**Oakgrove Integrated Primary School**



**Policy for**

**Attendance and Truancy**

**Sept 2024 Annually**

# POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE AND TRUANCY

At Oakgrove IPSN we believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is important too, that children arrive and leave school on time. It is equally important that children should not be at school if they are unwell.

## Oakgrove IPSN is a happy school. Children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All staff show concern and care about each child’s welfare.

## As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential.

Oakgrove IPSN will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure.

**OAKGROVE AIMS**

**Oakgrove IPSN aims to promote high achievements and learning for life by working**

**With children of different backgrounds - religion, culture, race, gender, ability to**

* **Become happy, confident, polite, tolerant and caring people**
* **Develop high self-esteem**
* **Respect themselves, others and the environment**
* **Develop enquiring minds and a sense of wonder**
* **Become highly motivated, lifelong learners**
* **Be flexible , adaptable and skilled for the modern wider world**
* **Be able to work independently and with others**
* **Be good listeners and communicators**
* **Be sensitive, articulate and develop empathy**
* **Achieve individual potential - intellectually, physically, socially,**

**Spiritually, culturally, morally and emotionally**

* **Be able to problem solve, self-evaluate and goal set**

**OAKGROVE MISSION**

**At Oakgrove we believe each child will succeed through experiencing quality in the provision of**

* **A welcoming, happy school which listens to children, parents and staff**
* **A broad, balanced challenging curriculum**
* **A stimulating and supportive learning environment**
* **An ethos of respect, discipline, challenge and encouragement to succeed**
* **An enriching extra curricular programme**
* **Learning partnerships between school, home and the community**
* **High expectation of children and staff**
* **Excellent, up-to-date learning resources and equipment**
* **Active, reflective and collaborative learning and teaching**
* **Safe, supported opportunities for discussion on diversity issues**
* **Teaching strategies that recognise different learning styles**
* **Special needs education across the ability spectrum**
* **Inspirational, enthusiastic and highly skilled teachers**
* **Cohesive, enthusiastic, well-motivated and valued staff**

**Policy Aims**

1. To improve / maintain the overall attendance of pupils at Oakgrove Integrated Primary & Nursery School.
2. To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance.
3. To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils.
4. To promote good relationships with Education Welfare Service.

**Role of the School**

Mrs Ashley Donaghey, as Principal of Oakgrove IPSN has overall responsibility for school attendance. Good attendance is a COLLECTIVE responsibility and therefore it is expected that teachers should bring any concerns regarding school attendance to the Principal’s attention or to the attention of: -

Mr Nial Gill (Vice Principal & Designated Teacher for Child Protection)

Mrs C Sargent, Ms L Wilson, Ms E Barber or Mrs R Wilson (Deputy Designated Teachers for Child Protection)

The Board of Governors provide support by reviewing school attendance figures and targets and ensuring it is placed as an agenda item at meetings on a regular basis.

Teaching staff regularly monitor the attendance and punctuality of pupils by ensuring that attendance is recorded at the beginning of morning and afternoon registration.

To enable our school to record and monitor attendance in a consistent way, we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2013/13.

[**http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance-and-holidays/recording-pupil-absences.htm**](http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance-and-holidays/recording-pupil-absences.htm)

## As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

**Role of Parent/Guardian**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

*Every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise.*

**(Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)**

It is a parent/guardian’s responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil’s absence on the first day of absence. This should be confirmed with a written note when the pupil returns to school. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, this information should be provided to enable the school to assist with homework or any other necessary arrangements which may be required.

Pupils are expected to be in school at Oakgrove IPSN for registration and the beginning of classes. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that children are punctual. Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on each child’s attendance record.

If your child appears reluctant to attend school, please discuss the matter promptly with the class teacher, Vice Principal or Principal to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.

## Communication

### Information on lateness, illness and absence is given to parents in the P1 Happy Days book and in the Prospectus. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.

At the pre-school induction meetings held each year for children about to enter Primary One the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to each school day. Being picked up on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only ones left.

Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things can upset children, making them unhappy, and may not want to come to school. Parents need to be aware of this.

