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ATTENDANCE POLICY

**OPTIONS TRENT ACRES SCHOOL AND TRENT ACRES BROOKFIELD**

**Updated 1 September 2024**

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6. **INTRODUCTION**

**Compliance:** This policy is written in accordance with and complies with Part 3, paragraph 17 of The Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England) (Amendment) Regulations and

School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, November 2016

“The 1996 Education Act states that it is the parents’ responsibility to ensure that their child receives efficient full time education.”

**Legislation:**

This policy is underpinned by guidance from the Department for Education; Working together to improve school attendance – May 2040.

Options Trent Acres School is a specialist, independent day school offering places to pupils aged 5 to 19. Places are offered to pupils who have complex needs including ASC, ADHD. A high number of our pupils may also have experienced early childhood trauma and may present with attachment difficulties.

The school operates across 2 sites within the Staffordshire borough and offers up to 141 across both facilities.

Options Trent Acres School, based in Kings Bromley is set within 12 acres of Staffordshire countryside. The full national curriculum is taught from key stage 1 to key stage 4, adapted to meet the needs of individual pupils. Post-16 pupils can access a range of qualifications, including additional GCSE’s and BTEC qualifications and a number of A-Level opportunities (please see Post-16 Policy for further information) The school is also home to a range of farm and domestic animals and reptiles who provide emotional support for pupils as well as curriculum enhancement. Additional opportunities to study animal care, land-based studies, equine studies, psychology and engineering are also available to pupils.

Trent Acres - Brookfield is a purpose-built vocational college. We offer places for pupils aged 14 to 19, enabling them to study vocational routes into computer gaming and coding, hospitality and barista music production and health and social care. Students will also be able to achieve Functional Skills in English, Mathematics and ICT from Entry Level to Level 2. Many of the staff will work across sites, providing consistency and stability for pupils.

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1. **GENERAL**

**Encouraging Good Attendance**

Prior to attending Options Trent Acres School, attendance at school for some of our pupils has been disrupted. Some pupils have missed considerable amounts of schooling which has impacted on their ability to build relationships and resulted in low self-confidence and low self-esteem. Following an assessment period, in which a multi-disciplinary team complete assessments to identify if the school can meet needs, the school liaises with the placing authority to offer a place at the school.

Once placement is agreed, the school will work closely with parents and carers to establish an appropriate route into school. Some children may be able to readily access a full time timetable, other pupils may require a transitional plan. Transitional plans are agreed with all stakeholders and are reviewed regularly. From induction into placement, the school places high emphasis on regular attendance for all pupils. This is extremely important where pupils have missed education and have gaps in their knowledge.

**Encouraging Good Punctuality**

Pupils are encouraged to attend the school on time to begin the learning day. The ability to be punctual is a life skill and assists students with structure. Good punctuality is a key quality to develop for future education and employment. However, it is important to recognise, due to the particular students educated at Options Trent Acres School and taking into account their Complex Needs that students will have difficulties with routines and at times flexibility in timings needs to be exercised, therefore transition to, from and around the school needs to be carefully planned. The intention is for all sessions to start on time, but at times student’s functioning and processing time effects their ability to keep their routines to normal expectations

Where persistent lateness is observed this will be discussed as part of a multidisciplinary team with the aim of supporting students to develop routines to enable good morning routines.

Parents/carers are asked to notify the school if their child is going to be late for any reason, this allows for teachers and their teams to be made aware and this can be factored into planning the students learning for that day.

Attendance is also reported on as part of our termly Academic Progress reviews.

Students are also awarded Effort Grades on a termly basis and are reported on:

* Grade A Excellent 100% attendance
* Grade B Good 95% to 99%
* Grade C Satisfactory 91% to 94%
* Grade D Unsatisfactory below 90%

**To support positive school attendance, school will:**

Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.

Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.

Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met. If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners.

If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service.

Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.

Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.

Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.

Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children’s social care. Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings

Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.

Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil’s EHCP is accessed.

Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.

Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.

1. **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTING ABSENCE**

For day students when a student is absent, it is important that the School is informed. If students do not arrive at the School, staff have no way of knowing where they are or if they are safe. Parents/Carers are provided with information when their child starts school which gives details of our opening times and telephone numbers so that we can be contacted. School term dates are sent out annually.

Parents are asked to:

* Make every effort to contact the Pastoral Manager as soon as possible on the first day of their child’s absence.
* If their child is going to be absent for some time, they should ensure the school is regularly updated.
* Ensure their child attends school regularly.

Full parental responsibilities are outlined at the end of this policy.

On the first day of absence the school will telephone if the parent/ carer has failed to make contact. In case of illness the parents/ carers should contact us again on the third day. If we are unable to make contact then a referral may be made immediately to the relevant Social Worker, or where a social worker is not named, then the designated person in the local authorities SEN team.

In exceptional circumstances the Head Teacher can authorise leave of up to ten days in any one school year. Prior notice must be given. If the student stays away from school after this authorised period, the school register will be marked as an unauthorised absence. This will remain on the student’s record. In cases of continued absence, the parent should inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

In making the decision whether to grant term-time leave for a student, the Head Teacher will consider:

* The age of the student
* The duration of the leave
* The student’s attendance record
* The student’s ability
* Previous term-time leave

There are times during a school year when a student may experience particular problems if leave is taken, such as:

* During exams or tests
* During the first year at a new school
* At the beginning of a new term

1. **ATTENDANCE MONITORING**

School attendance is monitored by the school’s senior leadership team (SLT). The Pastoral Manager and Family Liaison Officer will work closely with parents to support and encourage good attendance. This involves wider work with the child and families including meetings, home visits and remote support calls. The leadership team meet on a half termly basis to identify pupils who may be in need of additional support to improve their attendance. Pupils with improved attendance are also highlighted and recognised with rewards and certificates.

**RESPONSIBILTIES OF PARENTS**

To support positive attendance, we work collaboratively with parents and appreciate joined up working to support the child.

**Parents are expected to:**

Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child’s barriers to attendance.

Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

Notify school of any issues that may be impacting on attendance

**MONITORING**

The school’s attendance team will ensure all school based staff complete their attendance responsibilities in line with the school’s policies and procedures.

The governors will hold the headteacher to account for their delegated responsibilities and for compliance with regulatory and statutory requirements. They will review progress and provide challenge when required.

The goverors will help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most and ensure that school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Ofsted will expect schools to do all they reasonably can to achieve the highest possible attendance as part of the behaviour and attitudes judgement. This includes, where attendance is not consistently at or above what could reasonably be expected, that schools have a strong understanding of the causes of absence (particularly for persistent and severe absence) and a clear strategy in place that takes account of those causes to improve attendance for all pupils.