cannot attend school, parents/carers are required to contact the school on 01202 606888 and speak to Mrs Fudge or Mrs Burry or to send an email to [office@ocean-aspirations.org](mailto:office@ocean-aspirations.org) providing their child's name and class and reason for absence. If the telephone line is busy, a message should be left on the answer machine. Parents/carers are required to contact the school every day of a child's absence before 9.15am. If a reason for a child's absence is not received, then the school will try and contact the

parents/carers to find out why their child is not in school. Should we be unable to contact a parent/carer, we may ask the School Attendance Worker to carry out a visit or a member of staff will make a visit to the home as this is then a safeguarding issue.

Please note:

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- An appointment card or verification by the doctor/ dentist/hospital is required.
- If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- If a child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea, they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last bout of sickness/diarrhoea. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.
- For more than three days of absence, the school requires medical evidence as to why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.
- The school office should be contacted every day of absence before 9.15am each day.

### **The Role of the School Staff**

The Leadership team has overall responsibility for attendance. Mrs R Richardson should be contacted if parents/carers have any attendance concerns: [richardson@ocean-aspirations.org](mailto:richardson@ocean-aspirations.org)

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. Pupil attendance is monitored weekly to highlight and take action where the attendance of individual children is causing concern.

The School Attendance and Inclusion Worker at BCP Council oversees the audit of attendance at Ocean Academy.

### **Attendance Team at Ocean Academy**

Attendance Administration: Mrs J Burry

Attendance Lead: Mrs R Richardson

Associate Principal: Mr L Tharme

Executive Principal: Mrs J Quarrie

It is the responsibility of the school attendance team to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date.
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents/carers are contacted on the first day of absence and a reason obtained.
- Where it is not possible to make contact, letters are sent to parents/carers requesting reasons for absence.
- Visits to the child's home if there is a safeguarding concern. Where this is not possible, social care will be contacted to follow up poor attendance.
- The appropriate national attendance code is entered into the register.

### **Action for Low Attendance**

96%+ Excellent – Well done! This will help all aspects of a child's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.

94-95%

Average – Strive to build on this. Work with parents/carers to continue to promote full attendance to move to 96%+

85-93%

Poor – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. The academy will contact parents/carers directly to seek ways of working together to improve attendance. Children with a percentage of 90% or below are termed as 'persistently absent'.

Below 85%

Unacceptable – Absence is causing serious concern. It is affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child's learning. Meetings between home and school to share strategies for improvement will be called. If improvement is not achieved a referral is made to the Attendance Service – School Attendance and Inclusion Worker and a Penalty Notice considered where absence is not authorised.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

- In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents/carers keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.
- Prior to the engagement of the School Attendance and Inclusion Worker at BCP Council, the school may issue letters/emails to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupils' absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for involvement from the School Attendance and Inclusion Worker.

## **Children Missing Education**

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Principal must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll and are reported to the local authority Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

## **Lateness**

The class register is taken at 9am and at the start of the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after 9am must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness is recorded on the electronic system via the screen in front of the office. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (Code 'L'). The register will close at 9.15am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') This national code counts as an unauthorised absence. Parents/carers should accompany their child to the office to report the reason for their child's lateness.

Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class. If this is an issue, it will be discussed with parents at parents' evenings and may be referred to the Attendance and Inclusion Worker at BCP Council. Frequent or regular lateness can provide grounds for prosecution or the issue of a Penalty Notice.

## **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness**

Parents/carers will be liable for a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning from BCP Council if their child is persistently late to school (after the registers have closed at 9.15am). Persistent is defined as a minimum of 5 late arrivals within 5 weeks. The absences do not need to be consecutive.

## **Definitions**

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers) as either

**AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**.

This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required:

### **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised is when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note, email or telephones the school to explain the absence.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Principal. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation' has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.
- Holidays which have not been agreed.

### **Authorising Absence**

Following amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which came into effect 1st September 2013, Principals/Headteachers are only allowed to grant leave of absence from school in exceptional circumstances. In considering whether or not to authorise a request for exceptional leave of absence in term time, the Principal/Headteacher will look at each individual case and only grant authorisation if the circumstances are truly exceptional. Additionally, any request should be made prior to the leave of absence and should be submitted to the school using the 'Request for Leave of Absence form' (available from the school website or office). Parents/Carers may be asked to provide additional information/evidence or meet with the school to discuss the circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. 'Unavoidable' should be taken to mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. As a general guide, the following indicates the type of scenarios that might be considered as 'exceptional':

- Immediate family member returning home from Service Duty
- Immediate family weddings or funerals (if abroad, only the actual day of the wedding/funeral)
- Occasions of religious observance
- Other situations where a 'compassionate' element is applicable

Generally, the following scenarios cannot be considered 'exceptional':

- Annual family holidays
- Educational visits arranged by family members during school time
- Family birthdays or other events
- Parents' profession or place of work making it difficult to coincide school and work holidays

Following an application for term time absence, parents/carers will be notified of the Principal's/Headteacher's decision at the earliest opportunity. If the circumstances are not considered to be exceptional then the absence cannot be authorised and the school may need to request that BCP Council issues a Fixed Penalty Notice. In considering whether to request a Penalty Notice, the school will have due regard to the latest version of the BCP Council 'Education Penalty Notice - Code of Conduct' (currently April 2019).

It is important for parents/carers to note that once Ocean Academy have requested that the BCP Council issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for a period of unauthorised leave in term time, you will not have an opportunity to discuss this matter further with the Local Authority. Any queries or discussions should be had prior to, or at the time of requesting the leave.

Year group attendance figures are reported monthly in the Academy newsletter. 'Attendance Matters' information will be sent out regularly to parents.

**Review**

This policy will be reviewed according to the schedule for policy review.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chair of South Coast District Board