



## Attendance Policy

Policy Lead:	<b>Deputy Headteacher (JN)</b>
Last Review Date:	July 2024
Next Review Date:	July 2025
Approval needed by:	<b>Governing Body</b>

It is widely accepted that attendance has a direct impact upon achievement, success and welfare. Strong evidence shows that where any individual pupils' attendance percentage is below 96% it will have a detrimental effect on their achievement, becoming increasingly damaging as their attendance percentage becomes lower. Non-attendance is one of the single biggest blocks to achievement and the school carrying out its function in safeguarding the welfare of children. Regardless of the reason for absence, not being present at school disadvantages children. Therefore, it is imperative to work with parents and carers to maximise every student's attendance. By focusing on good attendance, we can make a significant impact across the range of outcomes for pupils.

## 1. Aims

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

- promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- acting early to address patterns of absence

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

## 2. Legislation and guidance

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

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

For the purposes of Education Law, the definition 'parental responsibility' lies with whomever the child resides. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s. Schools are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll. In addition, lesson registers are taken each lesson.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 Local Governing Body

The Governing Board 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
- issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary after consultation and in conjunction with the Local Authority

### 3.3 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer (EWM):

- monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- reports concern about attendance to the headteacher
- arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### 3.4 Class teachers and Form Tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. They should:

- reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually
- emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate pupils to be in the classroom
- promote rewards and celebrate progress but continue to outline sanctions
- apply rewards and sanctions consistently
- follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence

- contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality
- review form or tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early and help set targets periodically review practice and consistency both across and between departments
- proactively promote attendance practice as part of staff induction
- consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils
- welcome pupils back following an absence and provide good catch up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

**This could include:**

- lesson resources
- buddy support
- one to one input
- meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems
- establish action plans to remove barriers, provide additional support and set targets. This could include:
- lunchtime arrangements
- support with uniform, transport, wake up routines or emotional wellbeing
- lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support
- make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups
- prepare supporting resources to ensure pupils can access learning when they return
- develop targeted intervention to address gaps and build pupils' confidence (including considering small group additional support)
- contribute to action plans which attendance staff draw together where appropriate provide tailored praise and encouragement when pupils attend and arrive on time

### **3.5 School administrative /office staff**

School administrative/office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

They will:

- ensure that absences are correctly coded, recorded and correct procedures are adhered to
- ensure daily attendance registers are accurate and complete, following up with staff members any incomplete registers
- enter marks from paper registers as and when required ensuring they are accurate
- maintain the first day call systems and ensure that it is working at all times
- ensure students who are on the vulnerable list or targeted list for attendance are personally contacted and matters escalated if they cannot be contacted

## Pastoral Staff

The Pastoral team across all Year Groups will:

- work with families and the community to identify which methods of communication work best,
- recognising potential barriers in hard to reach families and find methods that work and are understood consideration if further interventions are required in line with the statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures
- provide regular reports to leaders on the at-risk cohort
- provide regular reports/caseloads to local authority attendance team or independent attendance organisations to raise awareness of emerging at-risk pupils
- develop and implement persistent absence action plans with pupils and families which address barriers and help establish positive attendance routines
- identify tailored intervention which meets the needs of the pupil, for example:
  - mentoring careers advice and guidance
  - input college placement
  - out of hours learning alternative provision where appropriate
- lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and impact of support
- make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- hold regular meetings or reviews of caseload with the Local Authority attendance team, external partners and alternative providers to check on welfare and review progress
- liaise with school leaders (designated safeguarding, special educational needs coordinator and pastoral leads) on referrals to external agencies and multi-agency assessments
- coordinate and contribute to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions
- work in partnership with Local Authority attendance team and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures
- provide regular reports to leaders on the impact of action plans and interventions

## 3.6 Responsibilities

**Parent responsibilities** - To help fulfil their important role in their child's education, parents must:

Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.

Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.

Work with the school and Local Authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.

Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

Work with the school and Local Authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.

Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

**Student responsibilities** – students are actively encouraged to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, to arrive punctually at school and at the start of lessons. Students should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence. E.g. bullying, racism etc.

## 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 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 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 a.m. and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

### 4.2 Lateness and punctuality

All students are expected to be punctual to school. School gates are open from 8.15am - 8.30 am. Students should be in class ready for the register to be taken at 8.45am.

Students arriving after 8.45am will be marked as late using an L code. Students who arrive after 9.15am will be coded as a U code (Late after register closed) and the absence will be coded as unauthorised.

All students who arrive at school late will have an appropriate sanction which will be determined by the appropriate member of staff, Form Tutor, Pastoral Lead or member of SLT. Punctuality sanctions are regularly reviewed.

### 4.3 Following up 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/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. Vulnerable students will be prioritised when making calls home.
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer.

If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may take measures to establish contact such as carrying out a home visit or calling the police.

