



Ousedale School

Be Kind | Work Hard | Succeed Together

Attendance Policy

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| Reviewed and approved by Personnel Committee | October 2022 |
| Next due for review by Personnel Committee | October 2025 |

1. Aims

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

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

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

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures and working together to improve school attendance guidance for schools](#).

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The Personnel committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer (NP) Pastoral/ academic and attendance secretary (PA&AS) (O)

The school attendance officer and PA&AS:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with the local authority to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers/form tutors

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

3.5 Associate staff

Associate staff are expected to take calls from parents / carers about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.38am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.30pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.15am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents / carers will notify the school of an unplanned absence via Edulink the parent app.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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. PALs will send letter regarding GP stamp to parents / carers as all illness needs to be accounted for or it will be coded as unauthorised.

4.3 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.

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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Pupils who are late to school will be given a lunchtime detention and if they are persistently late they will lose their free time
- Pupils who are persistently late to class will be placed on punctuality report and will be given an appropriate sanction

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by sending a text via Edulink the parent app and/or if a pupil is vulnerable and/or there are safeguarding concerns a phone call will be made first thing in the morning.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school reports to parents/ carers on their child's attendance record via a twice annually written report. Parents / carers will also be able to access their child's attendance via the school's communication app.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required
- Study leave for internal and public exams

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being granted.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

- All attendance is important but the focus will be on PP/FSM/EAL/LAC and SEN (EHCP) & (K) pupils because these groups are the most vulnerable.
- Marksheet for 'whole school attendance' by year group and campus is available on SIMS/Class charts for Pastoral and Academic leaders (PALs) and the attendance officer (AO) (NP) and pastoral/ academic and attendance secretary (PA&AS) (O) to access.
- AO & PA&AS will update the attendance regularly and meet with PALs every fortnight (KS3 1 week and KS4 the next week) to address attendance issues for their year group. PALs must continue to inform them of any letters that need to be sent out. PALs must inform AO & PA&AS that letter one needs to be sent out if attendance is below 96% but only if no valid reason has been provided for the absence.
- In the first instance AO & PA&AS, PALs and form tutors to focus on pupils whose attendance is between 93% and 96%
- The 'notes' on the mark sheet must be kept up to date on why a pupil's attendance is below 93%
- AO & PA&AS, PALs and SLT links to focus on pupils whose attendance is between 86% and 93%, especially those pupils who have had poor attendance in previous years
- If a pupil has had a previous year(s) of attendance below 91% a meeting must be convened immediately once the attendance falls below 93% (see letter system)
- AO & PA&AS and PALs will use the 'five letter' system
- Once attendance dips below the 96% threshold letter one will be sent (if no genuine reason for absence), plus the 'attendance matters diagram'.
- Form tutor to have conversation with pupil(s) whose attendance is below 96%.
- If no improvement of attendance from letter 1 (2 week period) and attendance is now below 93% letter 2 will be sent, plus the 'attendance matters diagram'.
- Tutor to contact home whose attendance is below 93%
- If no improvement of attendance from letter 2 (2 week period) and attendance is below 90% (persistent absence) letter 3 will be sent and a meeting will take place within a week of the letter being sent with parents/carers, PAL and SLT link (rep of SEND if student is on the SEND register). AO & PA&AS will set up meeting.
- Ten unauthorised attendance sessions is the start point for legal intervention

