

Oak Farm Primary School

Attendance Policy



OAK FARM

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Approved by: HT

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Part A: 1. Overview

Oak Farm Primary expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved. At Oak Farm Primary, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low, persistent and severe attendance/punctuality and barriers to attendance with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.
- To build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance in 'Working together to improve school attendance', which applies from 19 August 2024, as well as 'School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures'. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, along with the 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- 'Keeping children safe in education'
- 'Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools'

1.3 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Behaviour policy

Part B: Oak Farm Primary

1. Expectations

The school's view on attendance is that it is everybody's responsibility. Every student is a valued member of the school and their presence is crucial for the collective success and well-being of the community overall. Aligned with the recommendations from an Impacted report entitled '*Understanding Attendance*' from January 2024 ([click here](#)), the school is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where every student feels they belong and are valued. The school aims to foster strong, positive relationships between students, and between students and school staff, to help build a supportive and connected community. Additionally, the school strives to communicate the importance and benefits of good attendance at every opportunity, helping students understand how their learning experiences contribute to their personal and academic growth.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Although attendance is everybody's responsibility, some members of the school community have a specific role in supporting attendance or providing oversight of the school's endeavours. These roles are outlined below:

2.1 The Governing Body (GB)

The GB of Oak Farm Primary is responsible for regularly reviewing attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. Further information about the LGB's role in reviewing attendance data can be found in Part A.

2.2 The Headteacher

The school's headteacher is responsible for implementing this policy at the school and monitoring school-level absence data, which is then reported to the governors. Additionally, the headteacher supports staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students as well as trends and patterns across groups of students. The headteacher works closely with the local authority to consider a range of legal interventions to improve attendance, including the issuing of penalty notices as a last resort.

2.3 The senior leader for attendance (the 'Attendance Champion') and the SLT

Assistant Headteachers and the SLT of Oak Farm Primary School are responsible for monitoring attendance data both across the year group and at an individual student level. They pay particular attention to the attendance of students categorised in vulnerable groups. Additionally, they report any attendance concerns to the attendance officer, Miss Fisk, and Attendance Champion, Mrs Hunt ~~Ms Frempong~~. Collaborating with the attendance officer, teachers, and Attendance Champion, they work to address and reduce persistent absenteeism. To further support these efforts, Assistant Headteachers and SLT arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues and record any actions taken.

2.4 The Attendance Officer

The school's attendance officer is Miss Emma Fisk. She is supported by the Inclusion team and Mrs Charmaine Hill, the nominated admin assistant, to manage the day-to-day attendance arrangements. The attendance officer liaises closely with class teachers to ensure that registers are completed accurately and are available for scrutiny. They are responsible for notifying the local authority's school attendance support team of persistent absences and collaborating with them to support improvement. The officer monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level. They also report on students with persistent absences to the Attendance Champion;

send out student absence letters on behalf of the Attendance Champion; and provide general management information on student attendance as required or the London Borough of Hillingdon (LBH). The attendance officer reports attendance concerns to the headteacher, or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and advises the headteacher when to issue legal interventions, such as fixed-penalty notices. The attendance officer oversees the signing in and our process by students and informs Attendance Champion of any concerns. The attendance officer ensures that latecomers are correctly recorded in the attendance registers and liaises with the pastoral team to arrange the collection and dispatch of work for students absent due to long-term illness. They also contact parents when they have not informed the school through a telephone call, message on Parentmail of their child's absence. Additionally, the attendance officer delegates to the nominated admin assistant, when necessary.

2.5 Pastoral Team

The pastoral Team of Oak Farm Primary School, guided by the attendance champion and attendance officer, pay particular attention to the attendance of students categorised in vulnerable groups. Additionally, they work closely together with the attendance team to address and reduce persistent absenteeism. The pastoral team supports the attendance team, during intervention meetings, offering solutions for possible barriers to attendance.

2.6 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for accurately recording attendance within lessons on a daily basis, using the correct codes and saving this information on SIMS. They are also responsible for monitoring, flagging concerns and being a point of contact between home and school to discuss attendance concerns.

2.7 Parents/Carers

By law, all students of compulsory school age (normally 5 to 16 years old) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure this happens, either by registering their child at a school or by making other arrangements to provide them with a suitable, full-time education. Once a child is registered at a school, parents are legally responsible for ensuring they attend; this means students should not have sessions of unauthorised absence.

2.8. How parents/carers can support good attendance

To support their child's school attendance, parents and carers should take several actions. First, they should establish good attendance habits by acting as role models and showing students that good attendance and punctuality are important. They should ensure that their child has a good rate of attendance, ideally 96% or higher. Creating a good routine for mornings at home so that students can arrive punctually and be properly equipped will also help mornings start calmly. Establishing a good bedtime routine is essential so that children can sleep well, get enough rest and make mornings less of a struggle. Parents should also know the routines of the school day to avoid issues, such as ensuring students have their PE kits on the right days. Reading all school communications helps parents stay informed about what's going on at school and can encourage conversations with their children. Attending all school open evenings and functions is another important step. Wherever possible, medical appointments should be made outside of the school day. Parents should only grant days at home for genuine illness and contact the school via telephone or email as soon as possible to explain why their child is absent and when they are expected to return. If appropriate, arranging for a family member or a friend to take a child to school if a sibling is sick can also help maintain good attendance. Parents should not take holidays during school time.

2.9 Students

Students at Oak Farm Primary School are expected to attend school every day and be punctual. This means arriving at school on time, ready to begin the day's activities. Regular attendance is crucial for ensuring that students do not miss out on important learning opportunities. In addition to being on time for school, students must also ensure they attend every lesson promptly. This punctuality applies to each class throughout the school day, reinforcing the importance of being present and ready to engage in learning activities from the beginning of each session. Unless absolutely necessary, students should remain in every lesson for its entire duration. This policy is designed to maximise learning time and minimise disruptions, helping students fully benefit from the instructional time provided.

