



OUGHTON PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Attendance in School Guidance and Policy

Policy Approval Date: September 2023

Approved by the Full Governing Body please see minutes dated Sept 2023

Review Date: September 2024

This Policy uses the Children's Services Integrated Services for Learning model policy for school Attendance Nov 2022 and the guidance document. This Policy also follows the guidance: Improving School Attendance: Support for Schools and Local Authorities August 2022. This policy also follows Government guidance regarding attendance in schools.

This Policy works alongside the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions and Keeping Children Safe in Education and our Child Protection Policy.

Introduction

Oughton Primary and Nursery School and Hertfordshire County Council is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for all individual children. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

We believe that children cannot learn if they are absent from school. Therefore, we aim to ensure that all our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and to raise standards by promoting regular attendance and punctuality of all pupils.

We believe the foundation of securing good attendance is that our school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where our pupils will want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Statement of Intent and Aim

Hertfordshire County Council expects Children's Services, Integrated Services for Learning and all schools to work closely together in partnership with Parents in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

We aim:

- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that improving attendance is everyone's business and embed a 'support first' approach.
- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance and is an integral part of the school's ethos.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school – staff, children and families.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- To work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Attendance Target

- To keep whole school attendance above 96%.

This school sets targets in accordance with Statutory Instrument. The annual target is the total absences expected in the school year, expressed as a percentage of the total possible attendance by pupils at the school. The school aims to be in line with National Attendance figures.

At Oughton School we want the whole school community – Governors, staff, Parents and pupils to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality. We aim to encourage and assist **all** pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

Good attendance helps the children in this school community to maximise their learning potential. This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Registers

The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Schools are required to call attendance registers. Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Registers must be taken at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. They should ensure that pupils can be accounted for in an emergency and that a pupil removed from the school at lunchtime will not go unnoticed.

Registers must record whether each pupil is present; attending an approved educational activity; absent; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent the register must also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.

When the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent correction to the register made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

Expectations / Responsibilities of All

Responsibilities – Parents and Carers

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance.
- instilling in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.
- impressing upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- informing the school on the first day of absence, by 9.15am at the latest.
- providing the school with an explanation for the absence.
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details.
- taking an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parent's evenings and other relevant meetings.
- working in partnership with the school to resolve issues and help the school to understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- proactively engage with the support offered by school to prevent the need for more formal support.
- If formal support is needed, proactively engage with this support to prevent the need for any legal intervention.
- booking any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- only requesting leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- treating staff with respect
- actively supporting the work of the school
- calling staff for help when they need it
- communicating as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support

Parents should:-

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the Attendance Policy
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with their children's school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance

- notify the school if they are absent. This should be done on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing using our online communication system or when the children return to school
- maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary
- ensure that school are informed of any changes of contact details
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- not book holidays during term time
- notify the school as early as possible the circumstances which may affect absence or require support

Expectations of Pupils:

We expect all pupils to take attendance and punctuality seriously and know the importance of good attendance and the impact of this on their education.

Responsibilities - Schools

Governing Body:

- Ensure an effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities.
- Offer a clear vision for high attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, pupils and families.
- Have a clear, written school attendance policy based on the expectations set out in this model policy.
- Regularly review and understand attendance data, discussing and challenging trends and helping school leaders to focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it the most within school.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- 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 training/professional development and support to deploy attendance systems effectively.

Oughton Primary and Nursery School:

- works actively to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and for groups of pupils including vulnerable groups
- has clear procedures in place to address persistent absence
- analyses attendance of all children and works to address the attendance of vulnerable groups
- supports parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- is sensitive to the needs of individual Parents and this is reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed. We understand that some Parents have difficulty understanding written communications and recognise the reluctance of some Parents to come into school.
- works hard to build strong relationships with families in order to promote good attendance.
- works with Parents to develop support approaches for attendance for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Oughton Primary and Nursery School follows the guidance from the Local Authority.

