

# Leaffield C. of E. Primary School



## Attendance Policy

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| Committee responsible: | Leaffield School Local Governing Board |
| Reviewed By:           | Leaffield School Local Governing Board |
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**Statutory Policy:**

Policy provided centrally for adoption by schools with minimal amendment to the core text. Changes are allowed to the text where indicated

# Attendance Policy

## Leafield C. of E. Primary School

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| <b>Approved by:</b>      | <b>EQSI</b>           |
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| <b>Date:</b>              | <b>January 2025</b>                     |

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## 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. We believe that for children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and that children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to always have your current contact numbers and email addresses. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date number and email address – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on contact details throughout the year. Please ensure we have both parents and at least a third emergency contact person's contact details.

### **Why regular attendance is so 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. Children are best safeguarded from exploitation and other risks in the wider community by attending school regularly where they are supervised by qualified and caring professionals.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is the legal responsibility of parents and registered carers and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

It is very important therefore that parents and registered carers make sure that the children they are responsible for attend school regularly and this guidance sets out how together we will achieve this.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through a culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Attendance is everybody's responsibility
- Promoting good attendance. The school's attendance target is 96%, good attendance is 95% and above
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons where applicable

## Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

[School census guidance](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

[Term time absence for Service children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

## Definitions

Where the term “relevant body” has been used within this policy guidance, this means the Board of Trustees of ODST. The relevant body has chosen to delegate some of its functions to Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) as set out in this procedure.

Unless indicated otherwise, all references to “school” include both schools and academies.

Unless indicated otherwise, all references to “teacher” include the Headteacher, Executive Headteacher or Head of School.

Unless indicated otherwise, all references to ‘staff’ include both teaching and support staff.

## Consistency of Treatment and Fairness

The relevant body is committed to ensuring consistency of treatment and fairness and will abide by all relevant employment and equality legislation.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Any feedback or concerns from ODST schools regarding this policy guidance will be reported back in the first instance to the ODST Education, Quality, Standards and Impact (EQSI) Committee.

## Date of Review

The procedure will be reviewed as required by the Education, Quality, Standards and Impact (EQSI) Committee of the Board of Trustees of ODST to take account of any revised guidance, legislative changes and / or national policy development.

# Roles and Responsibilities

## The Board of Trustees of Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust

The Board of Trustees is responsible for:

- Promoting a culture that sets high expectations for attendance across all ODST schools
- Supporting schools to prioritise attendance
- Ensuring that school leaders are able to fulfill high expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing attendance data from across the Trust and directing school improvement resource to help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it

## The Local Governing Body

The Local Governing Body is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
  - Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
  - Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools
  - Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

## **The headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the School Business Manager to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels.

## **The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance can be contacted via the school office by phone (01993 878 273) or email (office.3124@leaffield.oxon.sch.uk).

## **Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office after the morning and afternoon registration periods close at 9.15 a.m. and 1.15 p.m.

## **School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents and registered carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents/carers where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

## Parents / carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them).

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every school day by 8.45 a.m.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.55 a.m. on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting their child's class teacher, or the school office by phone (01993 878 273) or email (office.3124@leafield.oxon.sch.uk).

## Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

Attend school every day on time.

## Recording Attendance

### Attendance 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, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

Present

Attending an approved off-site educational activity

Absent

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

The original entry

The amended entry

The reason for the amendment

The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment



We will also record:

For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not

The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.45 a.m. and ends at 3.15 p.m.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45 a.m. on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00 a.m. and will be kept open until 9.15 a.m. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00 p.m. and will be kept open until 1.15 p.m.

## **Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.55 a.m., or as soon as practically possible, by contacting the school office staff by phone (01993 878 273) or email ([office.3124@leafield.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.3124@leafield.oxon.sch.uk)). Please be honest about the reason for absence.

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

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 will be notified of this in advance.

## **Planned absence**

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

For planned absence, parents must request a Special Absence Request Form, from the school office.

***However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.***

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## Lateness and punctuality

Poor punctuality impacts your child. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

A pupil who arrives late:

- o Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- o After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

## How we manage time keeping:

The school day starts at 8.45 a.m. and we expect your child to be in class at that time. If your child arrives to school and registration as expected, they will receive a present mark (*/*)

Registers are marked by 9.00 a.m. and your child will receive a late mark (**L**) if they are not in by that time.