### 4.4 Reporting to parents

Regular communication between The Oaks Academy and parents around concerns over attendance is a priority. Absence alerts trigger a text home on each day of absence. A follow up phone call from the School Staff will be made where parents do not contact school. A home visit will then be triggered if contact still cannot be made. Parents receive an annual attendance report for their child and are contacted more regularly if there are attendance concerns. Attendance is discussed with parents at every Early Help, CIN and CP meeting and also as appropriate at meetings involving other external agencies.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

**Illness 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 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office by telephone or through the School Gateway app. 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 4 days or there *are* doubts about the authenticity of the illness school may 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 the parents/carers will be notified.

**Unauthorised Absence** – Fixed Penalty Notices Parents/carers should be aware that The Oaks Academy may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in any one term, with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. Parents will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and will have 15 days to ensure an improvement in attendance and / or punctuality. Failure to ensure improvement will lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court. **From August 2024, there is a new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence. The Local Authority are currently updating schools on this and information will be updated in this policy as soon as this information is clarified.**

**Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances** - Leave of Absence in Term Time Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a student can be away from school if the leave is granted. It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs of a

consecutive 5 or more unauthorised days, then school may apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court. **From August 2024, there is a new National Framework for Penalty Notices for school absence. The Local Authority are currently updating schools on this and information will be updated in this policy as soon as this information is clarified.**

## 5.1 Reducing persistent absence

Attendance is monitored closely on a daily and weekly basis to identify trends and issues for individual students and groups of students. Regular contact is made with parents/carers if attendance deteriorates. This could be in the form of phone calls, emails, texts, letters, meetings and home visits. An action plan will be created with parents and other involved agencies if appropriate, as well as the child. This will have key review dates and programmes of support will be an integral part of this plan. Relevant external agency support will be requested as necessary such as the School Nurse, Early Help, CAMHS and Medical Needs Teams. Students will be recognised and praised where improvement is made and also where attendance meets the required level. The high profile of attendance will be maintained at TOA via notice boards, the website, Twitter, Facebook, newsletters, assemblies and Form Tutor time.

### Strategies for pupils at risk of persistent absence

The Oaks Academy will establish robust escalation procedures which are initiated before absence becomes a problem, for example, by:

- sending letters to parents and carers
- having weekly reviews
- engaging with local authority attendance teams and/or independent attendance organisations
- using Fixed Penalty Notices and/or other legal sanctions
- engaging with children's social care staff, including Virtual School Heads and social workers where appropriate
- establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance
- monitor the implementation and quality of escalation

The Oaks Academy will also establish clear and effective service level agreements with external partners to support pupils with persistent absence, including:

- Local Authority education welfare and attendance services
- independent attendance organisations
- alternative providers
- youth services
- school nursing and mental health professionals
- children's social care staff where appropriate
- establish good relationships with a network of voluntary organisations and charities to support vulnerable pupils including those with persistent absence, for example:
  - mental health charities
  - mentoring organisations
  - young carers association
  - engage in or lead on attendance reviews and clinics in line with escalation procedures



## Attendance monitoring

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

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

The school 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. Robust school systems provide useful data at cohort, group and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups such as:
  - children who have a social worker including looked-after children
  - young carers
  - children who are eligible for free school meals
  - children who speak English as a second language
  - children who have special educational needs and disabilities

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

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

The 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 consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring over a termly period
- 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

### Leadership and management will:

- offer a clear vision for attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, pupils and families.
- make sure staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that pupils understand its importance.
- convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes. Empower staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement. Make sure it is resourced appropriately (including through effective use of pupil premium funding) to create, build and maintain systems and performance.
- have a designated attendance champion in the senior leadership team with clearly assigned responsibilities which are identified within the attendance policy, escalation of procedures and school improvement plan.
- make sure staff receive professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively.
- governors should have an accurate view of school attendance and engage in escalation procedures where appropriate.
- build respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Make sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- communicate openly and honestly with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
- model respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:
  - treat pupils with dignity, build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries > take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to
  - absence, handling confidential information sensitively
  - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with
  - staff and pupils particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
  - communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being

### Parents and carers should:

- treat staff with respect
- actively support the work of the school
- call on staff for help when they need it
- communicate as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support

### Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

Students are rewarded for good attendance and for improved attendance. This can take the form of positive letters home, awarding achievement points and entry to a prize draw.

### **What can Parents/Carers do to help?**

Let the school know straight away why your child is absent from school. Communication with school is extremely important in supporting your child in school. Try to make any dental/GP appointments outside of school time. Ensure that addresses and telephone numbers of parents and key contacts are up to date. Take an interest in your child's work.

If Parents/Carers are worried about their child's attendance at school what can they do? If you are concerned about your child's absence, please contact Mr J Newham Deputy Headteacher, Mrs P Prince School Attendance Officer or their Pastoral Manager on 01270 661223.

## **7. Monitoring Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 12 months by the member of SLT with overall responsibility for attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **8 . Links to Other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
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
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	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

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