3. Communication

Effective communication is paramount in ensuring high attendance rates at school, as it fosters a collaborative environment between the school and families. Oak Farm Primary school's attendance officer plays a critical role in monitoring and promoting good attendance, acting as the primary liaison between the school and the parents or carers. They are supported by the inclusion team and the school's attendance champion, a senior lead dedicated to attendance issues, ensuring that robust systems and strategies are in place. The school utilises a variety of communication methods, including regular updates to parents and carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. These updates can be disseminated through emails, letters and parent-teacher meetings, helping to keep families informed and engaged. Oak Farm Primary School maintains a 'buzz' of attendance through a well-planned calendar of events and communications that highlight the importance of regular attendance. To support these efforts, the school's designated attendance champion and attendance officer will work closely with the Inclusion team, Assistant Headteachers, class teachers and welfare staff, all of whom are instrumental in supporting various attendance initiatives. The pastoral team can be contacted for further assistance in addressing attendance concerns and providing additional support to students and their families. By employing a comprehensive approach that includes clear communication and dedicated support roles, Oak Farm Primary School aims to minimise student absences and promote a culture of regular attendance. Appendix A has examples of communication that may be sent to parents regarding attendance.

4. Procedures

Procedures are crucial for the monitoring of attendance because they ensure consistency, accuracy and accountability. They provide a standardised approach for recording and tracking student presence, enabling timely identification of absences. This facilitates early intervention for at-risk students, promotes a safe learning environment and supports legal compliance regarding compulsory education. Clear procedures also streamline communication between stakeholders ensuring everyone is informed about attendance-related issues. Additionally, accurate attendance records are vital for funding, resource allocation and analysing patterns to improve overall school performance, as well as student engagement.

4.1 Arriving at school and lateness

Students are expected to arrive promptly for school by the times outlined below.

Table 1: Start times for Oak Farm Primary School

	Gates open at	Classroom doors open at	Classroom doors shut at (official start time)	Child marked late if they arrive after
Morning nursery	8:25am	8:40am	8:50am	9:00am
Afternoon nursery	12:05pm	12:20pm	12:30pm	12:30pm
Reception, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4, Year 5, Year 6	8:25am	8:40am	8:50am	9:00am

4.1.1 Punctuality

Students are expected to arrive at Oak Farm Primary School on time each day. Sometimes unexpected lateness occurs which cannot be helped. Students will not be permitted through their classroom door after the official start time. Students who arrive after the official start time indicated in Table 1 should be escorted by their parents to the main office, where parents should sign them in. Students who are late will receive a green card once they have entered the main school building. This card must then be presented to the class teacher to indicate to the office staff has registered them. When a child arrives late without a green card, the class teacher will need to call the main office to confirm that the child has arrived.

If a child arrives no later than 30 minutes after the official start time, they will be marked in the register as 'authorised late: late before registration closes.' If a child arrives more than 30 minutes late, they will be marked as an 'unauthorised absence: late after the register closes.' An unauthorised late will affect a child's overall rate of attendance. Arriving late means that students miss the crucial input for their day, which puts them at a disadvantage to their peers. If a child is late on two or more occasions within a week, their parent will receive a message sent via Parentmail. If a child has been late on 5 occasions, they will receive a letter regarding lateness. For every 5 late marks, a new letter will be sent. After 15 late marks, a meeting will be organised and further action determined.

See Appendix E for flowchart of daily absence monitoring procedures.

4.2 Absences

Each school day consists of two sessions, a morning (referred to as AM) and an afternoon (referred to as PM). Therefore, if a child is absent from school for one whole day, this will equate to two sessions of absence. There are two types of absence: authorised and unauthorised. The school is responsible for deciding whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised therefore the information you give us determines the outcome of the absence. As a school, any authorised absences ultimately will be the decision of the headteacher and the school has the right to request any evidence of any absence. Any absences that have not been reported will be marked as unauthorised.

4.2.1 Notifying the school

Parents must inform the school via telephone call, or email if their child is ill and will be absent from school. A detailed reason for absence must be received before 9:00am on each day of absence. A child simply being 'unwell' is not a reason to be absent from school. Although medical appointments and illness constitute an authorised absence, they will still affect a child's percentage attendance, therefore we require parents to provide documentation for these absences. Following guidance from Public Health England, the school operates a strict period of 48 hours from the last spell of sickness/diarrhoea before a child is allowed to return to school to which parents must adhere. For advice and information on whether children are well enough for school, parents/carers are advised to visit the related page on the NHS website ([click here](#)).

4.2.2 Contact details

Oak Farm Primary School must have up-to-date contact numbers for your child so we can contact you when your child is absent or in case of an emergency.

4.3 Working with the local authority

Collaboration between schools and local authorities is crucial for improving attendance. Joint efforts ensure that barriers to attendance are identified and addressed, providing holistic support to students and families. This partnership fosters a community-focused approach, enhancing engagement, resources and interventions, ultimately leading to better educational outcomes and reduced absenteeism.

4.3.1 Issuing of penalty notices

Parents are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties continue, the school may refer the child to the attendance team at the local authority. The team will also try to resolve the situation but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance fail and unauthorised absences persist, the team can use sanctions such as the issuing of a penalty notice as a last resort, which is currently £80 rising to £160 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days, a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid penalty notice, which could lead to a prosecution in the Magistrates Court. More information can be found in the Department for Education's statutory guidance: '*Working together to improve school attendance*' ([click here](#)). Alternatively, parents may wish to contact the local authority attendance team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01895 250858. Attendance advice may be sought at any time by the school and it may be necessary to fast track a referral to them.

