



Orchard Mead
Academy

Attendance Matters

Information for parents and carers

At Orchard Mead Academy, we know that good attendance is crucial to the future educational success of our students. **Good attendance to school is nationally defined as 96% and above; where students' attendance falls below this level, research tells us that they are less likely be able to fulfil their education potential.** It is our mission to ensure that every student has excellent attendance, fostered through a love of school.

Why does attendance matter?

The **link between attendance and achievement is well researched.** We want all our students to achieve the very best examination results so that they are able to obtain the qualifications needed in order to achieve their future dreams and aspirations.

It is vital that students and parents understand that poor attendance can have a significant impact on student achievement. Figures from the Department for Education (DFE) show:

- Pupils who did not achieve grade **9 to 4** in English and Maths GCSEs in 2019 had overall attendance of **91%** over the key stage, compared with **95%** among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and **96%** among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths
- Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, **83.7%** achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and Maths compared to **35.6%** of pupils who were persistently absent.

Rewards!

Good attendance is regularly rewarded in school through you child following our Orchard Oath of '**Work Hard, Be Kind, Be Responsible**'. Students accumulate honour points for **100% attendance** which enables them to access a range of Rewards, Trips and Enrichments.

Understanding your child’s attendance

It can be easy to become confused by attendance data and to feel unsure about what the percentages mean.

The chart below shows you how percentage attendance links to the actual number of school days and school lessons missed.

When we look at the information like this, we can see that **even a student with 95% attendance has missed 10 days of school, the equivalent of 50 lessons**. This is a significant amount of lost learning and can make keeping up difficult. Similarly, **even though 90% sounds good** and would be an excellent test score for example, **in attendance terms 90% is a significant concern**.

We would ask students to strive for 100% attendance. It is not necessary for students to take days off for simple things like minor heads or tummy aches. We often find that once they are in school then simple ailments are forgotten about!

Descriptor	Students Attendance Percentage %	Days Absent	Number of Missed Lessons Due to Absence (Each Lesson is 1 Hour)
Excellent	100%	0 Days Off	0 Lessons
	99%	2 Days Off	10 Lessons
	98%	4 Days Off	20 Lessons
Good	97%	6 Days Off	30 Lessons
	96%	8 Days Off	40 Lessons
Requires Improvement	95%	10 Days Off	50 Lessons
	94%	11 Days Off	55 Lessons
	93%	13 Days Off	65 Lessons
Serious Concern	92%	15 Days Off	75 Lessons
	91%	17 Days Off	85 Lessons
Persistently Absent (90% and below)	90%	19 Days Off	95 Lessons
	89%	21 Days Off	105 Lessons
	88%	23 Days Off	115 Lessons
	87%	25 Days Off	125 Lessons
	86%	27 Days Off	135 Lessons
	85%	29 Days Off	145 Lessons
	80%	38 Days Off	190 lessons

What is persistent absence?

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee (PA)' when their **attendance falls below 90%**. Absence at this level is **significantly detrimental to a child's education**. All students whose attendance has fallen below 90%, or are at risk of moving towards becoming a PA, are monitored rigorously.

As a school we will:

- Listen to students, parents and carers carefully to find out why a child is not attending school well enough
- Plan support and intervention to help a child's attendance to improve
- Maintain good communication, letting students, parents and carers know of improvements, no matter how small
- Link with other agencies such as the Education Welfare Service, the School Nursing Service, Children's Social Care and others to help find the right support, particularly where concerns remain following school level interventions

Understanding how lateness can contribute to low attendance figures

KS3 Students are expected to **arrive for school by 8.25am** and KS4 students **by 8.35am** where daily routines of uniform and equipment will be checked before entering the school building. Students enter the building, at the designated gates, and make their way to their tutor group. If a student **arrives late to school after these times they must arrive at the Student Reception** where they will be signed in and issued with a late card which they will need to hand to their class teacher upon arrival to lesson.

Lateness after 9:30am will be unauthorised and contributes to half a day's absence. Ongoing lateness after 9.30am will **significantly impact a student's attendance percentage and must be avoided.**

Please note that if a parent/carer reports that there are extenuating circumstances that have prevented a student from arriving on time, then we will, of course, take this into consideration, therefore it is really important that you communicate with us, letting us know why your child was late, and **give us up to date contact details.**

Lateness to school results in a next day breakfast club detention.



What can parents and carers do to support good attendance?

There are lots of things that parents and carers can do to support good school attendance.

Some examples include:

Basics:

- Remind yourself of the school day and the school calendar so that you know that what time your child is expected in to school
- Set out the expectation that your child should attend every day and help children to understand that minor aches and pains are normal and can be managed in school
- Avoid making appointments for your child in school time
- Don't rely on your child to carry out baby-sitting duties or to wait in for trades people during school time

Establish a routine:

- Establish good sleep routines so that your child is able to get up in time for school. Good ideas include limiting screen time before bed, encouraging something relaxing such as a warm bath or reading to help them to wind down and sticking to regular sleep and wake up times so that your child's body knows what to expect when
- Encourage your child to get all of their uniform and equipment ready the night before to avoid panic and stress in the morning
- Encourage your child to be independent and get themselves up for school by providing an alarm clock
- Leave plenty of time to dress and eat so your child doesn't feel rushed and the morning is calm

Talk to school:

- Come into school to attend Parents' Evenings and other events. We want to get to know you and build a good relationship between school and home—these events are a great opportunity to do just that
- If you spot issues arising make an appointment to talk to your child's Assistant Head of Year or Head of Year. We can plan a way forward together
- Keep school informed of important life events so that we can put in place support if needed. We will always treat this information in confidence and do our very best to ensure that your family feels supported during the tough times

Other ideas:

- Set attendance goals at home and offer rewards if your child meets them—these don't need to be expensive but could be things that your child values such as time
- Help your child to understand why attendance is so important—use some of the ideas from this leaflet to illustrate your points or talk to them about how adults might be treated if they failed to attend work to help your child to understand that good attendance is a life skill