Leadership and Management at Oughton Primary and Nursery School:

- offers a clear vision for attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by all staff, pupils and families.
- makes sure all staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
- expects good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that all pupils understand its importance.
- conveys clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes. Empower all staff to take responsibility for attendance.
- recognises attendance as an important area of school improvement.
- has designated attendance staff (SLT, Office and Pastoral team) who work together to improve attendance.
- monitors the implementation of policy and practice and report non-attendance

- monitors whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, historical trends, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
- establishes, implements and monitors robust arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME), following HCC and Government guidance regarding Children Missing Education.
- ensures that attendance registers are kept accurate as they are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of school attendance and are involved in strategic decisions and analysis to improve this area

Headteacher responsibilities:

- Having a clear, written school attendance policy based on the expectations set out in this model policy and ensuring the implementation of this policy – ensuring compliance with DfE Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities – Working together to improve School Attendance – September 2022 - [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for safeguarding and how this links with poor school attendance – ensuring compliance with Keeping children Safe in Education 2022, Statutory guidance for schools and colleges – September 2022 - [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- Developing good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND). Ensuring compliance with Statutory Guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England December 2015 - Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions - [Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)
- Ensuring every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities for attendance.
- Ensuring accurate completion of admission and attendance registers.
- Ensuring staff are actively working to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole.
- Having clear processes in place to address persistent and severe absence - pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and this cohort must be made the top priority for action and support. Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues ensuring joint working between the school, children’s social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Often severely absent pupils have additional needs and therefore it is vital that schools ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the pupil’s absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.

- Ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- Monitoring and analysing data and trends.
- Reporting to the Governing Body and Trusts the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building and modelling respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Open and honest communication 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.
- Liaising 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.
- Sharing information on and working collaboratively with other schools in the area, LA's and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming severe or persistent.
- Ensuring the school attendance policy is applied fairly and consistently and recognises the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Schools should consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Ensuring all staff members:
 - 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
 - deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events
 - use physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure
 - regularly communicate expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents

- establish and monitor implementation of rewards for attendance and punctuality and sanctions for absence and lateness.
- Monitoring implementation of policy and practice, for example through form time, drop in, shadow late gate, planner checks
- Engaging community businesses, partners and residents to promote attendance and report non-attendance.
- Monitoring of whole school data regularly to identify reasons for absence, patterns, attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions
- Establishing and ensuring implementation and robust monitoring of arrangements to identify, report and support children missing education (CME) or at risk of becoming CME

Ensuring compliance with guidance regarding Children Missing Education - see Herts Grid

<https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/children-missing-from-education>

Additional elements: The Headteacher is responsible for :

- agreeing whether an absence should be authorised. The power to authorise an absence rests with the Headteacher or delegated person within the school, and not with Parents or the local authority – see section for circumstances under which an absence may be authorised;
- having clear policies in place to address persistent absence.
- ensuring that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness.
- monitoring trends.
- implementing a system for all parents to report a child's absence.
- reporting to the Governing Body the attendance figures and progress to achieving the set targets.
- reminding all Parents of their commitment to this policy.
- building respectful relationships with all 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.
- communicating openly and honestly with all 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.
- liaising 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.
- modelling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for all staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture.

- developing support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND)
- Ensuring that parents fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education

Role of Attendance Champion – member of SLT alongside other key staff:

- Implementing the policy with the Headteacher.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Championing and improving attendance.
- Ensuring practice is in place to address persistent and severe absence is robust.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Oversight of data analysis -
 - Monitoring and analysing attendance data regularly to allow early intervention to address issues. This includes raising concerns with other agencies like children’s social care and early help services which are working with families.
 - Robust school systems which 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
 - Keeping the Head and all school staff informed of attendance figures and trends by providing regular reports to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures
 - compiling attendance data for the Head, the Governing Body and the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO).
 - Ensuring a positive working relationship with the LAAO is fostered, including attending Attendance Targeted Support Meetings.
 - Communicating messages to pupils and parents
 - School attendance, safeguarding and pastoral support policies which should clearly outline:
 - the key principles
 - rules pupils need to follow
 - routines
 - consequence systems
 - If required, holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.

