



Dear Parents/Carers,

25<sup>th</sup> July 2024

At Oakfield Junior School we firmly believe that regular school attendance is essential for the educational progress and overall wellbeing of our pupils. We hope that this letter helps you to keep in mind the key aspects of our attendance policy.

### **Why regular attendance matters**

Consistent school attendance allows your child to:

- › Fully engage in learning and make academic progress
- › Develop critical social skills by interacting with their friends and teachers
- › Grow in confidence in a supportive and nurturing school environment
- › Build a sense of routine and responsibility, essential for future success

### **Attendance support**

We understand that some pupils may face challenges that impact their attendance. Our school's attendance team is here to provide support and guidance to pupils and families in such situations. If you encounter any difficulties related to attendance, please do reach out to: Mrs Aby Akhtar- Attendance Administrator [parent@oakfield.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:parent@oakfield.surrey.sch.uk); Mrs Debbie Willemse-Headteacher [head@oakfield.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:head@oakfield.surrey.sch.uk); Mrs Jenny Mare-SENco [jenny\\_mare@oakfield.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:jenny_mare@oakfield.surrey.sch.uk)

### **Acceptable reasons for absence**

We recognise that there are circumstances where a pupil's absence can't be avoided.

Acceptable reasons for being absent from school include:

- › **Illness:** when your child is unwell, either physically or mentally, and unable to attend school
- › **Medical appointments:** if your child has a medical appointment that cannot be scheduled outside school hours, please notify us in advance and provide relevant documentation (e.g. an appointment card)
- › **Religious observance:** we respect the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of our pupils. If your child needs to be absent for religious observance, please submit a request and the headteacher will review it
- › **Exceptional circumstances:** in exceptional situations, such as family emergencies or unforeseen events, please contact the school immediately to discuss the absence

### **How to report unplanned absences**

In the event of an unplanned absence, we ask that you follow these steps:

1. **Contact the school office:** on the day of the absence, please call the school office before 8:30am to inform us about your child's absence
2. **Provide a reason for absence:** please email the school office with a brief explanation for the absence, such as illness or family emergency, to help us maintain accurate written records
3. **Ensure the office is updated on a daily basis.**

### **Term-time holidays**

**Term-time holidays are not permitted during the school year.** Absences due to term-time holidays are disruptive to learning and lead to missed opportunities in the classroom.

However, we recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances that require a leave of absence. In such rare cases, please submit a formal request to the school office well in advance. The headteacher will carefully consider each request and, if deemed appropriate and in the **best interest of the child**, may grant permission for the term-time leave of absence.

We emphasise that such instances will only be considered on a discretionary basis, and the decision will be made with the pupil's educational welfare as the utmost priority. We appreciate your co-operation and understanding regarding our approach to term-time holidays.

### **Sanctions for unauthorised absence**

As a school we are expected to adhere to the Department of Education and Surrey statutory guidance linked to attendance.

Therefore the school may be forced to issue a fine (known as a fixed-penalty notice) for unauthorised absence. If issued with one, you'll need to pay this directly to the local authority (not the school) – £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

The decision whether to issue a fine will take into account whether the national threshold has been met – namely 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks – as well as other factors.

*See attendance policy (on school website) for more detail.*

Before a fine is issued, you may receive a notice to improve to give you a chance to engage with support.

### **Rewards for good attendance**

We value and recognise good attendance at Oakfield Junior School. Pupils who maintain excellent attendance records throughout the academic year are eligible for special rewards and recognition.

Let's work together to celebrate and encourage regular attendance.

### **My question hasn't been answered here**

Please get in touch with Mrs Aby Akhtar- Attendance Administrator [parent@oakfield.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:parent@oakfield.surrey.sch.uk) with any further questions, and we'll be happy to discuss them with you.

Thank you for your co-operation in making sure your child receives the best possible educational experience.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Debbie Willemse

### **Contact information**

School office: 01372 374781

Email: [parent@oakfield.surrey.sch.uk](mailto:parent@oakfield.surrey.sch.uk)

Website: <https://www.oakfieldjunior.com>