

orchard  
Education

## Attendance Policy

Orchard Education Ltd  
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## School Attendance

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less.

### Aim of policy:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence including persistent absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
  
- Highlight what actions the school takes in managing attendance.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

### Overview:

Our purpose is to provide high quality education within the available resources to each pupil according to individual need within a caring and nurturing environment.

The Orchard is a small specialist school that caters for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties who have found it difficult to achieve their full potential in the mainstream sector.

The school tolerates a wide variety of behaviours but does not accept them as inevitable and unchangeable. The individual's behaviour will be prioritised and through planned intervention and adherence to the rewards and sanctions in the Behaviour Policy, school will ensure that the consequences to behaviour are specific and limited.

All systems, teaching and management of the school, focus on the promotion, establishment and internalisation of socially acceptable and appropriate behaviours.

Through an individualised approach, in a consistent, caring and supportive environment, each pupil will be given opportunities which encourage them to develop their knowledge skills, qualities and self-esteem.

With this positive behaviour management each pupil will be empowered as their confidence, ability and self-control is enhanced.

Pupils are encouraged to develop appropriate behaviour patterns within the school. There is a warm caring attitude in adult-child relationships together with individual/group tutorials and the systematic use of incentives. Pupils are dealt with as individuals and this facilitates pastoral care.

To this end the school will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems, which may impede full attendance, are acted upon as quickly as possible.

Our school recognises that:

- All pupils of school age have an equal right to access an education.
- No pupils should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents/carers to ensure attendance at school as required.
- Pupils and parents/carers may at some stage need to be supported in meeting their attendance obligation.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents/carers may impact on attendance. The school will, with the agreement and support of parents/carers, work with other agencies if necessary to resolve these.

## **Expectations:**

As a school where pupils often must travel some distance to attend, communication between home and school is vitally important. School will wherever possible assist learners in the transport to School by way of a pickup and drop off service, however this service will be withdrawn if poor behaviour is apparent. Where transport is provided, school drivers will wait a short period of time for students to get ready, however students should be immediately ready to attend at their allotted collection time

School will ensure that there is an emergency contact for all pupils and so that regular contact is maintained.

We expect the following from our pupils:

- That they attend school regularly.
- That they arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from parents or carers:

- Contact with school on the first day of absence or as soon as possible.
- Provide a signed and dated absence note for all absences.
- Support their child and school in achieving maximum attendance.
- To ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact school as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children arrive at school well prepared for the school day and to check that any homework given has been completed.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever a problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

## **Pupils and parents/carers can expect the following from the school:**

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents/carers when a pupil fails to attend school without providing a good reason.
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.
- Access to a broad and balanced curriculum designed to cater for individual needs to promote academic achievement, skills, creativity, imagination, initiative and individuality in all pupils.
- Accurate records of class room absence will be kept and monitored. This will support decisions for pupil interventions.

## **Encouraging attendance:**

- Celebrate good attendance.
- Monitor attendance and raise concerns early.

## **Responding to non-attendance:**

### **When a pupil does not attend, the school needs to respond effectively.**

- We will telephone parent/carer/emergency contact on the first day of absence if we do not receive a reason for absence.
- All concerns relating to any pupil's absence will be notified to the referring agency/school.
- If contact has not been made in the first week of absence the referring agency/school will be notified.
- All telephone/text messages received will be recorded in the daily log book and detailed on the attendance sheets to the referring school/agency.
- Where non-attendance continues, the case will be discussed, and the appropriate action taken. Parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss strategies for reengagement. This will be reviewed within a nominated time period to continually monitor with a view to improvement and ensure success.
- If there is no further improvement we will seek support and work in partnership with the referring agency/school in order to assist reintegration into education. This may result in the referring school/agency seeking Education Welfare involvement for legal proceedings to be considered.

## **Organisation:**

In order for this policy to be successful every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education:

## **Guidelines for staff dealing with attendance and absence:**

### **Teachers/Learning Support:**

- Liaise with administration staff to accurately record attendance

## **Administrator:**

- Phone parent/carer/emergency contacts on first day of absence.
- Report any concerns about absences to the Principle.
- Record all reasons given for absence in the daily communications log. Collect and check absence letters and appointment cards received.
- Accurately record attendance on the attendance sheets for the referring agency/school.
- Complete registers.
- Monitor long term attendees, inform Principle; who will consider the level of action to be taken.
- Contact parent/carers or send out letters to parents advising them of their attendance at The Orchard.
- Request support from referring agency/school.
- Work with Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to support reengagement / legal proceedings.

## **Guidance on categorising absence as authorised or unauthorised:**

The main areas where The Orchard will authorise absence are given below.

### **Illness:**

Where schools accept that a pupil is ill, they must authorise the absence. Parents should telephone The Orchard on 01472 898498 before 9.30am on the first day of illness.

### **Appointments:**

Dental and doctor's appointments are authorised absences. Parents must confirm these appointments in writing. Parents may be asked to provide evidence (i.e. appointment cards or letters etc) if absences become too frequent or if requested by the referring school or agency or Education Welfare.

### **Holidays:**

Time off for holidays is not a right. The regulations state that:  
The Principle should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a leave of absence is granted, it will be for the Principle to determine the length of time the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday as a norm. (DfE School Attendance – Department advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities – November 2016).

The Orchard will not give permission for pupils to have holidays during examinations courses.

### **Exceptional Circumstances / Unavoidable Causes:**

These could be catastrophic events at home or students held in custody rather than shopping trips or birthday treats. There may be extenuating or compassionate reasons for authorising absences

## **Pupils arriving late:**

Pupils who arrive at school after 9.15am are deemed to be late. The appropriate marks should be entered to record these situations. Between 9.15am and 9.45am the mark will be recorded as 'L' and after 9.45am the mark will be recorded as 'U'. Parents/carers will provide an explanation for late attendance. Parents/carers will be informed of late attendances. If pupils arrive late they should report to the office.