- Undertaking home visits in line with school's safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Identifying pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Making sure escalation procedures to address absence are initiated proactively, understood by pupils and families, implemented consistently and their impact reviewed regularly.
- The escalation of procedures to address absence needs to be:
 - understood by pupils, parents and carers
 - implemented consistently
 - reviewed regularly
- ensuring that the Local Authority is notified of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly via a **10 Day Absence Form**.

See guidance on HCC Grid for form –

<https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/attendance-guidance-and-statutory-responsibilities>

Role of Teaching staff:

- Ensuring the effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by setting an example of punctuality and good attendance.
- Implementing the policy and ensuring it is applied fairly and consistently.
- Ensuring that the registers are taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session and are accurate and up to-date;
- Reviewing class and individual attendance patterns;
- Informing the school attendance champion/line manager of any concerns;
- Emphasising with pupils the importance of punctuality and good attendance.
- Reminding parents of their commitment to this policy.
- Building respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Communicating 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.
- Holding regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Liaising 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.

- Modeling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture.
- 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

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
- 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 all families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being
- deliver clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through prospectus and admission/transition events
- reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure
- regularly communicating expectations for attendance and punctuality and school performance through regular channels of communication with staff, pupils and parents
- establishing and monitoring implementation of rewards for attendance and punctuality and sanctions for absence and lateness
- informing the school office of any concerns

Pupils at risk of severe or persistent absence – good practice recommendations (this list is not exhaustive)

- 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 support
 - 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

As a school, we monitor attendance and look to improve a child's attendance through informing Parents of their child's attendance if it drops below or close to 90%. We write letters and may hold meetings and work to support families to identify potential barriers.

We provide information to the Local Authority Attendance team to raise awareness of emerging at-risk pupils

Office Staff who focus on Attendance, Pastoral Staff expectations:

- To ensure the recording of attendance and absence data is accurate.
- To ensure robust day-to-day processes are in place.
- To track and follow up absence and poor punctuality (implement punctuality routines such as late gate or sign in procedures).
- Provide appropriate support and challenge to establish good registration practice.
- Carry out robust first day calling procedures including priority routines for vulnerable children including children with a social worker. If absence continues without explanation, further contact should be made to ensure safeguarding.

- Identify any absences that are not explained for each session and contact parents to understand why and when the pupil will return.
- Where absences are recorded as unexplained in the attendance register the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no later than 5 working days after the session.
- Where reasonably possible, ensure school holds more than one emergency contact number for each pupil.
- Keep parents informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance and absence record (this should be communicated to parents in an easy-to-understand format and percentage headlines should be avoided. For example, concentrate on the amount of time missed and the impact on the pupil's learning).
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or Local Authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals.
- Undertake home visits in line with your safeguarding responsibilities to engage families and ensure children are safe.
- Identify and, where possible, mitigate potential barriers to good attendance in liaison with families and relevant support agencies.
- Implement children missing education (CME) procedures when appropriate -
- See guidance on HCC Grid regarding Children Missing Education, <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/children-missing-from-education>
- Where pupils have additional vulnerabilities, which may require multi-agency meetings try to arrange those meetings outside of lesson time, where possible.
- Engage with feeder schools or organisations to access absence information in order to identify target cohorts prior to transfer, including mid-year transfers and managed moves.

Pupils at risk of persistent absence

Pupils at risk of Persistent Absence

School is expected to:

- proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support parents to access any required services where out of school barriers are identified.

- If the issue persists, take an active part in a multi-agency effort with the Local Authority and other partners.
 - Act as the Lead Practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the Lead Practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the Local Authority and partners.
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate weekly reviews with leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads) for monitoring and evaluation purposes
 - Initiate and oversee the administration of absence procedures.

This should include:

- letters home and attendance meetings
- engagement with local authorities and other external agencies and partners
- 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 as to whether 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

Pupils who are persistently absent (below 90%).