At 9.15 a.m. the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark (**U**) 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. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Whilst there is no mandatory time for afternoon registration, the school will seek to take the register directly following the lunchtime period at 1.00 p.m. in order to support safeguarding and early identification of pupils who are Late to return or whom do not return. If your child is present for this registration they will be marked (**\**)

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with a member of the headteacher or representative to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

## Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may make a home welfare visit, contact the local community police service or the local children's social services – if there is a safeguarding risk.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Visit you at home if we have not heard from you by day 3 of absence
- Work together with you and your child to identify and address any in-school barriers to attendance quickly
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, we will work together to support you and your child and access any support you may need. This may include a multi-agency assessment.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, and attendance moves below 90% we will refer the matter to the County Attendance Team.

## Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels via a half-termly report.

## Authorised and unauthorised absence

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

**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, school will require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

**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 late after the register has closed and are therefore given an unauthorised absence 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 resolved 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 bedtimes
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open and honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

## Approval for term-time absence – Exceptional Leave

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. It is widely known that there is a strong link between pupil's attendance, attainment and future success. Poor attendance habits are known to continue into secondary school, further education and employment. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and the school may request for a Penalty Notice to be issued.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form (accessible via a hard copy from the school office or a downloadable copy from the school website). The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

- The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#).
- The Headteacher or designated representative will meet with every family applying for exceptional leave to stress the importance of good attendance habits and links between attendance and attainment.
- Exceptional leave is most unlikely to be authorised when a pupils attendance is less than 96%.
- Exceptional leave should always be refused if the school is aware of any truancy.
- Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
- Reasons for exceptional leave should be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process
- The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
  - Parent(s) 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
  - If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

- Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):
  - Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
  - Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
  - Attending provision arranged by the local authority
  - Attending work experience
  - If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

## Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

## Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate
- Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay **£80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days**. This amount is prescribed by the Education Penalty Notices (England) Regulations 2007. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice within the prescribed period may result in prosecution for the underlying offence of failure to secure regular school attendance.

Any second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3-year period will be charged at a higher rate of **£160 to be paid within 28 days**, with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80. (The three-year period begins from the date of the first penalty notice issued on or after 19 August 2024)

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

**Please note: Penalty Notices are issued per parent/per child.**

### **Notices to improve**

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

### **Strategies for promoting attendance**

The promotion of a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils, all members of school staff and the Local Governing Body.

The Class with the highest attendance receives whole Class Attendance Certificates at the end of each half term.

The School newsletter regularly reminds parents of the importance of regular attendance.

## **Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school**

### **Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance**

- We will work together with you and your child to identify and address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, we will work together to support you and your child and access any support you may need. This may include a multi-agency assessment.

### **Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND**

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

- We will work together with you and your child to identify and address any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where barriers are outside of the school's control, we will work together to support you and your child and access any support you may need. This may include a multi-agency assessment.

### **Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence**

- We will work together with you and your child to plan for a successful return to school and good attendance.

## **Attendance monitoring**

### **Monitoring attendance**

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board.

## **Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## **Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the local governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, ODST, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

## **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

**Persistent absence (PA)** is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents full support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any child seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards it 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 will have an action plan to improve attendance. This may include a multi-agency assessment. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance team.



**Severe absence (SA)** is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing significant damage to any child's academic and social progress which can have lifelong consequences. All SA pupils at our school will have an Individual Attendance Plan which will incorporate multi-agency input. You will be expected to engage with all partners to improve your child's attendance to 96+%. SA pupils are our highest priority at our school.

Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

### **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 Oxfordshire County Council for consideration of legal proceedings.

At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, or take action via a Non-Attendance referral, the legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

The County Attendance Team, with the school, will encourage you to engage with a multi-agency approach. Education Supervision Orders may be discussed with you to support rapidly improved attendance.

Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

Alternatively, parents 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. The team can be contacted on 01865 323513 or [attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk).

## Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Tim Edwards -Grundy, Executive Headteacher

Rhiannon Abberly, Head of School

Jeanette Shaw, Governor Responsible for Attendance

### Summary:

- ✓ The school has a legal duty to report and publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance.
- ✓ School attendance data must be available to Oxfordshire County Council, ODST and the Department for Education.
- ✓ Parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly and on time.
- ✓ We have a lead member of the LGB who monitors our attendance arrangements on behalf of all our pupils.
- ✓ 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 optimising your child's attainment, mental health and social well-being.

## Appendix 1 : Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

### Summary of Attendance Codes and Meanings: September 24

All schools, except those where all the pupils are boarders, must keep an attendance register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The attendance register must be kept electronically to aid accuracy and reduce the burden of information sharing, the attendance register is a legal document and the responsibility of the Headteacher.

On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non –compulsory school age) whose name is listed in the admissions register at the time. **Registers must be formerly taken at an identified time AM/PM**, both registration sessions must be clearly outlined in the schools' whole school attendance policy and made known to parents/pupils and school staff.

Full information contained in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the Statutory Attendance Guidance Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024.

