



ATTENDANCE POLICY

AUTHOR	REVIEWED	NEXT REVIEW
R. HORTON	NOVEMBER 2022	NOVEMBER 2024

Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Oulton Primary School and Nursery fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health & Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

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

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head Teacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported



to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, governors and parents/carers in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and Leeds City Council Children's Services so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.



We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Where possible, evidence to support absences will be required.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school's Head Teacher.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- Absences of children with below 90% attendance will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided.



Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality
- To refer to Leeds City Council Children's Services any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Leeds LA and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Senior Leadership team and Attendance Officer in school.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Attendance Officer and Senior Leadership Team member where there are concerns and acting upon them



- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

School Attendance Officer/Head Teacher

The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to Leeds City Council Children's services (Area Attendance Officer)
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the Area Attendance Officer
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Administration staff/Attendance Officer

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late record is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head Teacher



- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence by telephone, text or calling into school
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist (Appointment card/letter)
- Ensuring children attend school before and after appointments
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with

Registration

All the school doors open at 8.50am until 9.00am This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classroom.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.05am and by 1.10pm. (Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present)- Absence codes will be entered by the school office.

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority.

Lateness

Once the doors are closed at 9.00am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 9.00am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is



documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.00am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M). Evidence will be requested.

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive, a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head Teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we will send a text message requesting a reason for the absence. If we do not receive communication then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

First Day Contact

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff/Attendance Officer check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are



unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence. On occasions when no communication is received we will home visit, if no response a letter requesting a call to school will be left.

Illness

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

When a child is continually ill during the week and phone calls have been received from Parents; we will carry out a 4th day home visit. We will request to see the child so we can use this as supporting evidence for the attendance records.

Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013, the government abolished the right of Head Teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays, Head Teachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist. A leave of absence form must be completed when arranging to remove a child from school for any length of time. Requests for holidays

will not be authorised (G absence code - unauthorised). Evidence must be provided for applications of leave with special circumstances. The Head teacher will confirm if a request is deemed exceptional circumstances (C absence code - authorised).

Parents run the risk of receiving a fixed penalty notice if then choose to take their child/ren out of school during term time. It is important to note that the circumstances that will allow the Head Teacher to authorise a holiday during term time are



extremely limited - in fact, Oulton's Head Teacher has almost no 'discretion'. It is the policy of Oulton Primary School to always pass the details of unauthorised holidays to the Local Authority.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Head Teacher and the Governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school, we rely upon parents/carers to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time (after school have sent letters/arranged meetings; then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Area Attendance Officer (Leeds City Council Children's Services)

Leeds City Council Children's Services will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been no improvement in a child's attendance

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

The Area Attendance Officer visits once a month to check and monitor attendance. They carry out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 90%). They work with the school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.



Monitoring Attendance

Our Attendance Officer and office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Any concerns regarding a child's attendance are passed to the Attendance Officer/Phase Leader/Head Teacher





Rothwell Cluster Schools

Attendance Policy - Sept 2018



Rothwell Cluster Schools Attendance Policy

(September 2018)

The Rothwell Cluster Attendance Policy is intended to be used in conjunction with individual schools' own attendance policies.

The aim of the Rothwell Cluster Schools Attendance Policy is to:

- Share the message of the importance of good attendance and punctuality with children, young people and their families
- Support families with individual needs to improve attendance and their access to education
- Work effectively with our various partners to achieve high levels of attendance
- Raise levels of attainment and achievement at school through high expectations of good attendance and punctuality

Responsibilities

Encouraging good attendance and punctuality is the shared responsibility of the schools, the parents, pupils, cluster staff and its partners.

What the Rothwell Cluster expects from Schools:

- All schools to have their own individual attendance policies; regularly reviewed and available for any parent upon request.
- All Schools to use the Rothwell Cluster Schools Attendance Policy to guide their attendance monitoring and investigate any problems that may lead to non-attendance; including challenging parents about regular illness absence.
- All schools to keep parent/carers informed of any attendance related issues
- All schools to attend the Attendance and Punctuality Working group termly meetings
- All schools to accept at least one pathway planning meeting with the Attendance Improvement Officer per academic year
- All schools to register pupils accurately and keep up to date records
- All schools to complete accurate and timely CME (Child Missing Education) referrals



- All schools to use a wide range of attendance support strategies and have a robust system of keeping accurate records of all contacts and actions taken

Parent/ Carer responsibilities:

- To perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age attend regularly. Absences should only be for genuine illness or in exceptional circumstances.
- To ensure their children attend school punctually.
- To provide school with their current and at least **two** emergency telephone number(s) and an email address for school records and update on any changes.
- To inform schools on the first day of their child's absence: some schools may require further contact in line with their own policy.
- To take holidays during the schools holiday periods; any leave of absence during term time must be applied for in advance

What Parents and Carers can expect from each school:

- An Attendance Policy which has been approved, is reviewed regularly by the Governors and is available to parents on the school website (and/or the school office)
- Clear advice and guidance relating to the policy and procedures including the use of Penalty Notices
- A positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils and parents feel safe, secure and valued
- A motivating, relevant and accessible curriculum for all pupils
- A high priority of attendance and punctuality monitoring
- Regular and efficient recording of attendance; twice daily
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without good reason
- Immediate confidential action on any notified problem
- Efficient and effective communication between home and school

Pupil Responsibilities:

- To attend school
- To arrive at school on time and follow school procedures for registration
- To arrive at school in uniform and equipped for learning
- To seek support in school regarding any barriers to attendance, attainment and achievement

What Pupils can expect from each school:

- A safe learning environment in which pupils feel valued and secure
- Consistently applied rewards for good and improving attendance
- Support when having difficulties
- Contact with home when not feeling well
- Spare equipment and uniform if needed



- Home visits from the school attendance officer, meetings, letters, phone call with parent/carers regarding attendance issues.