Persistent absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 90%. Absenteeism at this level will considerably damage a pupil's educational prospects and the school will work alongside parents/carers to tackle this issue.

School is expected to:

- Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent.
- Ensure additional targeted support is in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
- If there is lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents, being clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working or being engaged with, work with the Local Authority on legal intervention.
- If there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children's social care.
- Work with other local schools, such as schools previously attended or schools of siblings.

- 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 / 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 Statutory Attendance & Participation Team (SAPT), 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 SAPT 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
- provide praise and encouragement when pupils attend and arrive on time
 - send letters informing Parents of their child's attendance and impact of this / concerns
 - providing intervention to address gaps and build pupils' confidence
 - meet families to look at addressing barriers and help establish positive attendance routines
 - identify tailored intervention which meets the needs of the pupil, in response to data and information
 - hold weekly or fortnightly check-ins to review progress and impact of support with the child
 - make regular contact with families to discuss progress
 - undertake home visits to engage families and ensure children are safe
 - consider using fixed penalty notices
 - referring as a case to the Local Authority
 - hold regular meetings or reviews of caseload with the Local Authority Attendance Team, external partners (Health care / Social Care) and alternative providers to check on welfare and review progress
 - work in partnership with local authority attendance team and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures
 - devising an Action Plan in partnership with the family and other agencies involved and monitor / evaluate the impact of this
 - engaging with Children's Services, where appropriate, following Child Protection guidance
 - implement Children Missing Education (CME) procedures where appropriate
 - engage with feeder schools during transition periods

Pupils who are Severely Absent:

Severe absence occurs when a child's attendance is at or falls below 50%.

School is expected to:

- Continue support as for pupils who are persistently absent.
- Agree a joint approach for all pupils who are severely absent with the Local Authority.

Pupils who are severely absent may be at risk of CCE/CSE/grooming etc. and teachers must ensure this cohort is made the top priority for action and support.

We are especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.

Often severely absent pupils have additional needs and therefore it is vital that school ensure all appropriate services are informed and aware of the pupil's absence so suitable support can be considered, and education provided/accessed.

Working with the Local Authority

The school works in partnership with external agencies and teams to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school. The Headteacher meets the external agencies on an agreed schedule regularly. The school works with individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance. When attendance does not improve sufficiently, and after discussion with advisors, the school will make a formal application to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice or at times refer to Children's Services or the LA Attendance Team.

We will notify the Local Authority of any pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend school regularly, have irregular attendance, or have 10 or more consecutive school days absence without the school's permission. Schools are also under a safeguarding duty, under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to investigate any unexplained absences.

ISL Attendance Team

The ISL Attendance Teams fulfil the statutory duty of the County Council in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities.

Each school in Hertfordshire has a link Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAO) who can work with the school.

The Attendance Teams can offers services to the school. Oughton works closely with the Attendance team and will seek their advice and support when deemed necessary. All schools have a named link LAAO who can liaise with the school and undertake whole school work for their allocated schools.

Our school works in partnership with the Statutory Attendance & Participation Team to devise a strategic approach to attendance. The Headteacher or Attendance Champion (SLT) will meet with the link LAAO when required to discuss and improve attendance for all persistently absent or severely absent pupils. Action Plans will be developed for all persistently and severely absent pupils. The school may request support from the LAAO for advice and guidance with the implementation of these action plans. If Parents do not proactively engage with support offered through the action plan, then formal intervention may be requested from the LAAO. If parents do not engage with formal support, the school may request statutory intervention from the Local Authority.

Statutory intervention can include:

- Parenting Contract
- Fixed Penalty Notice application from school
- Parenting Order
- Education Supervision Order
- Prosecution

Attendance Surgeries

LAAOs can support schools by attending attendance surgeries, to meet with a number of pupils and parents where attendance or persistent absence has been identified as a concern and early intervention deemed an appropriate action to undertake.

