

Oswaldtwistle School

Attendance policy



Approved by:	Paul Bridge	Date: 08/09/2022
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1. Aims

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

- › Promoting good attendance
- › 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.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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 Management Committee

The Management Committee is responsible for:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher 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
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Deputy Head Teacher

The Deputy Head Teacher is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Paul Bridge and can be contacted via phone: 01254 231553 or by email: paul.bridge@oswaldtwistle.org

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Jacqueline Scott and can be contacted via phone: 01254 231553 or by email: Jacqueline.scott@oswaldtwistle.org

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Registers are taken at the beginning of every day in Form between 8.45 and 9.00am and at the start of the second session at 12.50pm and 1.05pm. Registers are taken at the beginning of every lesson throughout the day. Attendance information is recorded on the school management information system.

3.6 School Office staff

School Office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents and pupils about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Transfer calls from parents and pupils to the Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day or timetabled session on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am on the day of the absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day and/or every timetabled session on time

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
- › 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.50pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

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.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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/carer 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.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- › The Attendance Officer records and analyses pupil punctuality. On entry to school all pupils who are late are challenged to explain the reason for being late. Pupils who are identified as being regularly late meet with pastoral staff to attempt to resolve the issues leading to the lateness. Sanctions may be imposed as necessary, such as after school detention, to make up lost time.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will follow the process as detailed below:

Day 1	First day response absence text sent. If no response and/or no reason given for absence phone call is made.	Dual Role – contact commissioning school to inform Child with Social Worker/child protection – informed from day 1
Day 2	If no contact established School will continue to phone.	
Day 3	If no contact established School will continue to phone. A home visit by the Attendance officer will be attempted on the fourth day for any child who is	

	considered vulnerable.	
Day 4	A home visit by the Attendance officer or other member of staff will be attempted on the fourth day.	Letter or card left at home if no reply requesting contact with school be made
Day 5 -10	If no contact made Local Authority attendance support team and/or other relevant agencies, to be contacted with a view to making contact or a home visit.	Referral made to the children missing from education team If the pupil is still absent without reason other agencies – the police and social care will be contacted and their input sought.

- 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

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels

- Parent/carers will receive a weekly update call from their child's Key Worker.
- Parents/carers will also receive a termly written report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

5.2 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 headteacher, 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

School has a wide range of strategies that are employed to encourage and promote attendance. These range from specific rewards such as:

- Weekly Rewards Assembly: Attendance prizes and certificates
- Positive Post Cards and Phone Calls home
- End of Term Attendance Reward Trips include (not limited to);
 - Go Karting
 - Laser Quest
 - Trafford Centre
 - Blackpool Pleasure Beach
 - Cinema
 - Ice Skating
 - Ten pin bowling

School also promotes attendance in a range of other ways, and in particular, focussed on meeting the needs of individual pupils. These include but are not limited to:

- Comprehensive Careers Service, including Independent Advice.
- Work experience programme
- 1 to 1 Reading Intervention programme
- 1 to 1 tuition sessions on the main site or at a satellite site
- 1 to 1 tuition at the student's home address
- 1 to 1 tuition may be with Teacher's from Oswaldtwistle School, the National Tutoring Programme or other Tutoring agencies
- 1 to 1 Mental Health and Wellbeing mentoring
- 1 to 1 Behaviour mentoring
- Hawes Farm alternative provision (Various outdoor based activities, forest schools, animal care etc)
- Preston Vocational Centre (Vocational training in Construction Industry trades)
- 4Tech Moto (Vocational training in Motor Vehicle Industry trades)
- Trident Military Training
- Outdoor Education (Walking, Sailing etc)

- External providers eg, Digital Advantage (10-week digital media project)
- Calico Development Programme (Work related workshops with 2 weeks work experience)

7. Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Officer will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends. This data analysis will be shared with leaders and including the special educational needs coordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead. It will be used to identify the pupils who need support, to inform and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families.

The Deputy Head with responsibility for attendance will:

- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings will be used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The Attendance Officer will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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 management Committee.

School collects data in the first instance during the admittance process. This includes data from previous schools, relevant outside agencies and family information. Data is stored on SIMS and also Behaviour Watch, which are both password protected systems. Data is also shared with FFT and Lancashire County Council through secure channels.

Data is used for the purpose of:

- Tracking the attendance of pupils
- Analysis of attendance trends
- Identifying where interventions are required to improve attendance

7.2 Analysing attendance

The Attendance Officer will:

- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This will include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.

- Provide data and reports to support the work of the Management Committee. This data will include analysis of sub-groups taking into the context of the school population.
- Benchmark their attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement. This may include: boys and girls, year groups, pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, pupils with a social worker or who are looked-after by the local authority, pupils eligible for free school meals, and any pupils from backgrounds (including ethnicities, religions or beliefs, or sexual orientations where applicable) in the school community that have, or have historically had, lower attendance than their peers

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to classroom teachers, support staff and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Use the wide range of strategies outlined in Section 6 to reduce persistent and severe absence

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 1 year by Paul Bridge (Deputy Head Teacher). At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Management 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

V	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of 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	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	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
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	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
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	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 admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2:

Oswaldtwistle School attendance action process flow

- Attendance 100% in a week – Acknowledge in Rewards assembly
- Attendance 100% in a half term – Rewards trip
- Improvement in attendance Rewarded

- Attendance drops below 96% - Key worker and form tutor monitor and discuss with pupil and parent/carer. Alert Attendance officer of downward trends for early intervention.

Attendance drops below 90% - Persistent Absence

- Inform Local Authority Attendance Support Team.
- Arrange a meeting with parent/carers to discuss barriers to attendance. Strategies will be explored to overcome these barriers. We will take the individual needs of pupils into account, including Special Educational Needs and disabilities, as well as mental health needs and medical issues. Where the student has an EHCP, SENDCO will be part of the attendance meeting. This will help to ensure that the individual needs of the pupil are being considered.
- If the needs of the family and child are wider than just school attendance, an Early Support Assessment will be opened, to explore what further support can be put into place for the child/family. This can include engaging the support of wider support networks.
- Where necessary, reasonable adjustments can be made to provision, to make attendance more achievable. This is considered on a needs basis.
- In certain cases, attendance may form part of a Keyworker Support Plan, Child in Need plan or Child Protection Plan from Social Care. The school will attend these meetings and work collaboratively with the wider professionals and family to support them.
- In some instances, the school may request medical evidence to support absence from school due to illness. In this situation, absence due to illness will be unauthorised without such evidence.
- Action plan drawn up by Attendance Officer and communicated to relevant parties. Attendance officer to monitor implementation and effectiveness of plan. Report in weekly attendance meeting with Deputy Head.

Attendance drops below 80%

- If no improvement Attendance Officer to facilitate attendance meeting to review and amend Action Plan as necessary.
- Formal Support Referral made to the Education Welfare Officer. Local Authority Attendance Meeting to be held. Formal support and targets set. Could include a formal Parenting Order or Education Supervision Order.

Attendance drops below 50% - Severe Absence

- Follow steps as above.

- Last resort is prosecution in magistrates court where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case.

- **Appendix 3:**