**If a pupil is present in school the following codes should be used:**

| Code | Meaning                                | Criteria  | Statistical Value   |
|------|--|---|---------------------|
| /    | Present at school AM                   | Must be in school at registration   | Attending (Present) |
| \    | Present at school PM                   | Must be in school at registration   | Attending (Present) |
| L    | Late arrival before register is closed | The pupil was absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed. | Attending (Present) |

**If a pupil is absent from school so that they can attend a place other than school for any of the following reasons the relevant code below must be used.**

| Code | Meaning  | Criteria  | Statistical Value                                    |
|------|--|---|--|
| K    | Attending Education provision arranged by the LA | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The nature of the provision must also be recorded.</li> <li>Code K can only be used if the child is present at the provision.</li> </ul>   | Attending an approved educational activity (present) |
| V    | Attending an Educational visit or trip           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip</li> <li>Arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff.</li> <li>The visit or trip must take place during the session for which it is recorded.</li> <li>Code V can only be used if the pupil is present at the visit.</li> </ul> | Attending an approved educational activity (present) |

|                 |   |   |   |
|-----------------|---|---|---|
| <p><b>P</b></p> | <p>Participating in a Sporting Activity<br/>P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• P code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity. The sporting activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded.</li> <li>• The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014;</li> <li>• the activity is of an educational nature;</li> <li>• the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and</li> <li>• the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved.</li> </ul> | <p>Attending an approved educational activity (present)</p> |
| <p><b>W</b></p> | <p>Attending Work Experience</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• W code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity Under arrangements by school or LA</li> <li>• In session for which it is recorded</li> <li>• The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014;</li> <li>• the activity is of an educational nature;</li> <li>• the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and</li> <li>• the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose</li> </ul>   | <p>Attending an approved educational activity (present)</p> |

|          |   |   |   |
|----------|---|---|---|
|          |   | for which the pupil's attendance has been approved.   |   |
| <b>B</b> | <p>Attending any other approved Educational Activity</p> <p>Schools have responsibilities for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils attending an approved educational activity. The school will need to be satisfied that appropriate measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the educational activity notifies the school of any absences by the pupil.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• B code can only be used if the pupil is present at the activity Under arrangements by school or LA</li> <li>• In session for which it is recorded</li> <li>• The place is somewhere other than the school, another school where the pupil is registered, or a place where educational provision has been arranged for the pupil by a local authority under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or sections 42(2) or 61(1) of the Children and Families Act 2014;</li> <li>• the activity is of an educational nature;</li> <li>• the school has approved the pupil's attendance at the place for the activity; and</li> <li>• the activity is supervised by a person considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training, experience and knowledge to ensure that the activity takes place safely and fulfils the educational purpose for which the pupil's attendance has been approved.</li> <li>• As set out in the DfE's guidance on 'Providing remote education'. pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor pupil's engagement with remote education, but this is not formally tracked in the attendance register</li> </ul> | Attending an approved educational activity (present)  |
| <b>D</b> | Dual Registered at another school   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code.</li> <li>• Code D may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.</li> <li>• Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absences are promptly followed up</li> </ul>  | Not a possible attendance (neither present or absent) |

**If a pupil is absent with leave (NB schools not required to follow regulation 11 in granting a leave of absence should still use the relevant code)**

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Meaning</b>  | <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>Statistical Value</b>                              |
|-------------|---|---|---|
| <b>C1</b>   | Leave of absence – performance or regulated employment abroad                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance licence issued by LA or</li> <li>• Body of Persons Approval issued by LA or</li> <li>• Justice of peace has given licence for pupil to go abroad for performance or regulated purpose</li> </ul>   | Authorised absence                                    |
| <b>M</b>    | Leave of absence for Medical or dental Appointment                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement in advance</li> <li>• Application by parent child normally lives with</li> <li>• Minimum time necessary</li> <li>• Where pupil is absent at registration</li> </ul>  | Authorised absence                                    |
| <b>J1</b>   | Leave of absence for Interview  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agreement in Advance</li> <li>• Application by parent child normally lives with</li> <li>• In session absence recorded</li> </ul>  | Authorised absence                                    |
| <b>S</b>    | Leave of absence for Studying for public examination                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>   | Authorised absence                                    |
| <b>X</b>    | Non – Compulsory School age pupil not required to attend school               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For part time attendance</li> <li>• Absence for timetabled sessions to use appropriate code and not X</li> </ul>   | Not a possible attendance (neither present or absent) |
| <b>C2</b>   | Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to part time timetable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exceptional circumstances</li> <li>• if the school and a parent who the pupil normally lives with have agreed that, exceptionally, the pupil should temporarily be educated only part-time</li> <li>• Temporary</li> <li>• See Working Together to improve attendance</li> </ul> | Authorised Absence                                    |
| <b>C</b>    | Leave of absence exceptional circumstances                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exceptional circumstances</li> <li>• No blanket approach</li> <li>• School discretion</li> <li>• Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.</li> </ul>               | Authorised absence                                    |