Casework

Once a case has been accepted, the LAAO will undertake direct work with pupils and their parents. This may include:

- arranging meetings between the school, parents and pupils
- making home visits to assess the situation and determine what action needs to be taken
- offering specific support to parents and individual pupils, either at school or elsewhere
- facilitating meetings
- enabling the pupil and parents to access appropriate support from other services and agencies

Local Authority Attendance Officers will usually work with children whose absences have not been authorised. However, LAOs may work with children whose absences have been authorised, such as persistent absentee (PA) pupils.

Encouraging Good Attendance:

The school rewards good attendance. Individual pupils receive certificates & rewards for excellent or much improved attendance as appropriate. Classes are also rewarded for good attendance. Pupils, Parents and staff are informed about the rewards for good attendance, via the school Attendance newsletter, general newsletters, assemblies and Parent meetings. Governors are informed about attendance each term.

The school encourages good attendance by:

- Using clear and consistently applied systems and processes to improve, reward and incentivise attendance and address absences. Makes sure these systems are inclusive and appropriate for all pupils.
- awarding good attendance certificates to pupils when they have achieved 100% attendance – each half term and end of year.
- Offering other school incentives to celebrate good attendance including prizes each term
- Keeping parents informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance and absence record.

Punctuality

- The School doors open at 8:45am
- The register will be open at 8:55am and is open until 9:25am.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed at 9:20am and parent provides a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session.
- Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (Code U).

School may arrange a meeting with parents to discuss concerns so that the problem can be addressed.

Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a Parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence.

If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered – or when no explanation is forthcoming at all – the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

- Leave of absence can be applied for in advance. It is the school's decision as to whether this is granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application (parents cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence).

Leave of absence to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 © for which a child performance licence has been issued. HCC will not issue a child performance licence where absence is required without the written permission of the Headteacher.

If a Parent, such as those whose first language is not English or who do not read or write may experience difficulty in providing notes, we will make alternative arrangements.

At Oughton, we keep notes regarding absences and enter these on Arbor and at times, on CPOMS if a lot of support / intervention and work with external agencies.

Absence may be authorised if:

- the pupil is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause. Medical evidence may be required for those pupils with persistent absences and common colds or illness not deemed necessary to be absent from school will not be authorised
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's Parent belongs – up to 2 days
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision
- there is a close family bereavement
- leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application. (Parents should be reminded that they cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence)
- leave of absence may be granted to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (c) for which a child performance licence has been issued

Before granting a licence the local authority must be satisfied that the child's education will not suffer. A school letter is requested as part of the licence application as confirmation of this. If a school believes a child's education will suffer as a result of taking part in a performance they should provide reasons to the local authority in writing. The information must be specific to the child (saying for example that it is against school policy is not sufficient). If the school does not provide such information the local authority will issue the licence.

Absences will not be authorised:

- if no explanation is forthcoming from the Parents or if the school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- for a variety of reasons which may include: shopping, birthdays, haircuts, tiredness, refusing to come to school
- for absences for pupils whose attendance is under 90% will not be authorised unless medical evidence is given. The Headteacher will make the decision regarding authorisation. If no medical evidence is received this absence will be deemed unauthorised and may result in a fixed penalty notice being issued over time.
- Pupils must attend school on the day of any medical appointments unless the appointment is out of Hertfordshire. For example, if a pupil has a medical appointment in the afternoon, they must attend school in the morning, or if medical appointment is in the morning, they must return to school for the afternoon session. Appointment cards may be requested prior to the appointment in order for the absence to be authorised.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Our school follows Hertfordshire County Council's Penalty Notice for Truancy Code of Conduct and procedures.

- We expect parents/carers to work with us to address attendance problems.
- If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term (including unauthorised holidays), the Headteacher may ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.
- The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days.
- There is no right of appeal by parents against a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance.

We follow guidance on HCC Grid when considering a Fixed Penalty Notice - <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absenceholiday>

We issue Penalty Fines for holidays. Holidays will not be authorised, see section on holidays.

Legal action may be taken if deemed necessary by the Headteacher and agencies.

