



**Oaklands School**

"The best for all, the best from all"

Montgomery Way, Winsford  
Cheshire, CW7 1NU  
Telephone: 01606 551048

**Head Teacher: Neil Oxley**

12<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Parents/ Carers,

### **Important Notice: New Government Attendance Changes Effective August 2024**

As I'm sure you are aware from recent coverage in the media, poor school attendance continues to be a national concern. We are proud that Oaklands School has effective relationships with parents and carers and we will always do our best to support you with school attendance.

New government statutory guidance came into force for schools in August and it is important that you are aware of some of the key changes which will affect parents. Please take the time to carefully read this letter.

#### **Increased Monitoring and Reporting:**

Schools are now required to monitor attendance more closely and report any absences to local authorities more frequently. This will involve more regular checks and communications regarding your child's attendance record.

#### **Stricter Penalties for Unauthorised Absences:**

- There will be stricter penalties for unauthorised absences. Parents may face fines or other legal actions if their children have a significant number of unauthorised absences.
- The 'Working together to improve attendance' DFE guidance states 'The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (5 school days) in a rolling period of 10 school weeks'. These sessions include when students arrive late to school after the register has closed. Any children arriving after registers close will receive an absent mark for the morning session.



An OFSTED Outstanding School 2010/2011, 2013/2014, 2014/2015 and 2019/2020

[www.oaklandsschool.org](http://www.oaklandsschool.org)



### Holidays During School Term time:

Holidays are not authorised by school unless it can be demonstrated that an absence during term time is as a result of exceptional circumstances and only if requested in advance by the parent the child normally lives with. Exceptional circumstances are, by nature, rare occurrences. The expectation is that family holidays will take place in the 13 weeks of school holiday time within an academic year. The key changes are:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- There is a national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another tool will have to be considered.
- The case could be presented straight to the Magistrates court to consider prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

### Support Services:

Our school offers support to assist students and families in addressing barriers to regular attendance. If you feel support is required, please do not hesitate to speak to Ms M Bairstow, Attendance Welfare Officer, at the school office.

### Your Role as Parents and Guardians:

The DFE guidance states: *'Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly'*. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. We ask for your cooperation and support in ensuring your child attends school regularly and punctually.

Here are some ways you can help:

- Ensure your child arrives at school on time every day.
- Schedule appointments outside of school hours where possible.
- Communicate promptly with the school regarding any absences and provide necessary documentation/medical evidence when requested.
- If you plan to take your child on holiday, please ensure that a request for absence form is completed and submitted to the school office. **This will remove the requirement to complete a home visit.**

Absence procedures and safeguarding:

If your child is genuinely unwell and unable to attend school, please telephone the school pupil absence line and leave a message or email [office@oaklandsschool.org](mailto:office@oaklandsschool.org) before 9.15 am. Please state your name and relationship to the child, the child's name, their form and the reason for absence. We must have a reason for each day a child is absent from school.

If we have not been able to make contact with you, we may make a home visit, or inform the police or social services. Some of these measures may seem extreme but it is our duty to ensure the safeguarding of every pupil in our school community.

We understand that every family's situation is unique, and we are here to support you. If you have any questions or need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you for your cooperation and continued support in providing the best education for your child.

Please see the link below for further information from Cheshire West and Chester on unauthorised holidays: [School Attendance-Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N Oxley', written in a cursive style.

Mr N Oxley  
Headteacher