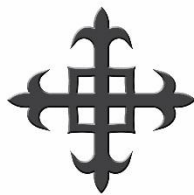


Attendance Policy



ST. OSWALD'S
C of E ACADEMY

Head of School: Mrs H Lambert

Executive Headteacher: Mrs S Patton

Policy Date: March 2026

1. AIMS

In order for our pupils to maximise all learning opportunities provided and to reach their full potential, consistently good attendance is vital. As a school, and as part of DSAT, we are committed to meeting our obligations with regard to school 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
- Identifying and acting promptly to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the right support in place to ensure they attend school.
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending school.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE document 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (May 2022) and refers to the DfE statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures (January 2015). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and responsibilities 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

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (February 2023)

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Executive Headteacher/Head of School

NB: The Executive Headteacher may delegate duties linked to attendance to the head of School, and quality assure this work regularly. Responsibilities include:

- Implementing the attendance policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and sharing this information with the local school board in the Headteacher's Termly Report.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed penalty notices where necessary
- Having an oversight of data analysis regarding attendance

3.2 Class teachers

- Complete registers accurately and promptly
- Have regular discussions with pupils about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality
- Liaise with other school staff and respond to attendance issues promptly.
- Support the Trust/whole school ethos of promoting good attendance

3.3 Attendance Leads

The school may appoint an attendance lead with delegated responsibilities, including:

- Development and review of the attendance policy
- Producing and distributing attendance information for parents/carers
- Setting and monitoring targets for improving attendance within the school, and evaluating targets with the senior leadership team
- Supporting all school staff in their work related to attendance
- Collating attendance data as required for senior leadership team, DfE, LA and LSB
- Identifying individual pupils with known punctuality/attendance issues, and ensuring these pupils are monitored closely
- Referring pupils to the Trust Education Welfare Officer when attendance gives severe cause for concern, and liaising with the EWO to develop strategies to support these pupils/families.
- Liaising with other partner agencies and services towards improving and developing strategies to raise levels of attendance.

3.4 The Local School Board

- Will receive information from the Headteacher and/or EWO on attendance in the Headteacher's termly report.
- Will support the school in setting attendance targets
- Will support the school in planning a response where attendance is a cause for concern
- Will support the school in its efforts to raise attendance
- May support the school by attending strategic meetings or attendance panels as appropriate.

3.5 Education Welfare Officer

The Trust has its own appointed Education Welfare Officer who will:

- Work with the Deputy CEO, Head of Business and Operations, Headteachers, School Business Managers, Learning Mentors and Attendance Leads to develop processes, communication streams and efficient ways of working to support attendance.
- Provide advice for schools and engage with pupils, parents and families to improve pupil attendance rates
- Arrange and carry out home visits or on-site visits, to explore and offer support to improve pupil attendance
- To be on the school site to facilitate 'late gates' as required
- Use, model and evaluate practice and quality assure the processes and systems relating to pupil attendance

- Work with other staff and agencies who support pupils, such as local authorities and multi agencies, including support for Early Help assessments and TAF meetings
- Develop processes and procedures to improve the attendance systems through data analysis, pastoral information and other evaluation, preparing reports, assessments and other statistics data as required
- Take part in internal meetings to share information and provide guidance on Trust policy where necessary
- Have an up-to-date knowledge of legal proceedings and support schools in relation to statutory processes
- Where required participate in Child Protection procedures as appropriate, including making an education contribution at case conferences and multi-agency meetings

4 STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

4.1 What the school expects of pupils:

- To attend school every day, unless in exceptional circumstances.
- To arrive on time, appropriately prepared for the day
- To report to their class teacher for registration, or to the school office if late

4.2 What the school expects of parents/carers

- To fulfil their statutory responsibility by ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time
- To ensure they contact the school as per reporting procedures if their child is unable to attend
- To ensure their child arrives on time, and is well prepared for the day (equipment, homework completed, PE kit etc)
- To contact the school (class teacher/headteacher/admin staff) in confidence whenever a problem arises that may keep their child from attending school
- To inform the admin staff of any forthcoming appointments and, where possible, make appointments outside of the school day. Evidence of an appointment **must** be shown to the school office staff – without evidence, the absence for a full session will be logged as unauthorised. Parents collecting children early will also be asked to show evidence of the appointment.
- Holidays should be taken in the school holiday period only, and leave in term time will only be granted in exceptional circumstances

.3 What parents can expect of the school

- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- First day contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing prior notification
- Prompt action when any problems are identified
- Close liaison with the Trust Education Welfare Officer, LA Attendance Officers and Early Help Team to assist and support parents and pupils

- Notification to parents/carers of their child's attendance record through annual reports sent home (drawn from Arbor)

5 ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

5.1 Registration procedures

The school bell rings at 8:55am for a prompt start at 9am. Registers are taken electronically at 9am. Children who are not in class at this stage will have to come into school via the main office.

Afternoon registers are taken at 1pm.

5.2 Responding to lateness (punctuality)

Pupils who are regularly late for school will miss out on valuable learning time. Late arrival in school can not only disrupt the individual child's learning, but also that of their peers. The school will take active steps to address persistent lateness.

