



**Ocean Academy Poole**  
an Aspirations Academy

# **Ocean Academy Attendance Policy**

Last Reviewed	Sep 2022	Update	Sep 2024
Owner	Ocean Academy	Ratified	Sep 2022



## Attendance Policy

### 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 in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
- confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others

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

### Parental Responsibility

Parents 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/carers at each parent/carer consultation evening, within individual termly reports and more frequently where there are concerns.

**It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding matter so that all parties know that your child is safe.**

Pupils are expected to arrive between 8.30 and 9am, when the doors are 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.

### Illness and Medical Appointments

If a child cannot attend school, parents 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, please leave a message. Parents are required to contact the school every day of a child's absence. If a reason for a child's absence is not received, then the school will try and contact the parents to find out why their child is not in school. Should we be unable to contact a parent, we may ask the School Attendance Worker to carry out a visit or a member of the pastoral/senior leadership team may visit the home as a matter of safeguarding.

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 your 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 require medical evidence for why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced. If no medical evidence is provided, the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

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

The Leadership team has overall responsibility for attendance.

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.

It is the responsibility of staff at Ocean Academy Attendance Team to ensure that:

- Attendance and lateness records are updated daily with the appropriate national attendance code.
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents/carers are contacted on the first day of absence to obtain the reason by 10.00am.
- Where it is not possible to make contact, the pupil's emergency contacts are phoned.
- If no contact is established within 24/48 hours, a home visit may be made; this is in line with the school safeguarding policy.
- If after a home visit, contact still cannot be made, then Social Services or the Police may be called to carry out a safeguarding and welfare visit.

## **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

## **Action for Low Attendance**

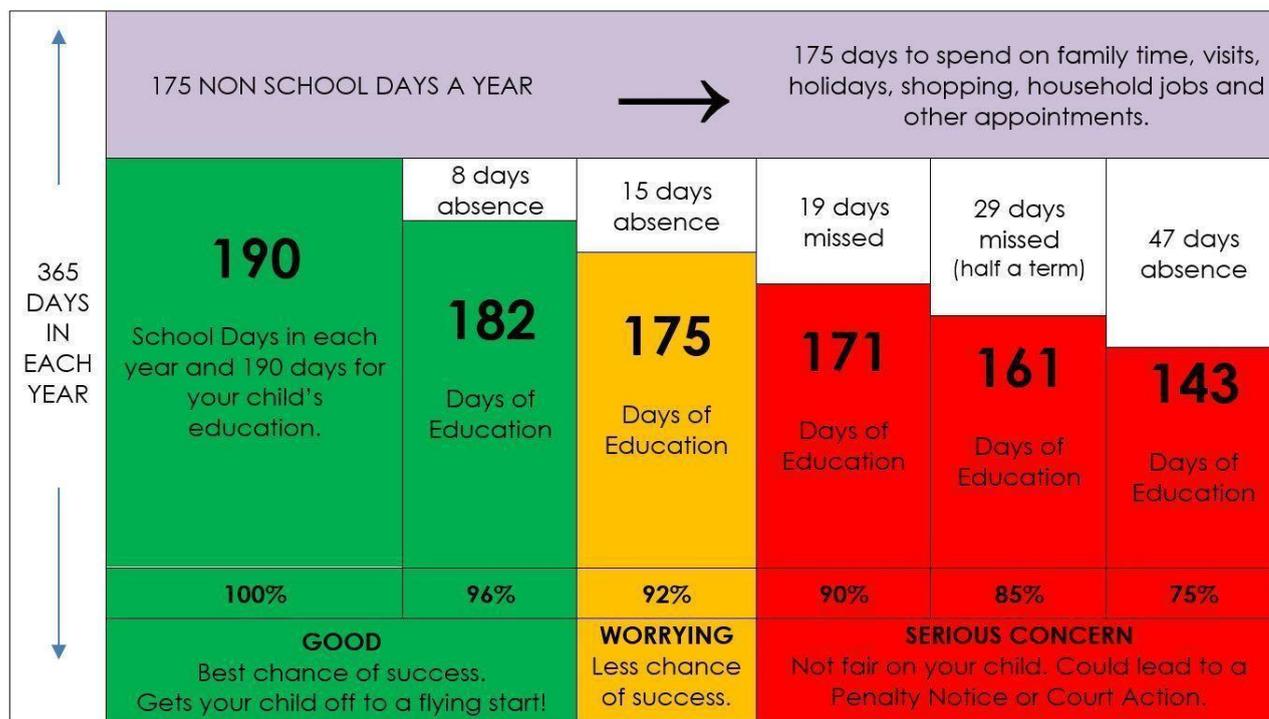
**96%+ Excellent – Well done!** This will help all aspects of your child's progress and life in school. This will give them a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic.

**94-95% Average** – Strive to build on this. Work with parents to continue to promote full attendance to move to 96%+

**85-93% Poor** – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. School will contact parents directly through telephone calls, text messages or letters 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 parents/carers and school will be arranged to share strategies for improvement and offer support. If improvement is not achieved a support process known as [FAST TRACK](#) may be started alongside a referral to the Attendance Service at BCP. A Penalty Notice will also be considered.

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 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 can be 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.

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 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) 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.

### **Review**

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

### **Further information regarding school attendance**

Please see: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

#### [BCP school attendance information](#)

If a registered pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, the parent could be guilty of an offence under [Section 444 Education Act 1996](#).

In April 2017, the Supreme Court held that attending school "*regularly*" means attendance in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school and not "*sufficiently frequent attendance*". This means that a child must attend school on every day that the school requires him or her to do so and failure to do this may lead to the commission of an offence.

### **There are 2 offences:**

1. [Section 444\(1\) Education Act 1996](#) – If the child is absent without authorisation then the parent is guilty of an offence. This is a strict liability offence i.e. all that needs to be shown is a lack of regular attendance. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £1,000.
2. [Section 444\(1A\) Education Act 1996](#) – an aggravated offence. If the child is absent without authorisation and the parent knew about the child's absence and failed to act then the parent is guilty of an offence. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £2,500 and a prison sentence of up to 3 months.