The Orchard is open for 192 full days per academic year and is required by law Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 to keep accurate registers of pupil's attendance. Activities outside the normal school day are not recorded in the statutory attendance register.

There is a strong statistical link between attendance and attainment.

Pupils join the school roll on the agreed admission date and are listed in both the admissions and attendance registers from that day.

At registration it is recorded whether every pupil was:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Present at an approved educational activity.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The attendance register is a legal document which must be accurately maintained and will be kept securely at all times.

## **Improving, Supporting and Challenging Absences**

School will always look to support our learners with managing attendance. We offer a very supportive network with additional pastoral support available. However, on occasions we may need to challenge poor attendance and school will follow appropriate methods in order to try and improve poor attendance. The minimum standards School will follow for all learners in improving, supporting and challenging attendance will be as follows:

### **Transport**

Transport is generally viewed as being a real positive in helping improve learner's attendance at School. However, there are a small number of learners who have this privilege withdrawn due to behaviour in vehicles. We know this presents a real challenge for some of the learners in that they will not routinely use other methods of transport available (bus pass provided). If transport is withdrawn school will look to seek ways in which transport can be reinstated by restorative actions.

### **Monthly Review**

Administration staff will write to the home address to give formal notification of the monthly attendance to parents/carers. Any learners below an agreed level (agreed with EWO) will receive notification and a follow up call from senior school staff. The letter will inform the parent/guardian of the resultant prosecution that will follow for low/non-attendance.

### **Education Welfare Officer**

We will utilise the NELC education welfare officer (Vicky Carmichael) and EWO of Wellsprings (Claire Pederson) to assist in any formal proceedings that may take place. EWO will also send out penalty notice warning letters

### **Rewarding good attendance**

We will continue to focus on positive rewards for pupils who attend school. Making the weekly raffle a big part of the school rewards scheme. Weekly prizes to be made available and the message for attendance reinforced with reward.

### **Prosecution**

School will be proactive in the SAP/LAP/PN process. We will look to target all pupils and families of ALL learners whose attendance falls below School expectations.

### **Data**

We will remain focused on being data driven, providing all the information for learners, staff, managers, and leadership team. By remaining focused throughout the School, we will make sure that we have every chance of improving on poor attendance. We will also make sure staff are focused and understand the processes that follow for poor attendance so that they can also explain and help students understand.

### **Flexible/Personalised Learning Patterns**

School will understand that issues may well present themselves whereby full-time attendance might pose a barrier for the students attending School. When used sensitively, over the short term with appropriate targets then this may be used to reintegrate pupils.

### **Student Voice/Student Council**

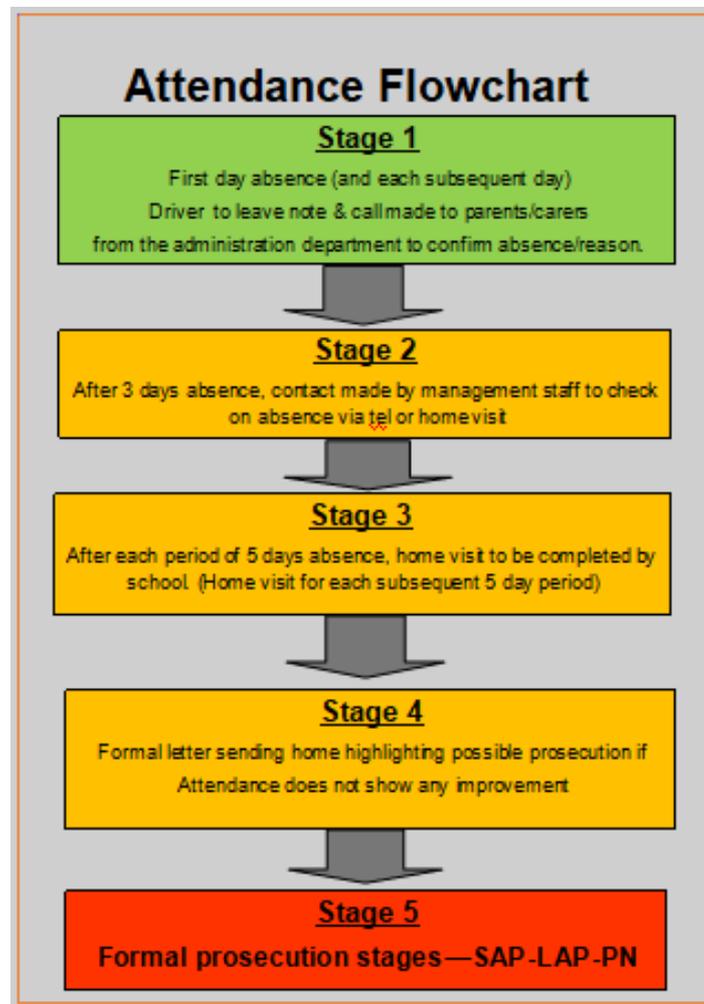
Throughout all the interventions it is vitally important that we give the students a voice. Trying to understand the issues surrounding each learner will no doubt help in trying to promote and increase attendance. Making the student council part of the school attendance process has helped focus learners towards attendance.

This policy will be reviewed annually by a Director.

	Initial	Review 1	Review 2	Review 3
Signed		Dave Melia	Pete MacLeod	D. Melia
Position		Director	Director	Director
Date		03/08/17	11/03/18	31/08/18

## Appendix A :

### Flowchart of school's actions when following up on non-attendance



These timescales are recommended minimum standards, school staff may bring each stage forward at any opportunity. School will not look to delay any of the stages highlighted above.