If attendance does not improve significantly, the school will refer to the Local Authority Attendance Team to open as a case. Expectation, responsibilities and Court action will be explained by the LA when a child is open as a case.

If a pupil, who is registered at a school, fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Local Authority Attendance Officer and the school fail to secure that pupil's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action. Legal proceedings can be considered at any stage if no progress has been made and no exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist.

Term Time Holidays

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations came into effect on 1st September 2013 removed all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time.

The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is for the Headteacher to determine what constitutes exceptional circumstances and for them to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Any application for leave of absence should not be granted unless it is made in advance by a Parent the pupil normally lives with and the school is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on individual facts and circumstance of the case which justifies the leave.

Procedures regarding holidays:

- Absence for time out of school for reasons other than illness are only authorised in wholly exceptional or compassionate circumstances. Should requests be made which do not fulfil these criteria any resulting absences will be unauthorised and appear as such on the pupil's record.

- The school strongly discourages Parents from taking family holidays during term time.
- In exceptional circumstances parents must use the Holiday Request Form, and submit this to the Headteacher, at least a 1/2 term in advance of the holiday.
- The Headteacher will consider each request individually and circumstances must be exceptional. When considering any request the attendance data from the current and previous year will be reviewed.
- Depending on the nature of the request authorisation may be required by the governing body.
- The Governing Body will consider **all** extended leave requests.
- Nursery children and children under the age of 5 are exempt from the above procedures.

Part-time Timetables

- As part of the framework for the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after, and care leavers (Ofsted June 2015) local authorities are required to provide detailed data on school age children in their area who are not in receipt of full-time education and schools are similarly expected to maintain data on students of compulsory school age who are on their roll but attending on a part-time timetable.
- The Local authority has published guidance for all maintained school, academies, free schools, studio schools, UTCs, ESCs and PSBs on the use of part-time timetables for pupils of compulsory school age (the term after their fifth birthday to the last Friday in June following their 16th birthday)
- All schools are required to return information on children who are on part-time tables within five days of the pupil starting or ending a part-time timetable.

Follow guidance from HCC Grid when considering a part-time timetable - <https://thegrid.org.uk/admissions-attendance-travel-to-school/attendance/attendance-part-time-students>

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil's needs. A part time timetable must be time limited and must not be treated as a long term solution and can only be made with parental agreement. The school should mark the sessions were the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence.

Oughton Primary and Nursery School encourage and provide a full-time education. Part-time is only considered for a short and limited period of time, if deemed absolutely necessary, backed by **NHS advisors**. Our Attendance Improvement Officer will be involved at this point. Oughton Primary and Nursery School will devise a short term plan to move the child into full-time education

rapidly, with the aid of any NHS advisors and AIO. LA Guidance will be sought and followed.

Flexi-schooling

Head teachers can agree to flexi-schooling arrangements where the Parents take on the responsibility for their child's education for part of the school week. Head teachers are advised to consider any such requests from parents very carefully before agreeing to them and are advised to draw up a written agreement with the parent. Where agreement has been reached, pupils should be marked authorised absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education. (Code C).

Oughton Primary and Nursery School discourages flexi-schooling as learning can be fragmented and impacts on the education of the children as well as the social interactions with peers.

Monitoring

We believe this policy will be effective only if it is consistently monitored across the whole school.

Publication of Information

Parents are made aware of the school ethos on attendance and punctuality through new parents' meetings, an annual newsletter with a focus on attendance and through regular items in the general school newsletter; attendance is a regular item on the school newsletter.

Attendance is reported to governors, via the Headteacher's report.

Pupils are informed about the importance of school attendance via PSHE lessons and school assemblies. Staff are informed of any changes to the School Attendance Policy through staff meetings.

The school shares information on individual pupils' attendance as necessary with Parents, pupils and staff. If a Parent's first language is not English, any communication may be requested to be translated. This will be done if possible.

Vulnerable Children

Children with health needs who cannot attend school at times

Oughton works closely with health professionals in order to support all children. Advice would be taken in order to support any child who was unable to attend school. Provision would be put in place to ensure that a child was able to access their right to an education – to suit the needs of the child. Provision would be individual, matched to the child.

