



Attendance Policy

Approval status	Approved
Last reviewed on:	September 2023
Next review due on:	September 2024

Statement of Intent

Oakwood Park Grammar School is committed to ensuring that all students make excellent progress and secure outstanding outcomes, not only in final public examinations but also in the assessments they complete in class throughout the academic year and in end of year examinations. In the last newsletter we emphasised the role that attendance plays in ensuring academic success and allowing students to engage and benefit from the wider opportunities available to them at school. We actively promote and celebrate 100% attendance for this reason.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our statutory obligation by creating a whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting 100% attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student 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 students have the support in place to attend school

2. 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](#)

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 Body

The governing body 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

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 students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 Deputy Headteacher responsible for attendance - Ms J Bevan

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school in conjunction with the school's Attendance Officer, Family Liaison Officer, Directors of Study and other Deputy Headteachers
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Benchmarking attendance data (using FFT) to identify areas of focus for improvement
- 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 students and families
- Working with external agencies such as Kent Attendance and Inclusion Service, NEFLT and CYPMHS

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Director of Study in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Ensure that parents/carers complete the school's request for absence paperwork when requesting a leave of absence
- Carry out first day absence calls
- Liaise with the Deputy Headteacher overseeing attendance when determining whether a request for absence will be authorised or unauthorised
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Updating the school's attendance tracking sheet
- Providing weekly attendance reports to Directors of Study and Deputy Headteachers and reporting concerns about attendance to the Deputy Headteacher responsible for respective year groups
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Attend KCC attendance training and strategy meetings

3.5 The Family Liaison Officer

- Monitoring the punctuality of students to morning registration on a daily basis
- Supporting parents and students to improve punctuality and attendance

- Carry out first day absence calls
- Working with the Attendance Officer to monitor and respond to attendance trends and patterns
- Updating the school's attendance tracking sheet to ensure all actions taken are recorded
- Attend attendance improvement meetings with parents/carers, Directors of Study and/or Deputy Headteachers
- Attend KCC attendance training and strategy meetings

3.6 Staff

Staff are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at the following times:

- Form Tutors will take a register at 8.30am and 1.50pm - Morning and afternoon registration
- The register will close at 8.40am and 2.00pm. Students arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence. After the registers have closed, students must report to the school office to sign in with the school's Family Liaison Officer, where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded.
- Class teachers will take a register within the first 15 minutes of each lesson taught.

3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school every day and is punctual
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- If late, sign in with the school's Family Liaison Officer

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

Students will be marked as:

- 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 also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student 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

4.2 Unplanned absence

- The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence before 8.30am. Attendance is a safeguarding issue therefore it is crucial that if a child has an unplanned absent the school is notified on the first day of absence.
- Parents/carers should do this either by emailing attendance@opgs.org or by calling the school on 01622 726683 Option 1.
- 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 student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a 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.

4.3 Planned absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.
- Parents should complete the school's request for absence form unless the absence is for a medical/dental appointment in which case a copy of the appointment letter/card is sufficient.
- We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence using the school's request for absence form.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student 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

- Students who arrive to school late, without good reason, on two occasions in one week will be given a Late Detention which will take place after school. These detentions will be run by the Directors of Study. Parents will be given notification of a detention 24 hours in advance.
- The school's Family Liaison Officer will discuss frequent lateness with parents/carers
- If lateness is persistent despite these measures the school will liaise with KCC Attendance and Inclusion Service

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the student'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 student's emergency contacts, the school may liaise with external services such as the police.
- 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 KCC Attendance and Inclusion Service.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

- Parents/carers have been informed that they can use Edulink to monitor their child's attendance in a statutory month and a statutory academic year.
- Academic monitoring reports to parents/carers also contain a student's statutory attendance to date.
- The school's Family Liaison Officer will make contact with parents/carers where patterns and trends of attendance and/or punctuality are of concern
- Directors of Study will invite parents/carers to an attendance improvement meeting where patterns and trends of attendance and/or punctuality do not improve
- The school will report to parents where a referral to KCC Attendance and Inclusion Service is necessary
- The school will send attendance letters at least three times a year to all parents/carers where attendance is below 90% and/or of concern.
- The school will use the Headteacher's Newsletters and Information Evenings for parents/carers to highlight the importance of attendance to school of 95% or above

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student 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 student is authorised to be absent for.

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 and the school should be notified using the request for absence form. This can be found on the school website or can be forwarded to parents by the school's Attendance Officer.

The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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 student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students 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.
- Representing county or country in national or international events.
- Weddings and funerals of immediate family members - day of the event only

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Family Holidays
- Events such as sports tours which do not involve a student representing county or country
- Confusion over school dates
- Child's/family birthday
- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Shopping trip

5.2 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 student 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

The school actively promotes and 100% attendance through:

- Using Headteacher's Newsletters and Information Evenings for parents/carers to highlight the importance of 95% or above attendance
- The school's achievement point system rewards 100% attendance on a termly and yearly basis

7. Attendance monitoring

The school utilises the following:

- FFT allows the school, on a fortnightly basis to benchmark attendance data for the school and groups within the school, against national and regional percentages
- FFT allows the school to monitor and track trends across a term, both whole school and groups within school
- The school utilises a colour coded attendance tracking sheet which is updated weekly for year groups and other groups within school. Directors of Study use this to track attendance and record action taken. This allows the school to monitor the impact of actions taken by the Family Liaison Office, Family Liaison Officer and/or Deputy Headteachers
- FFT attendance analysis will be shared this with the governing body on a monthly basis as part of the school's key performance indicators

7.1 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.2 Reducing persistent and severe absence

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

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school and/or KCC Attendance and Inclusion Service for students who are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance such as NELFT, CYPMHS and Integrated Children's Services.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum on a yearly basis by Ms J Bevan. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Curriculum and Pupil Progress Committee.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student 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 student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student 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 student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day