



OUGHTON PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL


Attendance in School Guidance and Policy

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This Policy follows the Children's Services Integrated Services for Learning model policy for school Attendance.

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1. Introduction

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for individual children, individual schools and for Hertfordshire as a whole. 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.

Hertfordshire County Council is committed to openness and equality of opportunity in every activity, from the way we employ staff to the way we deliver services. It is a central responsibility of members, managers and employees of the County Council to ensure that every individual that we come into contact with is treated with dignity and respect.

This Attendance Policy is intended to guide, assist and empower schools to meet their responsibilities and to provide an agreed framework within which consistent practices and procedures can be applied.

2. Statement of Intent

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.

3. 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 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 (if the school has an attendance policy) of their children's school
- impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct

- 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 their children's 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 - when the children return to school
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- should not book holidays during term time

4. Responsibilities - Schools

Schools are responsible for supporting the attendance of their pupils and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance.

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. If the register is called at the end of the afternoon session schools should ensure that adequate arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils do not leave school between registrations. 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.

Registers should open and close at regular, set times and this information should be publicised to parents.

When calling the register the appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each pupil's name - gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. In marking registers, schools should use the national set of symbols as advised by the Department for Education (see Appendix 2)

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.

In order to reduce the possibility of post registration truancy secondary schools are encouraged to take class registers in each lesson and/or carry out regular spot checks.

Schools should:-

- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole - as one of their key tasks
- have clear policies in place to address persistent absence
- have clear policies in place to address the attendance of vulnerable groups
- support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- be sensitive to the needs of individual parents and this should be reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed. Schools should recognise that some parents have difficulty understanding written communications. They should also recognise the reluctance of some parents to come into school.

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

Punctuality

Schools should take steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness should be monitored and followed up.

School policies, brochures and website should clearly state the time at which each school session begins and finishes, including the time at which registers open and close. Schools should not keep a register open for the whole session.

When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she should be 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 should be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session using the correct code.

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. (Code U)

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, etc.

School Attendance Policy

Schools are not required to have an attendance policy but are encouraged to do so.

Good practice suggests that the following should be taken into consideration when writing a school attendance policy:-

- ensure that legal requirements are met
- give a high priority to attendance and punctuality
- name the SMT member with overall responsibility for attendance
- identify clear channels of communication with parents
- identify what is considered as authorised/unauthorised absence
- make provision for first-day of absence contact
- contain clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence
- prioritise the importance of early intervention
- identify a range of strategies to encourage whole school attendance
- promote the setting of targets for individual pupils, form groups etc.
- establish systems for rewarding good/improved attendance
- be sensitive to individual pupils' needs
- be alert to critical times (e.g. secondary transfer)
- establish procedures for re-integrating long-term absentees
- establish clear lines of communication with outside agencies
- ensure that all staff adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness

- provide for effective primary-secondary liaison
- inform and involve governors
- ensure that good practice is identified and disseminated
- explain how attendance information will be shared with parents (newsletters, website etc)
- be reviewed at regular intervals
- make clear to parents that it is the school - not the parent - which authorises an absence.
- make clear to parents what is, and is not, acceptable as reasons for absence
- state how lateness, both before and after closure of registers, is recorded and monitored
- make clear that leave is granted only in exceptional circumstances
- address attendance from a whole school perspective. Actively promote the link between attendance and achievement
- encourage all staff - including ancillary and administrative staff - to see attendance as part of their responsibility
- actively address all issues - such as bullying – which may lead to non-attendance
- 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 (<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>)

5. Responsibilities – 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 (LAAO) who can work with the school.

The Attendance Teams can offer the following services:-

ATTENDANCE DUTY SYSTEM

A dedicated telephone line through which schools can contact an LAAO between the hours of 9.00 am to 1.30 pm, Monday to Friday.

Types of enquiries may include –

- school issues e.g. register coding, holiday absence etc.
- enquiries relating to a pupil
- 10 day absence returns
- request for Early Intervention letters
- FPN enquiries
- Removal from Roll enquiries
- requests for referrals

Oughton Primary and Nursery School works closely with the Local Authority.