4.3.2 Child missing from education

If a child has been absent for 10 school days they are classified as a child missing from education (Children Missing from Education-CME). A referral to the local authority's CME team will be made for further advice and support.

4.4 Exceptional leave during term time

The school will not authorise any leave during term time. Parents/carers who feel it necessary to take their child out of school for an extended period of time due to unavoidable and extreme/exceptional circumstances must make a formal request by completing the '*Request for leave of absence during term time*' document (refer to Letter 8, Appendix B). This should be submitted to the headteacher at least two weeks before the intended period of absence. Any supporting documents should be submitted with the request form, such as flight details or exam letters. There is no right of appeal in regards to any decision made concerning requests for exceptional leave during term time. If the child will be late returning from a period of leave, the school requires parents/carers to produce documentation to evidence this. Where holidays are taken which have not been authorised, the school will inform the local authority attendance team, who may issue a penalty notice of £80 per parent per child if it is paid within 21 days. If it is not paid within 21 days, it advances to £160 per parent per child. If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action. More information can be found on the Department of Education's website ([click here](#)). Where there is reason to believe that a prolonged absence is the result of a holiday, the school will pursue it as it would if it was informed about the holiday in advance. Suspicion of prolonged absence due to a holiday in term time is enough to pursue a holiday penalty notice through the local authority.

4.5 Extreme/exceptional circumstances

Extreme or exceptional circumstances generally include situations that are rare, significant or unavoidable. The following scenarios illustrate what is meant by this term:

1. Bereavement: the death of a close family member.
2. Serious illness: when a child or close family member has a serious/critical illness that requires the child to be absent.
3. Family crisis: emergency situations involving members of the child's family that require immediate attention.
4. Religious observances: religious festivals or ceremonies.
5. Examinations: external examinations or assessments.
6. Legal requirements: attending a court hearing, being involved in a custody dispute or other legal obligations.
7. Unexpected travel disruptions: unforeseen travel disruptions that make it impossible for the child to attend school (eg. natural disasters).

These exceptional circumstances typically do not include:

- Holidays during term time.
- Family events like birthdays or weddings.
- Minor ailments (colds, headaches).

5. Identifying trends and patterns

It is important to note that consistent attendance is essential for a student's academic and social development. Oak Farm Primary School will work with parents/carers and other professionals as needed to support students in attending school regularly and meeting their full potential. The school uses the following procedures for monitoring daily attendance and informing parents:

- daily attendance reminder messages are sent via Parentmail to all parents/carers who have not notified the school of their child's absence;
- weekly Parentmails are sent to parents/carers to whose children who have more than 2 late arrivals at school during the preceding week;

- Whole school attendance is shared weekly on the school bulletin, alongside regular updates and support;
- Attendance reports are given to parents three times across the academic year; two at the parental consultations (Oct & Feb) and with the final report in the summer term.
- parents/carers will be notified if their child's attendance becomes cause for concern and parents will be invited in to meet with staff in line with Oak Farm's *'Six steps to monitoring attendance'* (outlined below);
- if there is still no improvement, or parents do not respond to the school's letters, or if parents/carers fail to show up for arranged meetings, then the school will refer the family to the local authority's attendance team; and
- school staff may undertake home visits if absences are not reported, to check that the child is safe and well.

5.1 *'Six steps to monitoring attendance'*

The school's attendance monitoring procedure, *'Six steps to monitoring attendance'*, is designed to support students in attending school regularly and making the most of their educational opportunities. To ensure that attendance concerns are addressed in a timely and appropriate manner, the following actions will be taken if a student misses a certain number of sessions:

- Class teachers need to be vigilant with the patterns of absences within their class.
- 10 sessions missed: Letter 1 will be sent home informing parents/carers that their child is at risk of falling below the national expectation for annual attendance, which can affect their learning and success in school.
- 20 sessions missed: Letter 2 will be sent home informing parents/carers that any further absences will mean that their child has fallen below the national expectations for attendance and will continue to be monitored by SLT, with an invite to attend and informal meeting with our school's Attendance Officer and Pastoral Lead.
- 30 sessions missed: Letter 3 will be issued, informing parents/carers that their child's absence is a cause for concern. The school's attendance champion will contact the family and will arrange a meeting with an member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 35 sessions missed: Letter 4 will be sent home asking parents/carers to attend a meeting with the attendance officer and family to discuss the attendance concerns with the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher.
- 40 sessions missed: Letter 5 will be issued and an attendance panel meeting with the Attendance Champion will be scheduled as the child is on the verge of persistent absence, having missed four weeks of learning. There is also a risk of a referral to the local authority's attendance team.
- No Further improvement: Letter 6 will be sent to inform that a referral will be made to the participation team, next steps will be given from the local authority.

Template letters referred to above can be found in Appendix B.

See appendix C: Flowchart of *'Six steps to monitoring attendance'*

Table 2: Sessions missed

Step	Sessions missed ¹	Percentage at the end of year (%)	Days missed
1	Class teachers need to be vigilance to the patterns of absence		
2	10	97	5 (1 week)
3	20	94	10 (2 weeks)
4	30	92	15 (3 weeks)
5	35	90	17.5 (3.5 weeks)
6	40	89	20 (4 weeks)

6. Celebrating good attendance

Oak Farm Primary School recognises the importance of celebrating and incentivising good attendance to encourage students to maintain consistent and punctual attendance. As such, the school utilises a variety of strategies to reward students who demonstrate excellent and/or improved attendance. The school rewards good attendance in the following ways:

Overview	Purpose	Rewards
Weekly	Highest class attendance	Trophy for their class for the week – LKS2 and UKS2 Attendance Bear for the week – EYFS and KS1 (Every child that achieves 100% from the previous week will be entered into a raffle. One child from each EYFS, KS1, LKS2 & UKS2 will receive a prize)
Half-termly	A child has achieved 97% and above A child has achieved 100%	Sticker will be awarded Certificate & Sticker will be awarded
Termly	A child has achieved 97% and above A child has achieved 100%	Attendance sticker given and one child from each EYFS, KS1, LKS2 & UKS2 will be entered into the raffle to win a book of their choice Attendance certificate awarded and a child from each EYFS, KS1, LKS2 & UKS2 will be entered into the raffle to win a £5 Amazon gift voucher

The class and year group with the highest attendance is celebrated in our weekly bulletin. See Appendix D for flowchart of rewards.