- Pupils arriving late must report to the school office, where a record of their late arrival will be made with the time of arrival and reason for the lateness.
- Pupils arriving up to 30 minutes after registration will be deemed to be late, and given a late mark (L)
- Pupils arriving after the close of registers (9:30am) will be marked as 'U'.
- Staff will monitor lateness, and note persistent offenders. Arbor registers will be annotated with the number of minutes late.
- Where a pattern of repeated lateness is seen, the school will send a letter to remind parents of the importance of good timekeeping.
- Where the problem persists, the school will ask the DSAT EWO to speak to parents by telephone to discuss their child's lateness and try to identify causes/seek remedies to the problem.
- If there is no subsequent improvement, parents will be invited to a meeting with the headteacher and EWO.

5.3 The school's response to unexplained absence

Although parents are expected to contact the school if their child is to be absent due to illness or other unexpected reasons, there will be instances where this does not happen. In such cases, the school will follow their 'first day call' procedure as outlined below:

- If no message has been received, office staff will note the absence as 'N' at the close of registers. This can be updated depending upon outcome of first day protocols.
- Some parents will message the class teacher via Dojo or send a message verbally – this should be checked in the first instance, though third-party information must be checked with the parent as per the actions below. Parents must be advised that the correct procedure is to ring the school office to report absence.
- The school office may send a text message as soon as registers are closed to the primary contact to check on the absence.
- If no contact has been received by 9:30am, the office staff will start to ring the contacts on the pupil's file.

- Should there be no response from any of the contacts on file, office staff should consult the SLT/safeguarding leads to ascertain whether a home visit should be made. This can be by school staff or the DSAT EWO, depending on staff availability.
- The school may choose to contact their Local Authority Safeguarding Hub if in person contact cannot be made with the family.

5.4 The school's response to attendance issues/following attendance pathways

- The school will identify and monitor pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern. The Trust will set a target for attendance, to be reviewed each academic year.
- The target for the academic year 2025-26 is 96%.
- Pupils falling below this will be deemed to be of concern. School can call upon the DSAT EWO to speak to parents informally at this stage.
- Children will be deemed as Persistent Absentees (PA) when attendance falls below 90% (as defined by the DfE.) Absence at this level is likely to cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and the school will need parent/carers fullest support and co-operation to address this
- The school will monitor all absences carefully. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold, or is at risk of reaching this, is given priority and parents will be contacted immediately via letter to inform them of the school's concerns.
- If the child's absence does not show improvement over a given time, the parent/carer will be contacted by the Trust EWO for informal discussion.
- Subsequently, all PA pupils and their parents/carers will be invited to attend regular attendance meetings with the school/DSAT EWO, and will develop an action plan which may include allocation of additional support, such as EWO intervention or Early Help referral
- Support strategies will be carefully monitored. If the level of absence continues despite this support, the school may then follow their Local Authority attendance pathway, and access support from the LA EWO for their locality area.
- Failure to comply with the above interventions could eventually lead to the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices, or prosecution in court.

5.5 Leave of absence (including holidays in term time)

The Trust will not authorise holidays in term time, and will impose a Fixed Penalty Notice of £160 per parent/per child for any leave of absence of 5 days or more. This FPN will reduce to £80 per parent/per child if paid within 21 days.

If parents do wish to take their child out of school during term time, applications for leave of absence should be made to the school at least 20 days prior to the date of absence. Leave of absence request forms must be collected in person from the school office.

Where a leave of absence request is deemed to be due to exceptional circumstances, the headteacher will consult with the Trust EWO to ascertain whether the FPN can be waived. However, the absence will still be classed as unauthorised.

6 SAFEGUARDING

Children may be at risk if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility. Within the context of the school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for our pupils includes;

Failing to attend school on a regular basis is considered to be a safeguarding matter.

As part of first day call procedures outlined, schools may well make home visits to ascertain the well-being of pupils. In any instance, where a pupil has not attended and the school has not been contacted with what it deems an acceptable reason, then a home visit will be arranged. The school will contact their safeguarding leads for additional support where necessary.

6.1 CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

Attendance leads will liaise with their Children Missing from Education Team. Children/students who cannot be located will be considered missing. The CME team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with specific Local Authority procedures.

6.2 ATTENDANCE CODES

The following codes should be used when entering details on Arbor.

- / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm Present in school during registration.
- Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed
- Code U: Late arrival after the register has closed
- Code B: off-site educational activity
- Code D: dual registered - at another educational establishment
- Code J: at an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
- Code P: participating in a supervised sporting activity
- Code V: educational visit or trip
- Code W: work experience

Authorised absence from school

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence

- Code C: leave of absence authorised by the school
- Code E: excluded but no alternative provision made
- Code H: holiday authorised by the school
- Code I: illness (not medical or dental appointments)
- Code M: medical or dental appointments
- Code R: religious observance
- Code S: study leave
- Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Unauthorised absence from school

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

- Code G: holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher
- Code N: reason for absence not yet provided
- Code O: absent from school without authorisation
- Code U: arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.

- Code X: not required to be in school
- Code Y: unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- Code Z: pupil not on admission register
- Code #: planned whole or partial school closure

SIMPLE ATTENDANCE FLOW CHART