VISITS TO SCHOOLS

All schools have a named link LAAO who can liaise with the school and undertake whole school work for their allocated schools.

Whole School Attendance Overview

The Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) can work with relevant member(s) of staff to ensure your school is Ofsted ready. Any issues arising from this visit can inform targeted whole school work for the academic year, focussing on supporting your school to reduce PA and the absence of vulnerable groups.

Schools with high levels of PA may be subject to 'no notice' Ofsted inspections. Visit(s) can be used to analyse the school's data, discuss any school specific PA issues, and agree a strategy and action plans to address PA.

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?

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

i) School Attendance Policies

Schools are not required to have an attendance policy, but are encouraged to do so to support consistent practice and effective communication of expectations around attendance. This document sets out Oughton Primary and Nursery School's intentions following this policy guidance.

ii) Parents' Evenings

LAAOs can play a key role in promoting school attendance at parents' evenings and new parent induction meetings.

iii) 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.

iv) INSET

LAAOs may offer INSET/staff training. This may cover such issues as school attendance, the role of the LAAO, school-age employment and persistent absence.

v) Governors Meetings

LAAOs may attend governors meetings to explain various aspects of the work of the attendance team – case work, legal work, FPNs etc.

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, LAAOs may work with children whose absences have been authorised, such as persistent absentee (PA) pupils (see appendix 1).

6. The Use of Legal Action

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. A complaint may be laid against the parents in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or an Education Supervision Order relating to the pupil under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the pupil's absence will be taken into account, when considering legal action. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' will be determined by the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' might include the death of a close relative, certain medically recognised conditions, awaiting SEN placement, specific child protection concerns, change of provision. Legal proceedings can be considered at any stage if no progress has been made and no exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist.

If, after legal action has been taken, the child still fails to attend school regularly the LAAO may keep the case open and will, if appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date.

In cases where parents wilfully withhold a pupil from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the ISL Attendance Teams will begin legal proceedings promptly on the grounds that no other course of action is available.

The Central Attendance & Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority will give approval before legal proceedings are commenced.

The Attendance Teams will consider applying for an Education Supervision Order when a parent finds it difficult to exercise an effective influence over a child who has developed a pattern of poor attendance. Education Supervision Orders will not usually be applied for in relation to pupils in Years 10 or 11.

Before an application is made for an Education Supervision Order:

- other possible means of dealing with the pupil's poor attendance will be explored
- the attitudes of the parent and pupil towards the poor attendance, and their wishes as to how it should be dealt with, will be noted
- the Local Authority will be of the view that the Order will have a significant effect on the pupil's attendance at school

7. Education Related Penalty Notices for Parents of Truants

Subsection (1) of section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added two sections (444A and 444B) to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty.

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy, where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so. For example it could be used where a parent has failed to engage in any supportive measures

Further information on penalty notices is available at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml> or from the local Attendance Team Manager.

8. School Attendance Orders

If a parent fails to register a child of compulsory school age at a school (and he/she does not intend to educate the child otherwise than at school). The LA will serve a School Attendance Order under Sections 437 - 439 of the Education Act 1996. This requires the parent to register their child at a school named by the Local Authority.

9. 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 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016.

It is important that the school's admission register is accurate and kept up to-date. Schools should 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.

For further guidance see - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/csf/admissions.shtml>

Responsibilities of the LAAO – Attendance Registers

Inspection of registers

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

If the link LAAO is concerned that a school's registers have not been kept in accordance with the requirements of the relevant regulations he/she will:

- notify the Headteacher of the concern and request that the matter is addressed
- if no appropriate action is taken by the school, and the LAAO remains concerned, the Attendance Team Manager will address the concern with the Headteacher
- if the matter still remains unresolved, the Attendance Team Manager will write to the Headteacher formally noting the concern. A copy of this letter will be sent to the relevant ISL Area Manager and the County Lead for Access and Inclusion

Registers - Retention

Registers should be kept in a secure place for a period of not less than 3 years.

When computerised registration systems are used a print-out of the register should be made not less than once a month. A print-out of the register relating to a particular school year should be bound in a single volume and retained for a period of not less than 3 years.

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. Full guidance on Removal from Roll is available at -

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare please contact the local Attendance Team immediately.