**Pupil Absent other Authorised reasons**

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Meaning</b>   | <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>Statistical Value</b> |
|-------------|--|---|--------------------------|
| <b>T</b>    | Parent travelling for occupational purposes.                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.</li> <li>To help ensure continuity of education for pupils, when their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school.</li> </ul> | Authorised absence       |
| <b>R</b>    | Religious Observance   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves)</li> </ul>  | Authorised Absence       |
| <b>I</b>    | Illness (not medical appointment)                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related). Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.</li> </ul>   | Authorised Absence       |
| <b>E</b>    | Suspended or Permanently excluded with no alternative provision made | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education</li> </ul>   | Authorised Absence       |

## Pupil Absent – Unavoidable Cause

| Code | Meaning   | Criteria   | Statistical Value                |
|------|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Q    | Unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements          | There is a lack of access arrangements for a pupil whose home is in England if— (a) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil under section 508B(1) of the 1996 Act(13) for the purpose of facilitating the pupil’s attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty; (b) a local authority have a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the pupil because of section 508E(2)(c) of the 1996 Act(14) for the purpose of facilitating the pupil’s attendance at the school and have failed to discharge that duty; or (c) the school is an independent school that is not a qualifying school and— (i) the school is not within walking distance of the pupil’s home; (ii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for boarding accommodation for the pupil at or near the school; and (iii) no suitable arrangements have been made by a local authority for enabling the pupil to become a registered pupil at a qualifying school nearer to their home. | <b>Not a possible attendance</b> |
| Y1   | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not been available  | The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport to and from the school that is normally provided for the pupil by the school or local authority is not available   | <b>Not a possible attendance</b> |
| Y2   | Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption                    | The pupil is unable to attend the school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency  | <b>Not a possible attendance</b> |
| Y3   | Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed        | Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those that the school considers cannot practicably be accommodated in those part of the premises that remain in use.   | <b>Not a possible attendance</b> |
| Y4   | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed | Where a school was planned to be open for a session, but the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather), the attendance register is not taken as usual because there is no school session. Instead, every pupil listed in the admission register at the time must be marked with code Y4 to record the fact that the school is closed.  | <b>Not a possible attendance</b> |



|           |   |   |                                  |
|-----------|---|---|----------------------------------|
| <b>Y5</b> | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention        | <p>The pupil is unable to attend the school because they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• in police detention,</li> <li>• remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• detained under a sentence of detention.</li> </ul> <p>A pupil's absence should be recorded under code Y7 (Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause) if they are unable to attend because they are serving a community based (i.e. non-detained) part of a sentence of detention, referral order, or youth rehabilitation order that requires them to be absent during the school day</p> | <b>Not a possible attendance</b> |
| <b>Y6</b> | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law | <p>The pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care (or the equivalent in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland), or</li> <li>• prohibited by any legislation relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.</li> </ul>  | <b>Not a possible attendance</b> |
| <b>Y7</b> | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause           | <p>This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The fact that a parent has done all they can to secure the attendance of the pupil at school does not, in itself, mean the pupil has been prevented by unavoidable cause. Schools must also record the nature of the unavoidable cause (regulation 10(6))</p>  | <b>Not a possible attendance</b> |

### Absent for unauthorised reasons

| Code     | Meaning                                     | Criteria   | Statistical Value           |
|----------|---|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>G</b> | Holiday not granted by school               | <p>The school has not granted a leave of absence and the pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday.</p> <p>A school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively.</p> <p>If the parent did not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.</p>   | <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |
| <b>N</b> | Reason for absence not yet established      | Where absence is recorded as code N (reason not yet established) in the attendance register, the correct absence code should be entered as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 school days after the session (regulation 10(7) to (9)). Code N must not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to Code O               | <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |
| <b>O</b> | Absent in other or unknown circumstances    | Where no reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes statistically classified as authorised.   | <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |
| <b>U</b> | Arrived in school after registration closed | <p>Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed but before the end of session.</p> <p>Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes</p> | <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |

### Administrative Codes

| Code     | Meaning                                     | Statistical Value    |
|----------|---|----------------------|
| <b>Z</b> | Prospective pupil not on admission register | <b>NOT COLLECTED</b> |
| <b>#</b> | Planned whole school closure                | <b>NOT COLLECTED</b> |