



Approved by the Governing Body on: XXXX

Review Date: XXX

## ONGAR PLACE PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

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The staff at Ongar Place School are committed, in partnership with the parents, pupils, governors and the Local Education Authority, to building a school which serves the community commendably; and of which the community is proud.

Research clearly demonstrates a link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

### Expectations

We expect that all **pupils** will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day;
- discuss immediately, with their Classteacher or another adult in school, any problems that deter them from attending school.

We expect that all **parents/carers/persons who have day to day responsibility for the children** and young people will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the day;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school;
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence;
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details;
- notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.

We expect that **school staff** will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, morning and afternoon
- monitor every pupil's attendance and punctuality;
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes giving reasons for the absence. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from the family doctor or other relevant body may be requested;
- encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children;
- provide a safe learning environment and provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns;

- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and the LEA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by Education Welfare may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order;

#### **Students leaving during the school day**

- Pupils are not permitted to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time;
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected time of return.
- Parents must sign children out on leaving school and sign them back in on their return.
- If a child leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate to contact the Police to register the child as a missing person.

#### **Registration and Punctuality**

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness to school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

- Registration takes place at 8.55am and students who arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as late for school.
- If a pupil arrives at school after 9.05am the parent/carer must sign in the late book to ensure their presence on site is noted, particularly in the case of a fire drill.
- Morning registration will close at 9.30am. If a pupil arrives after this time, the lateness will be recorded as a U code (an unauthorised absence) and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- Lateness will be dealt with through the school monitoring system and may be referred to Education Welfare.
- Afternoon registration will take place at 1pm.
- The school day ends at 3.20pm each day.

#### **Encouraging Attendance**

Ongar Place School encourages regular attendance in the following ways;

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- by responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- by marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. If pupils arrive at school after the close of the register without a written explanation, the lateness will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the pupil's name recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill;
- by publishing attendance statistics;
- by celebrating good and improved attendance;

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- by monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance or lateness, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues.

### Responding To Non Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 10am the school will endeavour to contact them on that day. If the family are not on the telephone, a letter will be sent.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If, by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made, (third day if waiting for a response to a letter), the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers or invite them into school to discuss their concerns. The school will tell parents that if the absence persists that a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.
- Where Children's Services are involved with the family it may be appropriate for the school to contact these.

### Holidays

- The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we strongly advise parents/carers to book their family holidays during the school holidays. In exceptional circumstances parents/carers should **apply** to the school using the 'Application for Leave of Absence' application form; however it is no longer policy to authorise any absences due to holiday taken during term time.
- No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right.
- Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time each parent may be liable to receive a penalty notice for each child.

### Penalty Notices

- The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 42 days, the Local Authority may prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.
- Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued
  - A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officer.
  - Where a child is taken out of school for a holiday during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. In these circumstances, a warning

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will not be given where it can be shown that parents have previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.

- Pupils identified by the police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who incurred unauthorised absences.
- Late arrival after close of registration on 5 occasions during a half term where the pupil's attendance falls below 85%. The lateness will be recorded in accordance with the 'Registration and Punctuality' section of this policy.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued. If a warning is issued then a pupil will be given 15 school days to show improvement before the Penalty Notice is issued.

- Penalty Notices relating to Exclusions
  - Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without a justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice.
  - The amount payable is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

### Changing schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school that they inform Ongar Place school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

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~~Reviewed: Spring 2015~~

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~~Author: Head Teacher~~

~~Policy: Statutory/Recommended~~

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