We would work closely with all professionals, including the Attendance Improvement Officer, to ensure that we are meeting all legal requirements. Please see our Supporting Children with Medical Conditions Policy.

Children with Special Educational Needs

It is a legal requirement that all children have access to an education. All children are expected to attend school and arrive on time for school. Children with SEND will be supported if there is a concern around attendance. If needed, medical advice will be sought to support the family and/or the LA Attendance Team. See our SEND Policy.

Children known to Social Care

We will inform external agencies of any concerns regarding attendance of children known to Social Care. This may be agencies working with the family or agencies monitoring such as the Virtual School.

Other groups

We monitor attendance and focus on vulnerable groups of children. If there is a concern regarding a group of children, this will form part of our development work through our School Improvement Plan.

Attendance Procedures

Door Open

- School doors open at 8:45 am and learning activities start at this point. Children are welcomed into the classrooms.

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Registration

- Registers are taken at 8:55 and 1:00/1:05 pm. Registers are marked consistently by Teachers and every child must have a mark in the register for every session (morning / afternoon)

- Any pupil arriving between 9:00am – 9:25am will be considered late. After 9:25am a pupil will be marked unauthorised absence for the whole session. This unauthorised absence will count towards a fixed penalty notice.
- Registers are marked in accordance with Government guidance.

Lateness

- Registers are taken by 8:55am. Gates are locked at 9:00am. Any pupil arriving after this time should report to the School Office.
- A member of the school office staff will record the late arrival to school
- A member of the school office staff will ensure that the later arrival is transferred into the register
- In the event of an emergency, the late arrivals sheet is taken to the Assembly Point.

When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she is marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.

When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and Parent provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she is marked as 'authorised absent' for that session. When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and Parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. A child refusing to come to school / a tired child will not be authorised. We expect all children to attend school, including those children with SEND. If medical advice is given, this will be taken into account.

The Headteacher makes the final decision regarding if a session will be authorised or not.

When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, his/her presence on site should be noted in a book in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation.

Oughton takes steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness is monitored and followed up.

- Initially the parent would be contacted by the school administrative assistant to follow up late arrivals to school
- Parents whose children are regularly late for school will be contacted by a member of school staff who will work with the Parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality
- Lates after 9:25am be considered an unauthorised late and will count towards unauthorised absence total, which could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- If late arrivals are due to circumstances outside the pupil's control eg delayed buses, road closure, then lates may marked as authorised
- Proof of medical appointments must be given if this is a reason of a late.

- External agencies, such as the Attendance team will be informed if lateness continues.
- Incentives will be used as appropriate to support improvement for individual students

Absences

- Notification must be provided for all absences from school
- Notification will be accepted from Parent/Carer or adult family member
- Notification is expected online via our communication system or telephone or in person by 9.15am. After this time, we will contact Parents as part of our First Day Response procedures.
- Letters must be given to the class teacher when the child returns to school or emails to the attendance email address noting the illness if a Parent has not recorded reasons via our online communication system.

Leaving and Returning to School during the School Day

- When pupils leave or return to school during the school day, office staff must be notified
 - Parents are requested to contact the school in writing to inform them of any appointments
 - Parents/Carers must sign their child out on leaving the school building
- Accurate records are vital as, in the event of an emergency, the Signing in and out book is taken to the Assembly Point.

Following up Absence

The school follows up all absences from school – phone calls and at times home visits if school has not been notified by the Parent. Prolonged or regular absence from school is managed in various ways which might include; letters to parents, 'phone calls to parents, meetings in school, involvement of the AIO or other professionals.

If other professionals (Social Care) are known to be involved, they will be informed of any concerns about school attendance.

If a pupil is returning to school after a prolonged period, then appropriate support will be given to help them settle in, The Headteacher, in conjunction with external agencies, is responsible for making a referral to The Education Support Team for Medical Absence (ESTMA) when a pupil is likely to be absent for a long time due to illness.