**FAMILY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME**

Again at this initial meeting parents are asked to try to arrange their family holidays within the school holidays, rather than in term time so that their child’s education is not disrupted. The Principal talks to those parents who persistently take their holidays in term time, reminding parents of the disruption to their child’s education. Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Principal. At this meeting the importance of regular attendance is highlighted along with other school routines.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are explained to parents. All parents are asked to contact school if their child is absent. This can be done by telephoning. Office staff record any messages and pass them on to the child’s class teacher. This information is recorded under the headings: date, child, class, and reason for absence. Parents can alternatively send a letter to school or write in the homework diary when their child returns explaining the absence. Parents can also call into school to see the class teacher to explain an absence. (These records are kept by the class teacher.) All information is used to inform teachers when filling in their registers. If no notification is received about a child’s absence the teacher contacts the parent/guardian.

**Role of Pupils**

Each pupil at Oakgrove IPSN has a duty to ensure that they attend school punctually and regularly.

In most cases, our children come to school on time every day. By making sure they do, you are helping to establish a good practice for the future. Patterns of lateness and absence that start in Primary School can end up in truancy in the Post-Primary school and ‘hard to break habits’ for the work place, so please make sure you HELP your child by:-

* being firm about bedtimes.
* encouraging them to prepare the night before, those items will need for school the next day.
* making sure they are up in time to have breakfast and to leave the house promptly.

**REMEMBER: SCHOOL COMMENCES AT 9.00 AM. Children can enter classrooms at 8.50am when teachers & classroom assistants will be present to welcome the children.**

If you have been absent from school or very late, a written note from a parent/guardian must be provided to your teacher when you return.

**ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

* Attendance / absence of pupils are recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
* There are over 30 codes for marking absences; therefore it is important that specific reasons for the absence or part attendance are given.

**Example**

**Code**

‘L’ Late before 10.00am - Late

‘U’ Late after 10.00am - Absent from session

‘B’ Bereavement - Authorised absence

P Approved Sporting activity - Approved educational activity

D No reason provided for absence - Unauthorised absence

**PROCEDURES FOR MANAGING NON-ATTENDANCE**

At the end of each month the school will run a whole school attendance report.

Each teacher will be asked to clearly highlight any child where there is a concern – normally where attendance falls below 85% or a regular pattern of poor attendance e.g. Mondays or Fridays.

**Concerns**

If a child is regularly late (recorded as ‘L’ until 10.00am – recorded as ‘U’ after 10.00am for school or is often absent then the class teacher contacts the parent concerned to have an informal discussion about this. A reminder note may be sent out by the class teacher. If this persists then the teacher registers their concern to the Principal/ Vice Principal

Attendance records are looked at regularly, patterns of absence worked out and the Educational Welfare Officer for the school is contacted. Contact may be made by phoning if the situation needs discussing before a visit, or by completing an EWS form and including a print out of an individual’s registration certificate which shows the patterns of absences and lates.

The Educational Welfare Officer meets with the Principal or Vice Principal regularly to discuss attendance issues, and to offer advice and support.

**EDUCATION WELFARE SERVICE**

The Education Authority through the Education Welfare Service, have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their children’s education.

Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational results and where attendance difficulties exist or a pupil’s attendance falls below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

The referral will take place within the context of:

* Shared policies and operational practices between the Education Welfare teams and the schools in their area. Clearly defined roles of school staff and the Education Welfare Officer.
* How much time the Education Welfare Officer will devote to the school.
* Expectation of the quality of the Education Welfare Officer’s intervention and support.
* Arrangements for referral, regular review, monitoring and evaluation.
* Procedures for resolving difficulties.

The chart below reflects and outlines the necessity for the mediating process within a potentially complex framework of problems.

**School Action**

**Education Welfare Service Process**

**Close Case**

**Review**

**Action Plan**

**Assessment**

**Allocation**

**Referral**

**(if required)**

**Intervention**

**School Attendance**

**2020-21**

**95%**

**2022-23**

**92%**

**2021-22**

**92%**

**2023-24 TARGET**

**FIGURE**

**96%**

**Truancy**

All the staff at Oakgrove IPSN are concerned about children’s regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child’s learning. They are also concerned about each child’s safety, welfare and happiness. Although it a very rare occurrence for a child to truant, if there is a concern that a child might be truanting then action is taken straight away.

If truancy is suspected, the Principal is notified, who then contacts the parent and the Educational Welfare Officer. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved. In the event of not being able to talk to the parent then the Principal/Vice Principal talks to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these are discussed with the class teacher and appropriate action is taken. The school always strives to maintain good communication with parents who are respected and valued as a child’s prime carer.

Nial Gill

September 2024