¹ 190 School days each academic year = 380 sessions (AM + PM) each academic year

6.1 Celebrating improved attendance

Oak Farm Primary School recognises that celebrating and rewarding students for improving their attendance can be a great way to motivate them and reinforce positive behaviour. The methods of celebration taken by the school include acknowledging students during school assemblies and mention the Year group or Phase.

The school also rewards improving attendance through providing a message from Parentmail for achieving specific milestones and half termly awards for significantly improved attendance.

7. Students who may need additional support

Oak Farm Primary School is committed to providing tailored support to students facing various challenges that affect their attendance. The school recognises that certain groups of students may require additional assistance to overcome these barriers and ensure their regular participation in school.

7.1 Students with complex barriers to attendance

For students with complex barriers to attendance, Oak Farm takes a comprehensive approach by closely collaborating with families and external agencies to address the root causes of absenteeism. The school conducts thorough assessments to identify specific challenges these students face, whether they stem from home, social or economic factors, or a combination thereof. Working with families, the school develops individualised support plans that may include flexible scheduling, pastoral support or access to community resources via a referral to Early Help. The school also strives to remove any barriers by providing a welcoming and inclusive environment, offering personalised learning plans and ensuring that these students have access to necessary support services such as counselling, mentoring and/or play therapy where appropriate.

7.2 Students absent due to mental or physical ill health, or SEND

Students who are absent due to mental or physical ill health, or their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive targeted support to help them maintain their educational progress. The school's SEND co-ordinator (SENDCo) can liaise with a wide variety of specialists including counsellors and healthcare professionals, who work together to create and implement individualised education plans (IEPs) or health care plans. The school will maintain regular communication with these students and their families, providing necessary adjustments. The goal is to ensure that these students receive a continuous and supportive education, tailored to their unique needs and circumstances.

7.3 Students returning after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

When students return to Oak Farm after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, the school implements a structured reintegration process to help them transition smoothly back into the school environment. This process includes an initial meeting with the student and their family to discuss any concerns and create a personalised reintegration plan. Key strategies may include a phased return to school, catch-up sessions and/or additional academic support to bridge any learning gaps. The school may also provide emotional and social support to help these students readjust and reconnect with their peers and teachers. By offering comprehensive reintegration support, the

school aims to ensure that students feel welcomed, supported and ready to re-engage with their education.

8. Mental health

Oak Farm Primary School recognises the critical importance of mental health and its impact on student attendance. In accordance with the Department for Education guidance '*Working together to improve school attendance*' (2024, [click here](#)), the school has established clear responsibilities and proactive measures to monitor, promote and support mental health within the community. To effectively support mental health, the school regularly monitors the well-being of students through various means, including surveys, wellbeing check-ins along with observations by teachers and staff. The school evaluates the effectiveness of mental health initiatives by gathering feedback from students, parents/carers and staff and by reviewing attendance data to identify patterns that may indicate underlying mental health issues. This ongoing assessment allows the school to adapt and refine its approach to ensure that the school's support for mental health is meeting the needs of all students.

8.1 Emotional resilience

Building emotional resilience is a key component of the school's long-term strategy and it is thoroughly integrated into the curriculum and provision of pastoral support. The school delivers a personal, health and social education (PSHE) programme that includes social and emotional learning activities, mindfulness exercises and resilience training. These programmes are designed to equip students with the skills they need to manage stress, build positive relationships and navigate challenges effectively. Additionally, the school's pastoral care team provides personalised support and mentoring to students who may need extra help in developing their emotional resilience.

8.2 A holistic approach

Oak Farm Primary School takes a holistic approach to promoting and supporting mental health and well-being, fostering a strong ethos and culture of care. This approach includes creating a safe and inclusive environment where every student feels valued and supported. The school prioritises open communication, encouraging students to voice their concerns and seek help when needed. The school also collaborates with external mental health professionals and organisations to provide additional resources and support for students and their families. By integrating mental health awareness and support into all aspects of school life, the school aims to create a nurturing and resilient community that prioritises emotional well-being.

Appendix C illustrates the support and approaches taken to support students at each stage of its attendance monitoring and intervention strategy.

9. Feedback

Oak Farm Primary School values the input of the whole community in helping to shape and refine the attendance policy. The school collects feedback through regular surveys distributed to students, parents/carers and staff, as well as during parent-teacher meetings and school council sessions. This feedback is carefully reviewed and considered in policy evaluations to ensure it remains effective and responsive to the needs of the school community.

10. Further support

To provide comprehensive support for students, Oak Farm Primary School actively engages with 'early help' services and other external agencies. These collaborations enable the school to access a wide range of resources and expertise in order to address the various challenges that may affect students and their attendance. Effective partnerships with local health services, social care and mental health organisations (such as CAMHS) ensures that students and families receive the necessary support and interventions promptly and effectively. For additional support, the school recommends the following helplines and websites:

- **Childline:** A free, confidential service for young people seeking help and support (website: <https://www.childline.org.uk>, phone: 0800 1111)
- **YoungMinds:** A mental health charity offering advice and support to young people and parents (website <https://www.youngminds.org.uk>, parent helpline: 0808 802 5544).
- **NSPCC:** Provides support and information for children and families (website: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk>, helpline: 0808 800 5000).
- **Samaritans:** Offers emotional support for anyone in distress (website: <https://www.samaritans.org>, phone or text: 116 123).

