



Ormiston Cliff Park
PRIMARY ACADEMY

Dear Parent/Carer,

Orde Avenue
Gorleston-on-sea
Norfolk
NR31 6SZ

Phone: 01493 661523

Email: office@ocppa.co.uk

Web: www.ocppa.co.uk

Principal: Mrs K Rutherford MA BEd

 **Anchored in excellence**

Date: 20/09/2023

Attendance at school and legal intervention

In September 2022, the Department for Education updated its policy document entitled '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)', details of which can be found on the link highlighted in blue.

Holidays

Once again I would like to remind parents and carers of the key points stated within the document, particularly in relation to holidays:

- *Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at school, they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. The Government is very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.*
- Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence.
- If a leave of absence is granted, it is for headteachers to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.
As a headteacher should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances *it is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a holiday*
- If the school does not receive a request for leave, the head teacher will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the head teacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention if they have at least 9 sessions (4.5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during 6 school weeks. The intervention could be in the form of a fixed penalty notice.

Any pupil at Ormiston Cliff Park Primary Academy who meets the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a fixed penalty notice is issued, the arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. A parent may receive more than one separate penalty notice resulting from unauthorised absence. When penalty notices are issued each parent will receive one per child. Therefore, each parent could receive multiple notices if they have more than 1 child who has been absent. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken. In some circumstances, the Norfolk County Council Attendance Team may choose not to issue a further penalty notice in the same academic year and may instead choose to prosecute a parent under the Education Act 1996 S444. There is no right of appeal by parents against a fixed penalty notice.



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Absences

Parents/carers **MUST** contact the Academy office and inform of your child's absence by 9am on every day your child is absent. Staff will be requesting specific details in relation to the absence on each day of the absence. If the absence is due to ill health, staff will ask for details of appointments with doctor/health practitioner and dates of return etc. Where numerous absences relate to health issues, staff will be requesting evidence of health appointments. All absences relating to Covid 19 will require evidence of positive Covid 19 testing. Details of action to be taken if infected by Covid 19 can be found here www.gov.uk/covid. Absence for Covid is recorded as I for illness.

Lateness

All pupils should arrive at the academy by 8.45am. Lessons start at 8.50am. Children arriving after 8.50am will be recorded as late and after 9am receive an unauthorised absence. We currently have several children who arrive between 8.50am -9.00am and as a result are missing 5 -10 mins of learning every day, which could amount to 50 mins a week, which could equate to 5 hours of lost learning in a term of 6 weeks! Lateness really impacts on learning so please help your child to arrive at the academy on time!

[Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. Every day that is lost at school, is a day of learning lost – which has to be caught up. Losing lots of days of learning can also contribute to feelings of anxiety and unhappiness in a child.

During the past two years the Academy has endeavoured to work in partnership with parents/carers taking into account some of the issues presented as a result of the Covid 19 Pandemic. As we move into 2022/2023 the updated documentation states quite clearly the responsibilities of parents and carers as well as those of the school.

I am confident that parents and carers will continue to work in partnership with the Academy to ensure that all children receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K Rutherford,
Principal