Parents' Guide to Attendance

Working together so every child feels safe, included and ready to learn

At Oasis Community Learning, attendance is about **belonging, safeguarding and opportunity**. When children are in school regularly, they build strong relationships, develop positive routines and have the best chance to thrive.
This guide explains what we expect, how we work with families, and what support looks like if attendance becomes a concern.

Our approach is simple: we act early, work with families, and take clear action where attendance does not improve.

Why attendance matters at Oasis

Attendance is never just a number.

- Being in school every day supports learning, wellbeing and friendships.
- There is a direct link between attendance and outcomes – quite simply, pupils with good attendance will achieve more in life.
- Patterns of absence can be a safeguarding concern.
- Missing school regularly makes it harder for children to catch up.
- Good attendance helps with social development, forming relationships essential for success in life.

We believe **every child is precious**, and we are committed to helping every pupil access the full-time education they are entitled to.

Our Shared Expectations

Every day counts

We expect all pupils to:

- Attend **every day the academy is open.**
- Arrive **on time** so learning starts calmly and positively.

Nationally, **good attendance is 95% or above**. Our ambition is for every child to meet or do better than this.

Even 95% attendance means that 10 school days – 2 whole weeks – have been missed.

Being on time

- Registers are taken at the start of the day and in the first session after 12.00pm.
- Pupils should be in school by 08:45am at the latest.
- Arriving late can be disruptive and will be recorded as a late or an absence, depending on arrival time. Arriving just half an hour late means a whole school session is recorded as an absence.

Strong routines at home make a big difference. Please do all you can to ensure your child has consistent sleep routines and are up and ready to leave in time each morning.

When should my child stay at home?

Children should only be absent if they are **genuinely too unwell to attend school**.

Mild coughs, colds, tiredness, or minor aches are usually **not** reasons to miss school.

We may require medical evidence where illness persists or where there are ongoing attendance concerns – usually when illness lasts:

- **4 days or more**, or
- Adds up to **10 days across the year.**

If you are unsure, please speak to us – early conversations help.

Appointments

- Please arrange medical or dental appointments **outside school hours** wherever possible.
- If this isn't possible, your child should miss **the minimum time necessary**, attending school before or after the appointment whenever possible.
- Evidence of the appointment should be provided.
- Very few appointments should require a full day of absence.

Holidays and time off in term time

Schools are only allowed to authorise term-time absence in **exceptional circumstances**. This means:

- Family holidays **will not** be authorised.
- Birthdays are not a valid reason for absence.

Unauthorised absence may lead to involvement from the local authority, including penalty notices.

We strongly encourage families to plan holidays during school breaks.

What happens if my child is absent?

First-day contact

If your child is absent, we ask to be contacted by 8.00am by phone. MCAS message or email.

If we haven't heard from you:

- You will receive a same-day call or message.
- For some pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable, a **home visit** may be carried out.
- In rare cases, if we are unable to establish a child's whereabouts and are worried about their safety, we may ask partner agencies to help us carry out a welfare check.

This is part of our safeguarding responsibility – we must always know children are safe.

How we support attendance at Oasis

We use a **staged, supportive approach**, always starting early and working in partnership with families.

We always aim to offer **support before any formal action**, and legal routes are only used when all other help has not led to improvement. We will communicate clearly with you at each stage, so you understand what is happening and what is expected next.

Stage 1 – Early concern

- We notice patterns (for example, frequent short absences, regular Fridays or Monday off, or late arrivals).
- A member of staff will contact you to understand what's happening.
- The focus is on identifying barriers and offering help early.

- We want to work together with you to find quick solutions to improve your child's attendance.

Stage 2 – Attendance Support Plan (ASP)

If attendance does not improve:

- We will invite you to a meeting in school.
- Together, we agree a short-term support plan.
- This plan sets out what school, family and pupil will each do.
- A named member of staff will be identified as your child's 'attendance champion', someone who will work closely with them to support and help overcome any identified barriers.

Stage 3 – Formal escalation

If concerns continue despite support at Stages 1 and 2:

- Senior leaders and external professionals may become involved.
- Another meeting will be held in school to understand why attendance is not improving.
- Our support always continues, but expectations are made very clear that attendance must improve.

Stage 4 – Legal routes (last resort)

- Used only when all other support has not been effective.
- Always proportionate and never a surprise to families.
- Safeguarding responsibilities continue throughout.
- This stage involves the Education Welfare Service and, in some cases, referral to social services.

Our aim is **always** to help children attend regularly – not to blame families.

Attendance and safeguarding

Attendance is a safeguarding issue.

Regular or unexplained absence may indicate:

- A child is struggling emotionally or socially.
- Wider family difficulties.
- A risk to safety or wellbeing.

This is why we act early, follow up absence quickly, and take patterns seriously. We aim to build strong relationships based on trust with families who are struggling – working together to identify issues and find solutions.

How families and school work together

We will:

- Create a welcoming, inclusive academy where children feel they belong.
- Listen carefully and act early when concerns arise.
- Be clear, consistent and fair in our approach.
- Rewards and celebrate success.

Families can help by:

- Making attendance a top priority.
- Establishing strong routines (bedtimes, mornings).
- Letting us know early if something is affecting attendance.

If you are struggling, please talk to us – **support is available**.

Our key message

Every day really does count.

Attendance Percentage	Learning days lost per academic year
98	4
95	10
90	19
85	29
80	38
75	48

When schools and families work together with clarity, care and consistency, children are safer, happier and more successful.

If you have questions or concerns about attendance, please contact any of these key members of staff:

- Your child's form tutor.
- The attendance team at the academy
- Your child's head of year or phase leader
- The academy's senior leader for attendance – Jack.Bytheway@oasisbrightstowe.org