- In the meeting, it must be stated that the pupil should be brought to school if parent believes they are sick and the school should make decision to send home.
- Parent contract will be completed and signed by all parties and an attendance target set
- Medical stamp letter provided and parents/carers informed that they must now provide evidence for anymore absence and that absence will not be authorised unless the parent/carer provides GP or other medical proof
- A certificate of attendance will be provided that highlights amount of unauthorised absence and reasons given by parent/carer
- All paperwork will be retained by the AO & PA&AS and a folder of evidence created for possible future prosecution
- Attendance matters diagram will be discussed at the meeting
- A warning letter (4) will be sent prior to letter 5 regarding an attendance interview if there is no improvement with the pupil's attendance
- If parents do not attend, attendance will be monitored for a further two weeks and if no improvement letter five will be sent regarding an attendance interview.
- An attendance interview must take place within a week of the letter being sent with parents/carers, PAL and Deputy Headteacher (rep of SEND if student is on the SEND register). AO & PA&AS to set up meeting.
- The attendance meeting will be to formally highlight the concerns and agree a new parent contract for the student to return to school. A warning letter will be issued to confirm that if attendance does not improve the parent/carer will be invited back for a Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) interview. Information will be given about the PACE interview and the parent(s)/carer(s) right to legal representation. All information is on the leaflet which parents/carers can take with them.
- All paperwork from first meeting must be present, an updated parent contract, School attendance interview sheet completed, PACE leaflet provided, and a warning Letter regarding PACE interview
- All information, including interview notes, will be sent to the parent/carer
- If parents/carers do not attend the meeting or If no improvement of attendance after two weeks from meeting a referral for prosecution made on V2 by AO & PA&AS. The MKC officer will interview each parent/carer separately under caution about their child's non-attendance. At this meeting, MKC is not looking for solutions to the non-attendance but merely gathering evidence prior to a criminal prosecution. There is a requirement for an overall attendance of 90% or below. All supporting information to be provided by the school and/or other agencies in the form of a 'court pack'
- The court pack will contain attendance certificate, parent contracts, school attendance interview sheet, copies of all letters sent out and any other relevant information
- Maximum period that can elapse, if there is no improvement of attendance from letter 1 to letter 4 is 8 weeks.
- If any improvement at any stage the 'improvement attendance letter' can be sent
- AO & PA&AS will send a list of students (fortnightly) whose attendance is between 95% and 90.01% to tutors and PALs. PALs to ensure that tutors ring home about attendance
- Learning mentors will have an attendance focus group for their year group(s). To see if there are any reasons in school or out that may be stopping them coming into school.
- Reward good attendance and those pupils whose attendance improves over time with certificates in assemblies, tutor time and at achievement awards evenings
- Work with the local authority and parents/ carers to support severely absent pupils (50% below attendance) and agree a joint approach to improve attendance.

5.3 Legal sanctions

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

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

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may 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.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual need and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. The following strategies will be utilised to promote attendance in school:

- Instill a mindset of high expectations around attendance and remind staff to model a 100% expectation for pupils to attend and learn in every lesson. All staff to model personal punctuality themselves and good attendance is everyone's responsibility
- Establish a senior leadership team presence around school. Senior leaders, PALs and staff will meet and greet students at the front of school every morning, to give pupils a warm welcome
- Work with parents / carers (including the PTA and SEND Parent Forum) and use meetings/ newsletters and school website to get all parents on board with the school's expectations for high attendance
- Work jointly with the local authority to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the local authority, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners
- Share the importance of good attendance in tutor time, assemblies and PSHE and discuss with pupils what happens if someone is late in the workplace or misses work
- Provide pupils with a purpose to be in school each day and link good attendance with achievement. Learning mentors to support pupils and parents/ carers with attendance issues to see if there are any reasons in school or out that may be stopping them coming into school. Working with external agencies where required for further support
- Provide secure conditions for learning and we will be relentless with managing bullying or any other issues between pupils. Offer safe places in school to make sure pupils are supported and feel they can attend school safely
- Use our exciting curriculum and experiences programme to entice pupils to feel their learning is worthwhile
- Reasonable adjustments will be made for SEND pupils

7. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to inform the school via the school's communication app in the morning each day if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes below 93%, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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

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

The school will track and monitor the attendance of individual pupils, year groups by campus and particular groups of pupils whose absence may be a cause for concern e.g. LAC/ SEND/ PP etc. and identify pupils who need further intervention and support.

8. Monitoring arrangements

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

9. Links with other policies and guidance

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Working together to improve school attendance, DfE guidance, Published: May 2022

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| J | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| P | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| W | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Authorised absence | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| | | public examinations |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence | Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| Unauthorised absence | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-------------|---|--|
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |