MOMENTS MATTER, ATTENDANCE COUNTS.
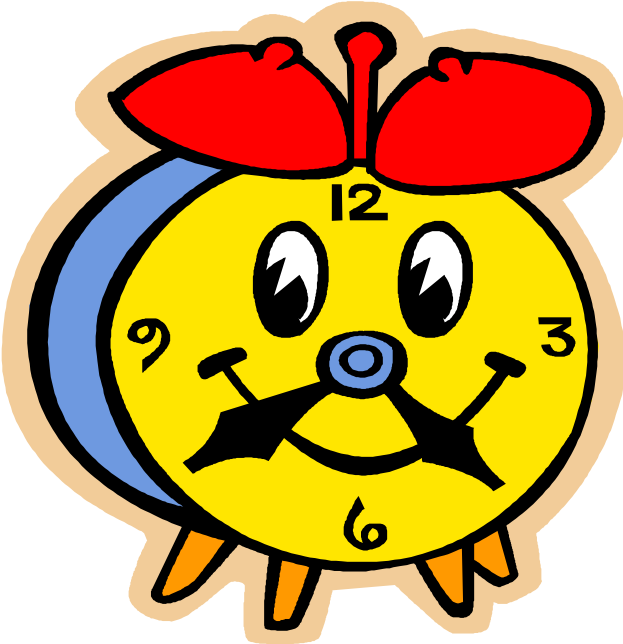# OVERLEIGH ST MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

It is important that all children aim for 100% attendance wherever possible, ensuring that they are given the very best opportunity to achieve.

Signed by:

		Summer 2024
	Head teacher	Date:
	Chair of governors	Date: Summer 2024

Statement of Intent

At Overleigh, we ensure a welcoming, safe and supportive environment, based on strong and trusting relationships with everyone in our school family. We take a whole-school approach to securing excellent attendance. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school.

We aim to:

- Ensure that this policy is clear and easily understood by everyone.
- Build strong relationships with families and ensure equality and fairness for all.
- Proactively support children and their families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Work collaboratively with other schools and agencies in the area.
- Ensure parents understand and follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance champion is Emma Drew (Headteacher), the deputy champions are Tanja Martell (Assistant Head) and Pippa Redmayne (TA/Pastoral Lead). They can be contacted via
admin@overleighstmarysce.cheshire.sch.uk .

Roles and responsibilities

Role of the governing board:
- Delegate powers and responsibilities to the Headteacher to ensure all school personnel are aware of and comply with this policy.
- Nominate an attendance governor to liaise with the champions and to report back to the Governing Body.
- Ensure that the attendance policy is carried out.
- Ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders.
- Monitor termly progress.
- Take responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to all stakeholders.

Role of the attendance champions:
- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all stakeholders are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement. We monitor and analyse attendance rigorously and when we have concerns ensure we are proactive in offering support and intervention to secure an improvement. Areas of concern could include children who: are regularly late, especially after close of registration – 9.10am, have irregular attendance falling below 96%, regularly have Mondays and or Fridays off school, have term time holiday(s), higher than expected absence due to illness where there is no pre-existing medical condition.
- Leading a supportive and trauma-informed approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Role of staff:
- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.

- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

Pupils are responsible for:
- Attending school and arriving punctually.
- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.
- Communicating any concerns related to attendance and absence as soon as possible to their trusted adults.

Parents are responsible for:
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

Attendance expectations and procedures
- School gates open at 8:30am.
- Doors into school open for children at 8:40am.
- Doors close at 8:50am when the school day starts and the register is taken.
- Pupils attending after 8:50am will receive a late mark to show that they were on site, but late for registration.
- Registration closes at 9:10am and any child arriving from this time will receive a U mark. A U mark counts as an absence.
- If a child arrives after 8:50am, parents must log their arrival at the main office, providing a reason.
- The afternoon register will be marked in class once children have finished their lunchtime break.

Absence

If your child attends school 90% in one school year it is the same as having a half day off every week.

Would your boss like you to be off work this much? It is practically part time!
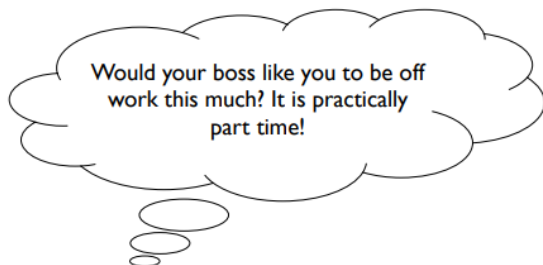
Let's look a little closer. . . . .

1 school year at 90% attendance

= 4 whole weeks of lessons MISSED!!!

Attendance over 1 school year. . . .

Percentage	Weeks absent from school
96%....	1 week plus
95%....	2 weeks
90%....	4 weeks
85%....	5.5 weeks
80%....	7.5 weeks

Attendance over 5 school years. .

Percentage	Weeks absent from school
96%....	5.5 weeks
95%....	9.5 weeks
90%....	19 weeks (half a school year)
85%....	28.5 weeks
80%....	38 weeks (one whole school year missed)

Parents are required to contact the school office via telephone or email on admin@overleighstmarysce.cheshire.sch.uk before 8:50am on the first and each subsequent day of their child's absence. They will be expected to provide a specific explanation for the absence. E.g. vomiting/temperature rather than unwell which is not specific.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by 9:10am to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone as soon as is possible but before 10:30am on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, or the frequency of absence is unusual.

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the one of the attendance champions. Persistent absence is attendance between 90% - 51%

(PA). Severe absence is attendance less than 50% (SA). All children falling into these categories are closely monitored and timely support plans put in place.

All children are expected to aim for 100% attendance, and should at least achieve above 96% for the whole year. Children who fall below 96% but above 90% are also monitored by the attendance champions.

Authorising parental absence requests
The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Parents are required a leave of absence form at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. **The school is not able to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.**

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

A fine to parents must be considered if a child misses 5 days of school for unauthorised absence. Alongside this, costs for fines will go up from £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days and from £120 to £160 if paid in 28 days which will ensure all parents are aware of when they might face a fine to ensure all councils are issuing fines appropriately.

Illness and healthcare appointments
Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend an appointment.
Performances and activities, including paid work
The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s). Even if a license has been awarded, absence for this purpose will not be authorised for children with current attendance at less than 96%.
Religious observance
The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.
Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their

child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND- and health-related absences
The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
  .

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

Leave during lunch times
Parents are not permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times unless they attend the Nursery class.

Truancy
Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

Attendance register
The school uses SIMS to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities. The DfE also access this information system.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole or partial school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed at 9:10am
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances

- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available
- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days for Reception.

Pupils who are absent from school but are receiving remote education for any reason will be marked as absent in the register.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, and the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance champions, supported by the SLT:

- Use a range of support and rewards appropriate to the child and circumstance. These can include special visits, praise from On-time Tilly Bear, termly certificates and badges, participation in attendance inter class competitions
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
    - Having **weekly** check-ins.
    - Having support meetings with parents.
    - Sending letters to parents.
    - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
    - Using fixed penalty notices.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2023) 'Working together to improve school attendance' (until 01.09.24)
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance' (from 01.09.24)
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023' (until 01.09.24)
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024' (from 01.09.24)
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Good Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Procedures

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:
- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:
- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent/severe absence (PA/SA):
- Persistent absence is attendance between 90% - 51% (PA).
- Severe absence is attendance less than 50% (SA).

Missing education
- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

Thank you for your continued support in promoting excellent attendance at Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary for your child.

"Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success"
Henry Ford