If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or radicalisation please contact the local Attendance Team immediately.

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.

Further guidance and a referral form is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

10. Authorising 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 should be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

Schools should communicate to parents their policies with regard to the notification and categorisation of absence. Some parents, such as those whose first language is not English or who do not read or write may experience difficulty in providing notes. In such cases schools should seek to make alternative arrangements.

Schools are encouraged to keep all absence notes for at least a term and when a pupil's absence is a cause for concern to retain the notes until there is no longer a concern.

Absence should be authorised if:

- the pupil is absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school')
- the pupil is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs
- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home; and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LA for any of the following: the child's transport to and from school; boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school; enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home
- 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 should 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. The absence should be recorded as code C

Further guidance is available at -

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

- Absence should be unauthorised if no explanation is forthcoming from the parents or if the school is dissatisfied with the explanation

11. Administrative Codes

There are a number of administrative codes which are not counted as a possible attendance in the school census. They must only be used in the circumstances described:

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (Code Y)

This code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes but is not counted as a possible attendance. It may be used when:
the school site, or part of it is closed due to unavoidable cause; or
the transport provided by the school or the local authority is not available *and*
where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

- Not required to be in school (Code X)

is used to record sessions that non –compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

- Pupil not on admission register (Code Z)

enables schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

- Planned whole or partial school closure (Code #)

should be used for closures that are planned or known in advance eg holidays, curriculum planning/training days (up to five per year) or the use of the school as a polling station.

- Different Term Dates for Different Pupils (Code #)

can also be used to record staggered starts or induction days. This is only acceptable where the school ensures that pupils not attending on that day are still offered a full education over the school year.

12. Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

Pupils who are engaged in off-site educational activities should be 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)

A pupil should be recorded as approved educational activity if he/she is attending:

- an approved work experience placement (Code W)
- a field trip or educational visit (Code V)
- an approved sporting activity approved by and supervised by someone authorised by the school (Code P)
- the pupil is attending an interview with a prospective employer, or another educational establishment (Code J)
- an off-site educational activity (Code B)

Note: The B code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. By using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils.

- Dual Registered – at another educational establishment (Code D)

Note: This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the school census. This code should be used where pupils are attending an ESC, hospital or special school on a temporary basis or for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children where they are known to be registered at another school for the session in question. Each school should only record the attendance/absence for those sessions where the pupil is expected to attend. Schools must ensure that they follow up all absence in a timely manner.

13. 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 discourage flexi-schooling as learning can be fragmented and impacts on the education of the children as well as the social interactions with peers.

14. Part-time time-tables

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. (Code C).

Oughton Primary and Nursery School encourage and provide a full-time education. Part-time is only considered for a short 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.

Guidance on part-time timetables is available at -
<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

15. Requests for Family Holidays During Term time

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations which come into effect on 1st September 2013 remove 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.

At the request from Headteachers the local authority has provided a standard letter to be handed to parents and carers to support the governing body and Headteachers in communicating their decision making regarding individual requests for leave of absence for holidays in term time. This is available on <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

Further information and advice of school attendance including the use of the correct registration codes is available at www.education.gov.uk
The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016 is available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk>
Further details information and advice on all aspects of school attendance in Hertfordshire is available at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

16. Oughton Primary School – Personal Procedures

At Oughton School we want the whole school community – governors, staff, parents and pupils to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Oughton School aims 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. This policy will support us all to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

Targets

This school sets targets in accordance with Statutory Instrument 2005 No 58 – The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2005. 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.

Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between school, parents and pupils.

The expectations for school are that:

- The school will provide a safe learning environment
- The school will ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis
- The school will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality

The expectations for parents are that:

- Parents are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn
- Parents will inform school, on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school
- If parents have failed to contact the school, the school will call the parents on the 1st day of absence
- Parents will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary
- Parents will ensure that school are informed of any changes of contact details
- Parents will ensure the school receives written confirmation regarding absences.

The expectations for pupils are that:

- All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually
- Pupils must remember to hand any note giving reasons for absence to the relevant person
- Pupils are expected to be ready to learn

Children with health needs who cannot attend school

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.

