

Oatlands Junior School Attendance Policy



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Policy Aims

Our school aims to meet its 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

In line with our school vision, we will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age, have and maintain, high attendance rates (95%+) and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) and [Summary of Responsibility for 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:

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

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

School Procedures

3.1 Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

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

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for a minimum of 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken from 8.55am when children are in class and seated and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken from 1pm when children are in class and seated and will be kept open until 1:10pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.50 a.m. or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6) and, subsequent days if they are still unplanned absences.

We would prefer parents to notify the school office via a telephone call, selecting option 1 and leaving a message on the school absence answer phone. Where this can't be done for any reason, an email should be sent instead to admin@ojs.rklt.co.uk

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence, parents are required to notify the school office via telephone call or email to admin@ojs.rklt.co.uk

However, we encourage parents 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.

Parents/carers should email school in advance using the admin address above to notify the office of medical or dental appointments.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance by completing an absence request form which is available from the school office and which can also be found on the school's website.

<https://www.oatlandsjunior.co.uk/seecmsfile/?id=1719>

Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late and minutes recorded, using the appropriate code (L- Late before Register).

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent and minutes recorded, using the appropriate code (U – Late after Register).

Persistent absence without sufficient reason, or persistent lateness will be followed up by the Headteacher and Learning Mentor and support offered to families as appropriate.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Where a pupil is absent with no notification from parents or carers, this will be followed up by the office team which will include a phone call to the parent/carer where necessary. If the call is unanswered, a text will be sent and follow-up calls made at a later time. If it has not been possible to ascertain the reason for the absence by 10.00 a.m. further steps will be taken, including a home visit if necessary or the notification of other services. A decision on any home visit will always be made by 12.00 midday on the first day of absence. Additional home visits may be made (if appropriate) if the absence is prolonged.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance and punctuality records are shared with parents/carers in the annual end of year report. However, intermediate reports are used and shared with parents at a meeting with the Headteacher and Inclusion Manager where there is a serious concern regarding either attendance or punctuality. Actions and support are agreed and monitored.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term-time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Applications for leave of absence during term-time for exceptional circumstances, should be made in advance by completing the request form, which is available from the school office and also found on the school website.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- 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
- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave from work arrangement is part of the company's policy (needs to be evidenced)
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional difficulties (needs to be evidenced)
- Where a family needs time together for support following a crisis
- To attend a family funeral
- Music or dance exam or similar

Absence **will not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

- Where a child's attendance has, or will, fall below 95%
- To accommodate a cheaper holiday
- To celebrate a child's birthday

- Performing on stage or screen. Children under the age of 13 cannot be licenced for this work

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling period over an academic year. NYCC is contacted to request issue of a penalty notice if there have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in the preceding 4 months.
- 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Strategies for promoting attendance

The Learning Mentor and Attendance Officer work closely with parents who are struggling with attendance and/or punctuality.

Posters informing parents of number of hours lost learning through days of absence are displayed around the school.

As necessary, the headteacher will write to parents to reinforce the message about the importance of high attendance and their responsibilities in this respect.

6. Attendance monitoring

6.1 Daily Attendance

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 4 days, we may (depending on the circumstances) contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will, in the first instance, involve our Learning Mentor.

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.

The school will identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

6.2 Analysis and Actions

The attendance officers, along with the headteacher, will meet each half term to review attendance, absence and punctuality data and agree next steps as appropriate. They will also consider historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence and develop strategies (where necessary) to address these patterns.

Where necessary, the school will also provide regular attendance reports to phase leaders and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families. The school will also use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

Our school uses electronic registers which enable us to easily produce reports and analyses for the purpose of identifying trends or concerns so we can take prompt action to address such issues.

6.3 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

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:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold meetings with the parents 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
- Engage in preventative work with parent/carers where poor attendance is anticipated

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Local Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- 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.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Estelle Scarth (Headteacher). The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Estelle Scarth and can be contacted via 01423 972827 and/or admin@ojs.rklt.co.uk

7.3 The Attendance Officers

The attendance officers:

- The school attendance officers are responsible for:
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data at school and individual pupil level (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Working with other colleagues to tackle persistent absence
- Working with NYCC education welfare/attendance and enforcement officer Julie Parrish – Tel: 01609 798013 julie.parrish@northyorks.gov.uk
- To tackle persistent absence Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The attendance officers are Carmel King, Julie Sanderson and Tricia Morales-Macias and can be contacted via 01423 872827 and/or admin@ojs.rklt.co.uk.

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes (Present and Late before Register Closes), and submitting this information to the school office, who will use other applicable codes to mark absence or visits, in line with school policy.

7.5 School office staff will:

- Take calls and check emails from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system (Arbor and CPOMS)
- Transfer calls from parents (where appropriate) to the Learning Mentor or Headteacher, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Check absence answer phones by 9:30 and follow-up.

7.6 Parents/Carers Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school each day
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.50 a.m. on the day of the absence and subsequent days and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

7.7 Pupil are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links to other policies

This policy is linked to the RKL Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Start and finish times of the school day

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:05pm and will be kept open until 1:10pm.

Appendix 2: Attendance Codes

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