By continuously gathering feedback and leveraging external support, the school strives to create an effective and supportive attendance policy that promotes the well-being and success of all students.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Examples of home/school communication regarding attendance

Appendix B: Template letters to parents/carers

Appendix C: Flowchart of '*Six steps to monitoring attendance*'

Appendix D: Flowchart of Rewards

Appendix E: Flowchart of Daily Absence Monitoring process

Appendix F: Flowchart of Roles and Responsibilities with Attendance at Oak Farm

Appendix A: Examples of home/school communication regarding attendance

No reason for absence (daily):

{Pupil First Name} is absent from school today. Please provide a reason for their absence. Absences must be reported each day before 9am via Parentmail.

Punctuality email (weekly):

Late Alert: Your child arrived late to school on two or more occasions this week. Please be reminded that classroom doors open at 8:40am and lessons begin at 8:50am once the register has been taken. Students will not be permitted through their classroom door after 8:50am. They will need to be signed in at the main office by an adult and will receive an authorised late register mark. Students arriving more than 30 minutes late will be registered as an unauthorised absence. We look forward to seeing an improvement next week.

Thank you for your co-operation.

100% attendance email (weekly):

We're pleased to let you know that {Pupil First Name} has achieved 100% attendance this week. This puts {her/him} in the best possible position to advance {her/his} learning. They will also be in with a chance of winning a prize in this week's attendance raffle!

Congratulations (Pupil's first name)

Appendix B: Template letters to parents/carers

Letter 1 – Letter about the importance of attendance

Re: Pupil name DOB

Dear Parent name,

Following a recent review of the school attendance figures, it has come to my attention that..... ... has missed 10 sessions. This indicates that they may be on the path to their attendance becoming a concern. It is school policy that we make parents aware of their child's attendance levels, and we would like to remind you of the importance of being in school every day. Not only does this aid their education, but also supports their social skills, mental health and future prospects.

Currently attendance is ...%.

Should attendance not improve, we may have to initiate our attendance monitoring procedures, which can mean a referral to The Participation Team. We are keen to avoid this and hope to work with you to improve attendance at school; please don't hesitate in contacting Miss Fisk on 01895 590375 if there is anything you feel we need to know, or would appreciate support with.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs S Hunt
Attendance Champion

Letter 1 – Nursery letter about the importance of attendance

Re: Pupil name DOB

Dear Parent name,

As you may be aware, school attendance is not compulsory for children until they reach the age of 5. However, as our nursery remains a valuable part of Oak Farm, we would like to encourage consistency for all of our children, even in the early stages of their education. Therefore, we are writing to share detail of our school policy which hopefully you will benefit from if/when your child joins the Primary School.

It has come to my attention that..... ... has missed 10 sessions. This indicates that they may be missing out on a significant number of their lessons. If this were to be the case later on in their schooling life, it may mean that they're on the path to their attendance becoming a concern. It is school policy that we make parents aware of their child's attendance levels, and we would like to remind you of the importance of being in school every day. Not only does this aid their education, but also supports their social skills, mental health and future prospects.

Currently attendance is ...%.

Please don't hesitate in contacting Miss Fisk on 01895 590375 if there is anything you feel we need to know, or would appreciate support with.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs S Hunt

Attendance Champion

Letter 2 – Inviting parents/carers in for informal meeting

Re: Pupil name DOB

Re: Invitation for an informal attendance discussion

Dear Parent name,

Following a recent review of the school attendance figures, and further to the letter we sent you on... I noticed that..... attendance is becoming a concern as they have now missed 20 sessions. As a consequence of the further decline, we would like to increase our support for your child. As a senior leadership team, we will continue to monitor your child's attendance and once again, would like to encourage you to open our channels of communication.

We would like to invite you to come in to have a conversation about [name]'s attendance at school, with our Attendance Officer & Pastoral Lead. This will enable us to explore whether there is anything:

- Happening at school that makes it difficult for [name] to attend
- Happening at home that we can help with, or that you think we should be aware of
- We can do to make it easier for [name] to attend school regularly

We are offering a meeting on to discuss the above. Please don't hesitate to make contact with Miss Fisk on 01895 590375 if you cannot attend, in order to arrange a more mutually convenient time.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs S Hunt

Attendance Champion

Letter 3 — Inviting Parents/carers in to meet with a member of SLT

Re: Pupil name DOB

Re: Formal meeting to discuss attendance

Dear Parent name,

Following a recent review of the school attendance figures, and further to the letters we sent you on and.....(*Further to the meeting we held on....*), I noticed that..... attendance is now of concern as... has missed 30 sessions. As you are aware, it is school policy that we make parents aware of their child's attendance levels and we have endeavoured to support your family with this.

As a senior leadership team, we are continuing to monitor your child's attendance and the impact this is having on their education.

This letter is to inform you that I will soon be in contact to arrange a meeting with a senior leader. In the meantime, we encourage you to contact Miss Fisk on 01895 590375, with any queries or information you may have.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs S Hunt

Attendance Champion

Letter 4 – Inviting Parents/carers in to meet with Deputy Headteacher/Headteacher

Child's name and DOB

RE: Attendance

Dear Mr and Mrs

Following my previous letters sent on **(enter dates)**, we are disappointed that there has been no significant improvement in **(Child's name)** attendance.