The School Office is responsible for completing the Removal from Roll forms to make Hertfordshire County Council aware that a pupil has been taken off roll.

See section within this policy regarding Removal from roll. The school follows the Hertfordshire County Council guidance on Exclusions.

First Day Response

- The school uses First Day Response
- This is for all pupils absent from school where no reason has been received for their absence
- First day response is carried out by the School Administrative Assistant
- The School Administrative Assistant receives the information to carry out the calls when the registers are returned to the school office
- All first day response calls are aimed to be made by 9:30 am. A record will be made if there is no response.
- The School Administrative Assistant will update the registers with any information received from first day response calls
- Absences are recorded each day and checked daily by the Headteacher or another member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- On occasions, a home visit by staff maybe carried out to check on the child. Safeguarding is a high priority at Oughton Primary and Nursery School. If there are concerns, the school will follow our Child Protection Policy which may result in requesting a police welfare check, a referral to Children's Services or to consult and follow the advice of our Attendance Improvement Officer.

Whole School Attendance Overview

The Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) works with us to discuss any issues such as targeted whole school work for the academic year, focussing on supporting to reduce PA and the absence of vulnerable groups.

Data analysis is an important part of this process and LAAOs will support schools to analyse their attendance data and draw up plans to address any specific issues. Analysis may include:

- persistent absence
- absence profile
- use of register codes
- comparison of form groups in individual years
- percentage of absence due to holidays
- attendance of vulnerable groups
- types of absence e.g. a few pupils with significant absence or many pupils with occasional absence
- lateness after registers close
- year by year percentage attendance
- attendance trends – is attendance increasing or decreasing?

LAAOs also work with families in casework alongside the school. Other than engaging in casework there are a variety of supportive ways in which LAAOs can work with schools to increase attendance levels.

Admission & Attendance Registers

The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended to date.

It is important that the school's admission register is accurate and kept up to-date. We regularly encourage Parents to inform them of any changes whenever they occur, through existing communication channels such as regular emails and newsletters. This will assist both the school and local authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education.

Where a parent notifies a school that a pupil will live at another address, all schools are required to record in the admission register:

- a) the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- b) the new address; and
- c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, schools must record in the admission register:

- a) the name of the new school; and
- b) the date when the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

All schools are required to notify the local authority **within five days** via school admissions - <http://www.intra.thegrid.org.uk/admissions/seam.shtml> when a pupil's name is added to the admissions register at a non-standard transition point. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point – at the start of the first year of education normally provided by that school.

All schools are required to notify the Local Authority of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason. This duty also extends to academies and independent schools.

Responsibilities of the LAAO – Attendance Registers

Inspection of registers

Registers are available for inspection during school hours by a Local Authority Attendance Officer when requested.

Removal from Roll

There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in **Regulation 8** of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This responsibility applies to all Maintained Schools, Academies, Free Schools, Studio Schools, University Technical Colleges, Education Support Centres and Independent Schools.

If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare Oughton will contact the local Attendance Team immediately and will also follow Safeguarding procedures under our Child Protection Policy.

We follow Government guidelines:

If a school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure should establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Confirmation should then be sought from the receiving school. When this information has been obtained, the school should complete a Removal from Roll form and return it to the local Attendance Team office. Whenever a pupil leaves a school a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.

If a school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has "disappeared" the matter should be drawn without delay to the attention of the Local Attendance Team.

We also follow the advice of HCC Attendance Team as well as Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Administrative Codes

There are a number of administrative codes which are used with registers. We follow HCC guidance as well as the Government guidance. Parents may ask about codes within register – please ask the School Office.

Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

Pupils who are engaged in off-site educational activities are recorded as attending (or absent from) an approved educational activity using the appropriate code. The key features of approved educational activity are that they must be:

- educational *and*
- approved by the school *and*
- supervised by the school or someone authorised by the school

Study leave is NOT an approved educational activity.

Appendix Acronyms

PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
LAAO	Local Authority Attendance Officer
CTF	Common Transfer File
CME	Child Missing in Education