



Attendance Policy

This Policy was updated in February 2021 in consultation with Oxfordshire County's Attendance Team.
Amended to add a COVID-19 Appendix.

The Policy will be reviewed and updated annually.

Trustee with Responsibility: Leadership and Management Team

Approval Level (D)

Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide an engaging and stimulating curriculum;
- Develop strong, positive and successful relationships with the children so that they want to attend school;
- Develop strong, positive and successful relationships with parents, working closely with them so that their child/ren attend school unless there are good reasons not to.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. If this occurs, parents are required to inform the school so that the absence can be authorised.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, never cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them

from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with any homework the school sets
- Having clothes and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic, emotional or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with the school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include: individual incentive programmes. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance team. If your child becomes a PA pupil, we will seek your consent to complete an Early Help Assessment with you and consider convening a Team Around the Family.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence either by phone, e-mail or in person.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90%.

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your current contact number and three alternative contact numbers at all times. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have up to date numbers – if we don't then something important may be missed. We will ask you to update your details at the start of each academic year but if your number changes, please inform us immediately.

The County Attendance Team

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at the Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513 attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss essential time with a member of staff and peers. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness

The school day starts at 8.45 a.m. and we expect your child to be at school at that time. Registers are marked at 9.00 a.m. and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. At 9.15a.m. the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the staff to resolve the problem; you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Exceptional Leave/Holidays

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's education and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. If parents wish to request leave, an application must be made in advance to the Trustees. Trustees must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Trustees will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Trustees' discretion. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Exceptional leave will be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.

Absences of Ten Days

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Attendance and Engagement Team – 01865 323513 attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Children Missing Education

In the event that children are in danger of going 'missing in education', Pupil Tracking Officer Alan Blackmore would be contacted – 01865 810515 Alan.Blackmore@oxfordshire.gov.uk. Alan Blackmore will also be contacted if a pupil is removed the school roll at non-standard transition points.

School Targets

We know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling. The minimum level of attendance the school aims for is 96%. Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in the weekly 'Update'. We ask for your full support.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are

Andrea Turner: Director
Laura Lee: Deputy Director and DSL
Tim Hirst: Trustee with responsibility for attendance.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures & its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimizing your child's attainment.

Appendix 1: Register Codes

Registration Code	Explanation and usage – extracted from “School Attendance” DfE Oct 2014
/ \	Present in school / = am \ = pm Present in school during registration
L	Late arrival before the register has closed
U	Arrived after the register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil’s absence using the relevant absence code.
D	Dual Registered - at another educational establishment This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the pupil’s attendance and absence for those sessions where the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.
J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

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V	<p>Educational visit or trip This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.</p>
W	<p>Work experience Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.</p>
C	<p>Leave of absence authorised by the school Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.</p>
E	<p>Excluded but no alternative provision made If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.</p>
H	<p>Holiday authorised by the school Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.</p>
I	<p>Illness (not medical or dental appointments) Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.</p>
M	<p>Medical or dental appointments Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of 11 school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.</p>
R	<p>Religious observance Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where</p>

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	necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.
S	Study leave Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.
G	Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher. If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.
N	Reason for absence not yet provided Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).
O	Absent from school without authorisation If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.
X	Not required to be in school This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Y	<p>Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances</p> <p>This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or • The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or • A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school. <p>This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity). <p>This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.</p>
Z	<p>Pupil not on admission register</p> <p>This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.</p>
#	<p>Planned whole or partial school closure</p> <p>This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.</p>

Appendix 2: COVID 19

Written in line with "Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year" government guidance.

Following DFE guidance, from the start of the autumn term 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19) Therefore, there is now a new category of non-attendance – 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

This category will only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)³

- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

This new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

From the beginning of the new academic year, we will return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak. In addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)':

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X⁴
- schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak.

Covid-19 Code summary.

'X' for all absences that are COVID-19 related.

'I' for all absences relating to illness (including DIAGNOSED COVID-19).

'C' for any other absence authorised by the headteacher on a case-by-case basis that is not covered by another code.

For Government Guidance on COVID-19 absence visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year#examples-in-which-not-attending-in-circumstances-related-to-coronavirus-covid-19-could-apply>