Door Open

- School doors open at 8:45 am and the school day starts at 8.55am. Pupils may enter the building at that time.

Registration

- Registers are taken at 9:05 am and 1:05 pm. Registers are marked consistently by staff and every child must have a mark in the register for every session.
- Any pupil arriving between 9:05am – 9:25am will be considered a 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 DfES guidance.

Lateness

- Registers are taken by 9:05am. 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.

Following up Lateness

- 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.
- Initially the parent would be contacted by the school administrative assistant to follow up late arrivals to school
- Incentives will be used as appropriate for individual students
- 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.

Absences

- Notification must be provided for all absences from school
- Notification will be accepted from parent/carer or adult family member
- Notification will be accepted by telephone or letter by 9.15am.
- Letters must be given to the class teacher when the child returns to school or emails to the attendance email address noting the illness
- Notifications are stored with the class register, and stored for the period of the academic year, unless requested otherwise
- Absences can be authorised for a variety of reasons which may include: illness, medical appointments, family bereavement, moving house
- Absences can be unauthorised for a variety of reasons which may include: shopping, birthdays, haircuts
- Absences are authorised by the Headteacher
- School may decide not to authorise absence, even when a reason is provided. If there is any doubt about an absence, the decision will be made by the Headteacher
- The Headteacher would make the decision to unauthorise absence once authorised, and then inform parents
- 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.
- 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.

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 by letter to inform them of any appointments
- All pupils should sign out on leaving the school building
- 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
- Prolonged or regular absence from school is dealt with 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 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 (forms are kept in the front office)
- 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 will 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.

- 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 may involve the Attendance Improvement Officer or follow our Child Protection Policy and may a referral to the Social Care at the LA.

Term Time 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. *(Please see appendix 2)*
- 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.

Rewards

The school rewards good attendance. Individual pupils receive certificates for excellent or much improved attendance as appropriate. Classes are rewarded for good attendance on a half-termly basis. Pupils, parents and staff are informed about the rewards for good attendance, via the school newsletter, assemblies and parents meetings

Covid-19

We follow Government guidelines when dealing with absences relating to Covid-19. We will isolate and send any child home if we consider them to have symptoms. We request Parents to have their child tested if showing symptoms and isolating is authorised. Once a test has been completed, Oughton Primary and Nursery School requests the results.

During any school closure, we maintain contact with families to promote safeguarding and well-being.

Working with external agencies and action

- 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 referral Children, Schools and Families.
- Legal action may be taken if deems necessary by the Headteacher and agencies. This may include fixed penalty notices and court action. 15 unauthorised sessions within the current and/or previous term may lead to a fixed term penalty notice and a fine will issued. If the fine is not paid within 28 days, the fine will be increased.

Publication of Information

- Parents are made aware of the school ethos on attendance and punctuality through new parents' meetings and through regular items in the school newsletter
- Attendance is a regular item on the school newsletter
- Parents, pupils staff and governors are informed of whole school attendance issues and statistics on a regular basis
- 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 will be translated as necessary if possible
- The School Administrator is responsible for ensuring that termly data is submitted to the DfES

Appendix Acronyms

DfES	Department for Education and Skills
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AIO	Attendance Improvement Officer
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education

Appendix 1

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Policy for Local Authority Attendance Officers working with children whose absence has been authorised

- if the LAAO becomes concerned (through checking the attendance register) that a pupil has accumulated significant amounts of authorised absence this will be discussed with the relevant member of school staff
- if it is agreed that there is a concern about the pupil's attendance the school should share this concern with the parents
- if concerns about the pupil's attendance remain, the LAAO will consider asking the school to make a referral to the attendance team
- if a pupil is identified as being a persistent absentee (PA). Persistent absence is when a pupil enrolment's overall absence equates to 10 per cent or more of their possible sessions.

(Note: if a pupil's absence has been authorised by the school, the LA cannot cite that absence as evidence of non attendance under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Appendix 2

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Present at off site educational activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another educational establishment	Not expected to attend this session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational reasons	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age pupils)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils (Planned)	Not counted in possible attendances

Detailed advice on the use of these registration codes can be found at www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00221879/advice-on-school-attendance