

October 2023

Dear Parents/ Carers,

At Outwood Academy Adwick we have very high expectations of your child's attendance and punctuality. We strive for 100% attendance and excellent punctuality. The banner below shows the impact of missed schooling. Our full attendance policy can be found on our website but here are key points for your attention.



If your child feels ill in the morning, please provide them with appropriate pain relief/ medication and then send them into school. If your child is too ill to be in school then we ask that you notify a member of our attendance team by phone call on **01302 722237** on the first day of illness and all following days. Please advise them of the reason for absence and the expected date of return. This phone call should be made by 9.00 am or alternatively you may leave a message on the school answerphone. Please be aware that if the need arises, members of staff may visit any child who is absent from school. We have a fantastic attendance team in school who are always willing to support. If support or advice is needed, please don't hesitate to contact the team via phone call using the number above or email: attendance@adwick.outwood.com

Punctuality

Students should be on the school site by 8.15am and should arrive at the first lesson by 8.25am. Students arriving after this time must arrive through Tenter Balk Lane (usually referred to as 'top gate' by students). If they do not have a valid reason for lateness, they will receive a break time detention, which they will complete on the same day. Students arriving after 9.25am are at risk of receiving an unauthorised absence for the AM mark. This would count against their attendance and put the family at risk of an Education Penalty Notice.

Transport Issues

We are aware of issues caused by changes to the 50A bus service from Carcroft which is currently meaning students are arriving at / after 8.25am. We encourage you to contact First Bus to provide your feedback on the timings of their service (<https://www.firstbus.co.uk/help-support/contact-us>). In the meantime students should access an earlier bus or find alternative modes of transport. There are other services available such as a 50 service leaving Carcroft at 7.46am and arriving at the academy at 8:04am. It remains the legal responsibility of parents and carers to ensure students arrive by 8.15am, as an academy we will always understand 'one-off' transport issues but we cannot allow students to arrive late everyday if the issues continue long term.

Council advice

Below is some local support on offer from the council you can speak to if your child is worried about school: -

Education Welfare Team: help families remove barriers to attendance.

Your Place local teams: family, activities, benefits, childcare, housing, debt and education.

Zone 5-19 or your local GP: support for a young person struggling with their health, parents can also contact the children's wellbeing service 'Zone 5-19' on 0300 0218997.

Your local Family hub- advice and support for your family around education for yourself or your child.

Chief Medical Officer Advice

We are currently experiencing high levels of illness. Please encourage your child to practise good hygiene, such as thorough hand washing. Advice from the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Chris Whitty:

"It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat."

"Worry and mild or moderate anxiety, whilst sometimes difficult emotions, can be a normal part of growing up for many children and young people. Being in school can often help alleviate underlying issues. A prolonged period of absence is likely to heighten a child's anxiety about attending in the future, rather than reduce it."

Appointments

We ask that a child's routine medical and other appointments are made out of school time. We understand that this is not always possible and we ask that we are notified in advance. This can be done by telephone, email or a note provided from home or appointment letter / card to confirm the appointment. Where possible, the child should attend school before the appointment and return to lessons afterwards.

Leave of absence (including term time holidays)

Amendments came into force in September 2013 and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 now state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Absence will not be authorised for reasons such as shopping for uniform, birthdays, day trips, weekends away etc. Requests for exceptional circumstances should be made in writing to the attendance team well in advance by parents or carers. Requests for absence for reasons such as compassionate leave, special family events, or competitions, etc. should be made in the same way. We will notify parents of our decision by telephone or in writing. Where a request has been refused, and parents continue to take their child out of school, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. We reserve the right to apply to the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

Persistent Absence

A child will be defined as a 'Persistent Absentee' if they miss 10% or more of school. The parents or carers of a child have a legal duty to make sure that their child attends school regularly. We can make a referral to the local authority where parents or carers are failing this legal duty. Persistent Absence is a serious problem for children, as much of the work missed when students are off school is never made up, leaving them at a considerable disadvantage. The local authority has the power to enforce school attendance, including the power to prosecute parents/carers who fail to ensure a child's regular attendance at school. For reference, if found guilty parents or carers could be fined up to £2500 and/or imprisoned for three months. It is important for parents and carers to note that the government has also strengthened schools' ability to respond by increasing Fixed Penalty Notices to £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days. These are an alternative to prosecution of parents or carers for failing to ensure a child attends school regularly. Failure to pay can result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Outwood Academy Adwick shares the Government's determination to raise the levels of pupil attendance at school because we want to provide the best possible outcomes for all our children. If you are experiencing any difficulty with your child's attendance please contact us immediately so we can work together to improve attendance or punctuality.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Yours sincerely



Mr R Catrall
Assistant Principal- Attendance & Punctuality