What the Cluster can expect from Leeds City Council, School Attendance

Service:

- Statutory support in the form of Penalty Notices and Cases for Magistrates Court proceedings and supervisory function for Education Supervision Orders.
- Swift follow up on CME (Children Missing Education) referrals
- Traded support, as agreed, TTO (Term Time Only) Attendance Improvement Officer time, and 3 days per year Team Manager support.

Absence Codes - *appendix 1*

All schools to use the attached authorised and unauthorised codes (Appendix 1).

Authorisation of absence is only at the discretion of the individual Head Teacher.

Authorised absence- An absence is deemed authorised when the school accepts that there is good reason for the absence and communication from the parent has been received. In the case of an agreed exceptional leave of absence request, no more than 10 days will be authorised.

Unauthorised absence- An absence is deemed unauthorised when there is no communication from the parent, exceptional leave has been requested but declined, leave of absence has been taken without prior request, the child has higher than average illness where no medical proof (appointment card, prescription etc.) has been provided or is a persistent absentee where an attendance plan may be in place.

Registration

All schools have their own individual registration times. Registers will be taken in each session every day. Registers will be closed no later than 30 minutes after an individual schools start time. A child arriving late but before the registers are closed will receive an L mark. Any child arriving after the registers have closed will received the U code which should be followed up by schools as with all other unauthorised absences.



Leave of absence in term time

From 1st September 2013, The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Amendment Regulations make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are Exceptional Circumstances (*appendix 2*). If the leave is granted, Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school (max 10 days). When unauthorised leave of absence in term time has been taken (min 5 days over a 12 week period), the school may apply for a penalty notice to be issued through the School Attendance Service when the child returns to school after their leave (penaltynoticesattendance@leeds.gov.uk). If the child fails to return to school on the agreed return date the school must take action (home visit, contact numbers etc) and then consider the child for a CME (Children Missing Education) referral.

Religious Observance

Schools will use the 'R' code for religious observance if they have been informed by the parents in advance. This code is generally used for one day per occasion when set apart by the religious body to which the parents belong. Any further absence around the specified date should also be applied for in advance and it is the Head Teachers discretion as to whether the additional leave would be authorised. Any additional leave not applied for, would be unauthorised.

Medical Appointments

All schools will only code absences 'M' as medical if an appointment card/letter is produced.

Entertainment Licences (including sporting events)

Schools will only consider granting leave of absence for pupils with Entertainment Licences if the Licence Application is seen prior to the performance taking place. If a licence is not produced any leave of absence taken will be marked as unauthorised.

CME (Child Missing Education)

When a child's absence is unexplained, schools will contact the parents on the first day of absence and endeavour to continue to make contact throughout the day until they can speak with the parent/carer. If the absence remains unexplained, the school



will undertake a home visit within 3 days to establish the child's safety and whereabouts. All reasonable enquires with emergency contacts, friends in school and neighbours should be made before a CME referral to the Local Authority is completed. The CME referral should be made to the Local Authority after enquiries have proved unsuccessful but no later than 20 days after the child's last attendance at school.

If a child moves out of the Leeds Authority (or the country) and is not in a school, regardless of knowing an address or not, a CME referral to the Local Authority needs to be made.

Admissions and deletions from school roll

From 1st September 2016, schools are required to inform the Local Authority in **every** circumstance when they are about to delete a pupil's name from the admissions register. This would include informing the Local Authority of the pupil's name, address and parents' name(s), destination and school (if known) within 5 days of the pupil leaving their school.

Schools must also provide information to the Local Authority when registering new pupils, including the pupil's name, address, DOB and previous school.

Where a child moves address within the Leeds area they **must** remain on roll of the school until another Leeds school takes them on their roll. They remain the safeguarding responsibility of the school until a transfer is complete.



Appendix 1

Key to Codes

- B Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)
- C Other authorised circumstances (not covered)
- D Dual registration (pupil attending other establishment)
- E Excluded (No Alternative provision Made)
- G Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess)
- H Annual family holiday (agreed)
- I Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointment)
- J Interview
- L Late (before registration is closed)
- M Medical / Dental appointments
- N No reason yet provided for absence
- O Unauthorised absent (not covered by other codes)
- P Approved sporting activity
- R Religious observance
- S Study leave
- T Traveller absence
- U Late (after registration is closed)
- V Educational visit or trip
- W Work experience
- # Planned whole or partial school closure
- Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. no mains water)
- X Non-compulsory school age absence
- Z Pupil not on roll

Further advice on coding is available on the DFE (Department for Education) website

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>



Appendix 2

Authorised absence is most frequently defined as; illness, medical and dental appointments and exceptional special occasions (see below) Authorised absence is at the Head Teacher's discretion and you will be required to provide school with evidence of the absence such as a doctor's letter. Routine dental appointments should be booked during school holidays.

Authorised Planned Leave in Exceptional Circumstances

In all cases an attendance record of at least 95% is required for any authorised absence leave to be considered. Each case will be considered individually but usually meet the criteria below

- Up to 2 days per year for religious festivals
- Funeral of a close family member
- Up to 2 days for the wedding of a family member
- Participation in a sporting event at city, regional or national level
- Theatre performances (only authorised if a recognised licence is required)
- Recognised examinations for music or dance
- Other exceptional circumstances agreed on an individual basis by the Head Teacher

This list of Exceptional circumstances have been agreed by all the Primary Schools in the Rothwell Cluster Nov 2013

Unauthorised absence is most frequently defined as absence when no explanation is given by parents. In addition these **planned** absence requests below will not be authorised

- **All holidays will be unauthorised including long weekends.**

Visits to relatives

Visits to events

Modelling auditions

Birthdays and shopping trips

END