Our records show that your child's current attendance is **%, totalling ...sessions.

It is important that children attend school regularly and on time. Here at Oak Farm Primary School, our best interests are to ensure our pupils reach their full potential which can only be done when pupils attend school regularly. Once again, we are giving you the opportunity to discuss any issues you may be facing with getting your child(ren) into school. We would like to understand the challenges that are preventing (child's name) attending school full time and would like to support you to affect a sustained improvement.

We are offering a meeting with our Deputy Headteacher/Headteacher and attendance officer on (enter date and time). Please get in contact with us if you cannot attend, in order to arrange a more mutually convenient time.

Please note, you may be asked for medical evidence for future absences in order that they can be authorised.

Please be aware that if this continues then we will have no other option but to pass this matter on to the School Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council. You may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

Please contact Miss Fisk on 01895 590375 if you have any questions.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs S Hunt

Attendance Champion

Letter 5 - Invitation to attendance panel meeting

Dear Mr and Mrs

RE: Attendance Panel meeting for (child's name)

I hope this letter finds you well. We are writing to inform you that we remain concerned regarding [Child's Name]'s school attendance. As a school, we are committed to ensuring that every student receives the best possible education and regular attendance is crucial to achieving this goal.

Over the past [insert time period], [Child's Name] has been absent for [insert number] sessions. These absences have accumulated to a point where it is affecting their academic progress and social development. We understand that there may be valid reasons for these absences and we wish to discuss how we can support [Child's Name] in improving their attendance.

To address these concerns, we would like to invite you to attend an Attendance Panel Meeting. The details of the meeting are as follows:

Date: [Insert Date]

Time: [Insert Time]

Location: [Insert Location]

During this meeting, we will review [Child's Name]'s attendance record, discuss any underlying issues contributing to their absences, and work together to develop a plan to improve their attendance. Your input and co-operation are vital in helping us to support [Child's Name] effectively.

Please confirm your attendance by contacting the school office at 01895 547036 by [insert RSVP date]. If you are unable to attend on the scheduled date, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can arrange an alternative time that is convenient for you. We appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to

Yours Sincerely

Mrs S Hunt

Attendance Champion

Letter 6 – Referral to Attendance Support Team

Child's name and DOB

RE: Attendance

Dear Mr and Mrs

As stated in our previous letters, **(child's name)** attendance has not improved and we therefore have no other option but to refer this matter to the School Attendance Support Team at Hillingdon Council.

Our records show that your child(ren)current attendance is **%.

Any absences will now be recorded as unauthorised until we receive medical evidence.

You may be at risk of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence or prosecution. This is a fine of £160 per parent, per child payable within 28 days. If paid within 21 days it is reduced to £80 per parent, per child. If the fine is not paid by the 28th day you may be summoned to court.

Please contact Miss Fisk on 01895 590375 if you have any questions.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs S Hunt

Attendance Champion

Late Letter – Pupil has been late on 5 occasions

Dear Parent/Carer,

I regret to inform you that (pupil name) has signed in late on 5 occasions since the start of this academic year (Year)

It is a parent's responsibility to ensure their children arrive at school on time. Lateness can disrupt the learning of others and can result in a pupil feeling greater stress and achieving poorer outcomes. Arriving ten minutes late on a daily basis equates to missing 6.9 school days over the academic year.

Research shows a close link between attendance at school and a child's achievement. Being late adds up to a loss of learning. All time out of school affects learning and achievement for pupils.

The different year group entrances are closed at 8.50 every morning; please ensure your child arrives before this time.

Please contact Miss Fisk on 01895 590375 if you have any questions.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs S Hunt

Attendance Champion

Late Letter – pupil has been late on 15 occasions, meeting to be arranged

Dear Parent/Carer of,

I regret to inform you that (pupil name) has signed in late on 15 occasions since the start of this academic year (Year)

We are offering a meeting with Mrs Hunt (Attendance Champion) and Miss Fisk (attendance officer) on (enter date and time). Please get in contact with us if you cannot attend to arrange a more mutually convenient time.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs S Hunt

Attendance Champion

Request for leave of absence during term time

Parents do not have the right to take their children out of school during term time. By law parents/carers must request permission from the headteacher for your child to miss school for any reason.

This form must be completed for any form of planned absence (with the exception of medical and dental appointments) and it should be submitted for authorisation at least 10 school days before the proposed absence. Copies of details relating to the request such as flight details or exam correspondence should be included in the request.

A request must be made for each individual child.

A request for leave of absence during term time for non-urgent medical and dental appointments does not require the completion of this form. However, these appointments should be made outside of school hours. Where this is not possible the school must be informed in writing explaining the reason for absence and giving as much notice as possible.

FAO Headteacher

I/We request of the Headteacher that leave of absence be granted to:

Child's name:	
Class:	
From:	
To:	
Reason for leave request:	
If the leave is for a holiday, please state why the holiday needs to be taken during term time	
Parent/Carer Name:	
Signed:	
Date:	

Return to Parent/Carer

Child's name:	
Class:	
Attendance %:	

The period of absence that has been requested from to has/has not been agreed and will be treated on the child's record as authorised/unauthorised.

There is no right of appeal to this decision as all absences are recorded at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Signed:(Headteacher)

Date:.....

Accepting a request for a leave of absence

Dear parent/carers,

Re: Your request for a leave of absence

Thank you for your request to take [name] out of school between [date] and [date].

Having considered the exceptional circumstances set out in your application, I am able to agree to your request.

I have not come to this decision lightly. At Oak Farm Primary School, we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

We consider each request for a leave of absence on its merits and the family's specific circumstances.

Please be aware that the fact that I have agreed to this request does not mean I will necessarily be able to agree to any similar request from you, or other parents/carers, in the future.

Yours sincerely

(Name)

Headteacher

Declining a request for a leave of absence

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Your request for a leave of absence

Thank you for your request to take [name] out of school between [date] and [date]. In this case I am afraid I cannot consent to your request.

At Oak Farm Primary School we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

I have not made this decision lightly. A request for an absence is considered on its specific circumstances and I have taken many factors into consideration.

As each request is different, this decision cannot be compared with decisions made by the school in the past and it will not affect any decisions made in the future. I am sorry to have to disappoint you on this occasion.

Yours sincerely,

(name)

Headteacher

After an unauthorised holiday

Dear parent/carer

Re: Holiday absence

I am writing about your action in taking [name] out of school for a family holiday between [date] and [date]. We are treating this as an unauthorised absence because [explain the evidence you have].

At Oak Farm Primary School, we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential to every child's success and fulfilment.

We have the power to grant leaves of absence under exceptional circumstances and a holiday is not generally considered to come under those circumstances. As outlined in the Trust's attendance policy, we expect parents/carers to consult the school before making any plans that will involve their child's absence from lessons or other commitments. Absences like these could have a detrimental effect on their education.

Insert the following if the child's absence has reached the threshold for a penalty notice and you have decided it's appropriate to issue one (see paragraph 181 of Working together to improve school attendance for questions to consider when making this decision):

[Name] has now had 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). In line with our attendance policy and the local authority's code of practice, you will be issued with a penalty notice. When you receive the notice, you must pay:

- £80, if it's paid within 21 days
- £160, if it's paid after 21 days but within 28 days

If payment is not made within 28 days, the local authority may decide to pursue further legal action. More information can be found on the Department of Education's website ([click here](#)).

Insert the following if the threshold for a penalty notice has not been reached: Please note that unauthorised absences can result in a penalty notice being issued if your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days). You can find more information about penalty notices in the trust's Attendance Policy. Copies of the policy are on the school website and are available from the school office.

We would like to arrange a meeting so that we can discuss this absence further. Please contact the school office as soon as possible on 01895 590375.

Yours Sincerely

(Name)

Headteacher

Accepting a request for absence for religious observance

Dear parent/carer,

Re: Your request for absence for religious observance

Thank you for your request to take [name(s)] out of school on [date] because of [religious occasion]. In this case, I am prepared to agree to your request and it will be considered an authorised absence. Each request for an absence is considered on its merits at the time. We recognise that a family's religious beliefs and traditions are intrinsic to their sense of identity.

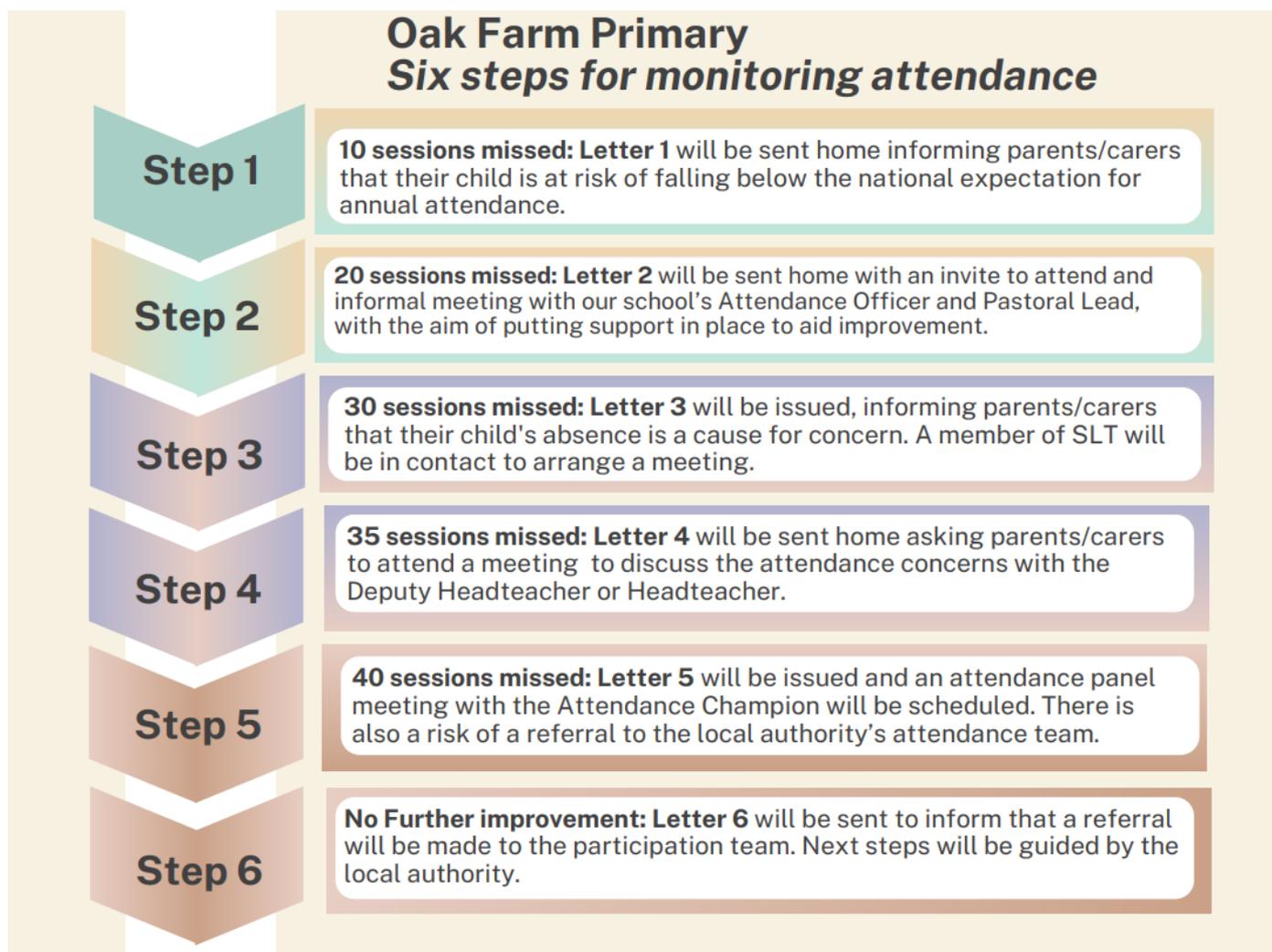
However, please note that my decision in this instance does not set a precedent and does not necessarily mean that I will agree to a similar request, from you or other parents/carers, in the future.

