Oatlands School

Attendance Policy (Pupils)

Date of last review: Spring 2022

Date of next review: Spring 2024

Contents

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

> Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

> Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

> The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

> The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Curriculum Committee is responsible for reviewing the Management of Pupil Attendance Policy bi-annually.

3.2 The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Head Teacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance twice daily. They will also ensure the admin staff are aware of absentees in their class.

3.5 School Admin staff

School Admin staff are responsible for ensuring that absences are recorded with the correct codes on Arbor. They will also liaise with parents to ensure absences are reported in a timely and detailed manner.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Late
- Absent and the detailed reason for that absence
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The amended entry
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:10am and the second session will be taken at 1:10pm and will be kept open until 1:15pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school by phone call, voice message or email, on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:30am at the latest or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

When informing the school that your child is unable to attend school, it is important to state your child's name, class and provide a specific reason for their absence.   If they are 'feeling unwell' please let us know exactly what their symptoms are.   This is so that we can track absences due to illness and control outbreaks of contagious viruses, tummy-bugs etc, before they affect the wider school community. If your child has any COVID related symptoms, it is important that this is also made clear.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

We do however expect parents, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary and we ask that parents visit the school office at least one week ahead of the appointment with proof of appointment. Pupils must be signed out upon leaving the school and signed back in on their return. Absences for appointments will be authorised if these procedures are followed.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence and complete a 'Application for Leave of Absence form'. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to be in school by 8:50am. Pupils arriving after 9:00am but before 9:10am will be recorded as 'L' late before register closed and if pupils arrive after 9:10am without a previously authorised absence, it will be recorded as 'U' late after close of register and counted as an unauthorised absence for that session.

In all cases of lateness parents will need to bring their children into school via the main office, providing a reason for lateness ahead of signing them in.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

> Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason for the absence. This will be done through a phone call, text message or email

> Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Parents can access their children's attendance records at any stage through Arbor. Attendance is reported to parents annually on their child's school report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as events such as:

> A major family event such as the wedding of a close relative

> Serious or terminal illness of a close relative

> Significant family trauma has occurred and a break is in the best interest of the child

> The leave would be of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

> Flexi-schooling requests – Where a child will benefit from taking part in an extra-curricular activity or intervention that cannot be undertaken during the school day

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

To reduce persistent absences the school will:

Firstly, send a letter to the parent/carers expressing concern about high levels of absence in the previous term and advising that the child's attendance will be monitored on a weekly basis to see an improvement.

If no improvement is seen by the end of the next half term, parents/carers will be sent another letter inviting them to attend a meeting to discuss ways in which the school can support the parents/carers to improve the child's attendance. The school will also request that medical evidence is provided for any further illness absences.

The school will make a referral to the EWO if there are any further absences.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Head Teacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
> Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Each term we hold a 100% attendance assembly where children are awarded certificates and badges for not missing any school. Due to COVID 19, these assemblies have been put on hold as we are not encouraging children to come into school if unwell.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call or email the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

The pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school **each** day their child is ill on subsequent days.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Attendance data is used to:

> Track the attendance of individual pupils
> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
> Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum bi-annually by the Curriculum Committee.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
U	Late after register closes	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
B	Educated Off Site	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual Registration	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview/tour with a prospective educational establishment
P	Sporting activity (Approved)	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
C	Other Authorised Absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Family Holiday (Agreed)	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I01	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
G	Family Holiday (not agreed)	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
X01	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on roll	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined or has recently left the school
#	School closed to pupils	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
X	Not required to be in school or COVID-19 related	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend or COVID-19 related absence not covered by other COVID codes below
I02	Illness – confirmed case of COVID-19	Pupils have a confirmed case of COVID
X07	Government attendance restrictions	National restrictions to education settings in line with Government advice
X08	Advised by Public Health Directors not to attend school	Local restrictions to education settings in line with advice from Directors of Public Health
X09	NHS test & trace required self-isolation	Pupils required to self-isolate due to contact with a confirmed case, by NHS test and trace
X05	Quarantine requirement	Pupils required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK
X02	Self-Isolating COVID-10 symptoms	Pupils self-isolating because they have symptoms of coronavirus but they have not yet had a positive test.
X06	Shielding	Pupils who have been identified as clinically vulnerable and advised that they should not attend school.