



Charlton-on-Otmoor Primary School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Charlton-on-Otmoor Primary School we recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing. Good attendance is essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child the best educational experience possible. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance through discussion, newsletters and end of term reports. School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is designed to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will formally examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets. The school together with governors, will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals. This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Aims

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

- Promoting good attendance
 - Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
 - Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
 - Acting early to address patterns of absence
 - Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and guidance

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

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Pupils Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school to prioritise attendance and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and help leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on the school MIS system – Integris.

School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school MIS system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the head teacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Use the school MIS system to record reasons for absences and identify parents/carers to contact where the school has not been notified of a reason for an absence. This will be done before 10am each day.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent. (e.g. sickness)
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- When needed, to work with the school and local authority to understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with any support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school regularly, aiming for an attendance rate of 100%
- arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day
- inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending school.

Recording Attendance

School Procedures related to attendance:

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

Any child who is absent/present from school will have their mark recorded as being:

- present (/ \)
- late (L)
- absent:
 - o unauthorised (O)
 - o approved educational activity (V) (attendance out of school).
 - o Medical (M)
 - o Authorised

Only the Headteacher, or a member of staff acting on their behalf, can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be considered unexplained and must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made. Pupils must arrive in school by 9:00 each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00 and will be kept open until 9:20. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00 and will be kept open until 1:20.

Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed / significant weather affecting roads.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.

Authorised absence

Absence will be authorised if the school has notification from the parents that the child is ill. This should usually take the form of an initial notification at the beginning of the period of absence.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. By contacting the school in person or via phone or email (parents@charltonono.co.uk).

If the child has a medical appointment with a healthcare professional (e.g. doctor or dentist) that cannot be made outside school hours, this will be considered as an authorised absence. Regular absences for medical reasons will be raised as a concern with parents. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

In the case of repeated absence due to illness, the school will request confirmation from the GP that the child has a medical condition that seriously impacts on their ability to attend school regularly. A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. If the school refuses a holiday request, but the child is still taken on holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. No absence will be authorised during statutory testing weeks.

If the absence has been requested and approved in line with the school procedures, then this will be an authorised absence. An absence may not be authorised, even if the parents give a reason, if the absences are persistent.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated in writing using the leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Unplanned absence

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact police or the MASH team.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.

Unauthorised absence

Absences will not be authorised if the following occur:

- **Unexplained absence:** Any absence that is not considered by the headteacher to be as the result of exceptional circumstances.
- **Persistent Lateness:** If a child arrives after the register has closed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the lateness is occurring on a regular basis and parents/carers fail to work with the school to address the issues, the matter can be referred to the County Attendance Team who will offer support.

Lateness, persistent and severe absence

If the child is repeatedly late, the school will initially contact parents expressing concerns about late arrival and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the Head will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the County Attendance Team if appropriate.

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

The school will:

- 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.
- Where out of school barriers are identified signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.
- If the issue persists take an active part in the 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.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory pupils' social care.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of siblings.
- Agree a joint approach for severely absent pupils with the local authority.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

The school will:

- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure joint work with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupils' EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.
- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at boards and governing body meetings and with local authorities.

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

The school will inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. PA cases maybe referred to the County Attendance Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment Supporting good attendance
- Attendance data will be checked termly (six times) by the Attendance Team to identify any issues.
- Attendance will be discussed at regular staff meetings where staff will have the opportunity to express any concerns.

The school will work closely with the County Attendance Team in their monitoring of the attendance and registration procedures in the school. The school will evaluate the success of the procedures by measuring the annual attendance % against their target at the end of the year, and their progress towards attaining the target.

Strategies for promoting attendance

The school will take the following steps in order to raise and maintain levels of attendance:

- Ensuring that the school is a place to which the pupils want to come: a place where the pupils are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place in which the pupils feel safe and secure.
- Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the School and to build and support their pupils' enthusiasm for attending school.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Celebrate good or improving attendance
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Target support to pupils and cohorts identified as needing additional support with their attendance.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at
- School
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via the annual end of year report or more regularly where the child is, or is at risk of becoming, a persistent absentee.

Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports and at Parent Consultations, attendance is discussed.

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

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

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Summary

Through the implementation of the policy, the following will be achieved:

- a minimum of 96% attendance
- a positive partnership between parents and school, working for the benefit of the pupils' learning
- clear and transparent procedures and expectations understood by all stakeholders

Approved by:	Nadia Gosling	Date: September 2023
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