Yours sincerely,

(name)

Headteacher

Appendix C: Flowchart of 'Six steps to monitoring attendance'



Appendix D: Flowchart of Rewards

Oak Farm Primary Rewards for Attendance

WEEKLY

The **class with the highest attendance**, in each phase will win the attendance **trophy/bear**.

Every child with **100%** attendance is entered into a **raffle**. One child per phase, at random, wins a **fidget toy**.

HALF- TERMLY

Every child achieving **97%** and above receives an **attendance sticker**.

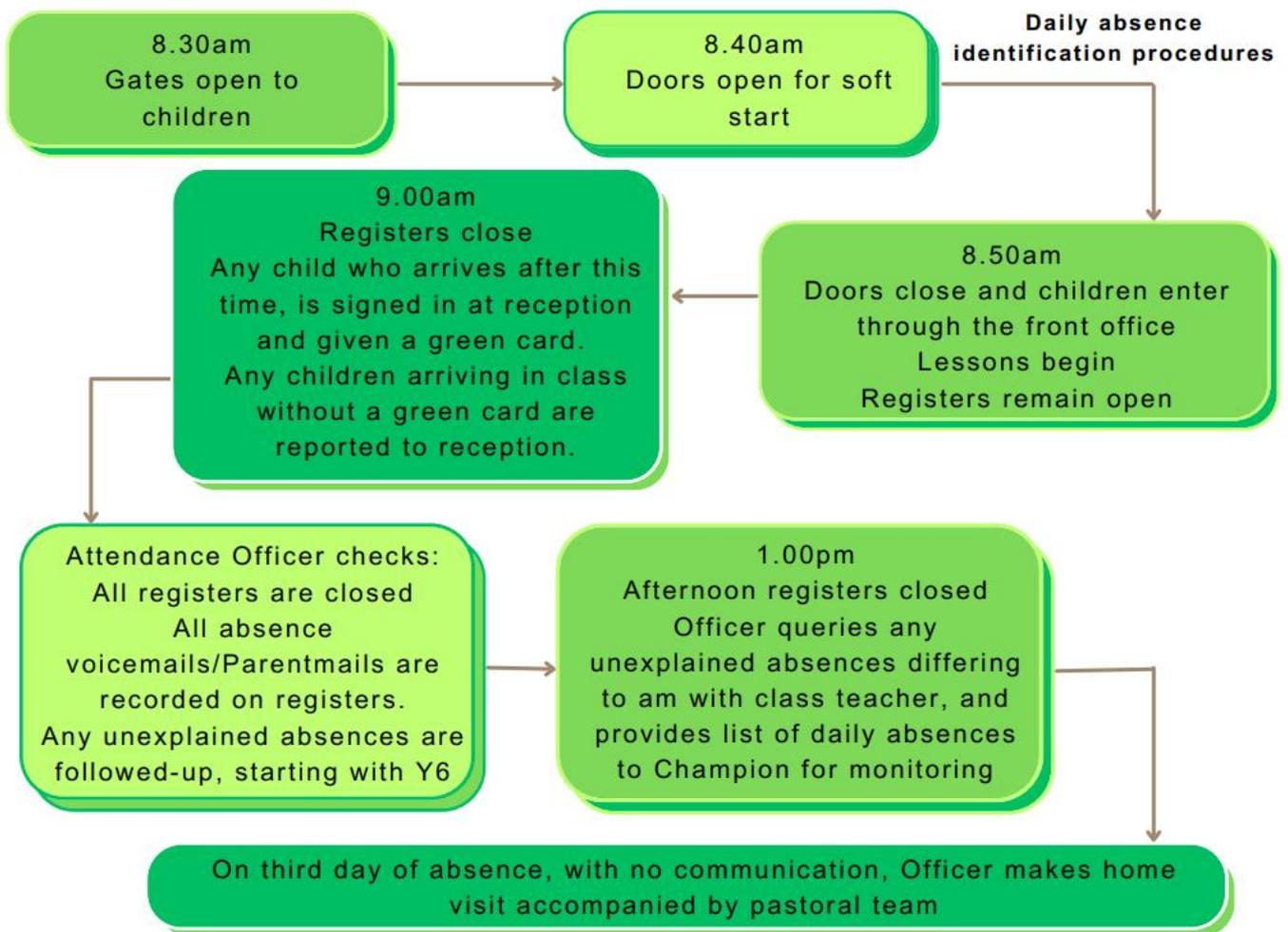
Every child achieving **100%**, receives **sticker** and attendance **certificate**.

TERMLY

Every child achieving **97%** and above entered into a **raffle**. One child per phase, at random, wins a **book**.

Every child achieving **100%** and above entered into a **raffle**. One child per phase, at random, wins a **£5 Amazon voucher**.

Appendix E: Flowchart of Daily Absence Monitoring process



Appendix F: Roles and Responsibilities with Attendance at Oak Farm

