

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Introduction

This policy is available on the website and will be made available to Parent/Guardians on request.

This policy has regard to the following guidance and advice:

Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
National minimum standards for boarding schools 2022 Education and Skills Act 2008;
Childcare Act 2006;
Sponsorship Duties (UKVI, July 2023)
Education (Pupil Registration Regulations) 2006;
Equality Act 2010; and
Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)

It has regard for the guidance contained in

Working together to improve school attendance 2022 and Keeping children safe in education 2024. (DfE, August 2024)

(DfE, August 2024);

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1. Aims

Oakham School aspires to and expects high levels of attendance from all pupils. The school knows that good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

1.1 The aims of this policy are as follows:

- 1.1.1 to help to ensure a continuing whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance; enabling every pupil in the School to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the School;
- 1.1.2 to prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the school, reduce absence and set out the School's approach to the management of absence and any cases of non-attendance;
- 1.1.3 to recognise the link between attendance / absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
- 1.1.4 to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, awareness and inclusion.

2. Scope and application

- 2.1 This policy applies to the whole school
- 2.2 This policy is designed to address the specific statutory obligations on the School to record attendance and absence

3. Regulatory Framework

- 3.1 This policy has been written with due regard to the following school policies:
 - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
 - Missing Child Policy and procedures
 - Behaviour Policy
 - Admissions Policy

4. Publication and availability

- 4.1 This policy is published on the School website.
- 4.2 This policy will be sent to Parent/Guardians when pupils join the School, and Parent/Guardians will be reminded of it at the beginning of the school year and when the policy is updated.
- 4.3 This policy is available in hard copy on request.



5. The importance of good attendance

- 5.1 Oakham School recognises that good attendance habits, established early, are central to the School's ethos and culture. In building this culture, we:
 - 5.1.1 the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the School's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
 - 5.1.2 the connection between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions and/or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding, wellbeing and support for disadvantaged pupils.
 - 5.1.3 the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and Parent/Guardians.
 - 5.1.4 children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

6. School responsibilities

- 6.1 The School acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the school community.
- 6.2 The School will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and Parent/Guardians.
- 6.3 Where there are challenges to attendance, the school will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.
- 6.4 The School will respond to non-attendance and/or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the School's Terms and Conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.
- 6.5 The School has robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.



7. Staff responsibilities

7.1 The Designated Attendance Champions responsibilities are:

- i) to establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure the systems are followed by all staff;

7.1.1.1 to advise and support staff, children and Parent/Guardians where attendance is not in line with expectations.

- ii) to have oversight of and analyse attendance data; and

7.1.1.2 to communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and Parent/Guardians.

7.2 Staff with specific responsibilities for attendance

At Oakham School a pupil's Housemaster/Housemistress through their Matron or Senior Pastoral Assistant has day-to-day responsibility for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality.

Attendance is monitored by:

- a) a formal register taken accurately each morning and at lunch time.
- b) seeking explanations of absences when a pupil is absent from school.
- c) making enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and following up with a Parent/Guardian to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the School.
- d) looking out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and informing the DSLA of any specific concerns.
- e) dealing with lateness to registration consistently and promptly and considering appropriate sanction for pupils who arrive late in line with the School's behaviour and discipline policies;

7.3 All staff and volunteers

The School ensures that all staff understand the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances.

Training and guidance on attendance are given on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.

As a minimum this will include all staff understanding of the importance of good attendance on attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances, and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances.



8. School arrangements

- 8.1 The School will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow up absence.

9. Monitoring attendance

- 9.1 The School undertakes regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the School and develop strategies to address them. Such analysis may include:
- 9.1.1 Monitoring weekly attendance and being aware of patterns and trends and, if required, providing support in a targeted way to pupils and families.
 - 9.1.2 Conducting analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends across whole school, year group, cohort and or individuals.
 - 9.1.3 Where required, devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.

Additional information regarding a UKVI pupil.

As a sponsor for pupils under the Home Office Child Pupil visa (formerly known as Tier 4 visa), the School is aware of its responsibility to report promptly to the United Kingdom Visas and Immigration (UKVI) department of the Home Office in cases where a pupil with child pupil visa is found to have contravened the terms of their visa.

UKVI sponsor guidance states that a sponsored pupil's attendance must not drop below 80% or miss 10 consecutive days of unauthorised absence. If any of the above occurs the school/college will assess the reasons behind this and if necessary, the school/college will report this on the SMS as per the sponsor guidance.

If any of the above occurs the school will assess the reasons behind this and follow this policy guidance on identifying factors that are impacting the pupil's attendance and implement support as appropriate. Matters which may lead to a decline in attendance may include:

- Medical Leave
- Family emergencies
- Approved academic trips

Early Identification of matters that are impacting on a pupil's ability to attend lessons is crucial in resolving the issues successfully.



10. Pupil responsibilities

School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. Oakham therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and has systems in place to reward good attendance and manage poor attendance.

10.1 Pupils should be aware that:

10.1.1 they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each school

10.1.2 they are expected to arrive on time to roll calls and attend all timetabled

10.1.3 they should not leave a lesson or the School site without permission or otherwise in accordance with School rules;

10.1.4 they should engage with the School's arrangements for recording and managing attendance as set out in this policy;

10.1.5 any unexplained absence will be followed up;

10.1.6 persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the School. This may take the form of:

- i) offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance.
- ii) communication with Parent/Guardians.
- iii) reporting to other agencies such as children's social care; and
- iv) sanctions against them or their Parent/Guardians in line with the School's Rules and Expectations Policy.

10.1.7 If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending school or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff, although the School encourages them to speak to their Housemaster/ Housemistress, Matron, Senior Tutor, Senior Pastoral Assistant in the first instance. Pupils are entitled to expect this information to be managed sensitively.

11. Additional needs

11.1 The School recognises some pupils may find it harder than others to attend school and will work with those pupils and Parent/Guardians to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

11.2 The School will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that affects their ability to attend school regularly. Suitable strategies will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance.

11.3 Where barriers are outside of the School's control, the School will work with Parent/Guardians and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for Early Help.

11.4 Where a pupil has an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the School will communicate with the local authority where the pupil's attendance falls or the School becomes aware of barriers to attendance that relate the pupils needs.



12. Parent/Guardian responsibilities

- 12.1 The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an effective, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every Parent/Guardian to make sure their child receives that education. This means pupils must attend every day that the School is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the School.
- 12.2 The School will help Parent/Guardians to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development.
- 12.3 Expectations the School places on Parent/Guardians can be found in Appendix 1 of this policy.
- 12.4 Parent/Guardians are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the Parent/Guardian Contract and failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the School about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the Parent/Guardian is treating the School unreasonably.

13. Information sharing

- 13.1 Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to Government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education.

14. Record keeping and confidentiality

- 14.1 All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.
- 14.2 The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The School's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has published privacy notices on its website which explain how the School will use personal data.
- 14.3 Attendance records will be kept electronically for 6 years and backed up monthly.



Appendix 1 School arrangements

1 Managing attendance

The School monitors, records and shares data about pupil attendance as part of its duty to safeguard and protect pupils. To promote attendance, it accurately completes admission and attendance registers as is required as set out in Appendix 2 and 3 respectively.

The School expects all pupils to be present at school for the whole of the school day from registration at 08:15 to end of the school day 16:30 as standard, 17:50 if staying for activities.

1.2 The role of Parent/Guardians

The School expects all Parent/Guardians to:

- make any application for an authorised leave of absence at the earliest opportunity;
- notify the School of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible in accordance with this policy and when doing so, give an accurate explanation for this; and
- cooperate with the School to explore possible barriers to attendance and to improve it where attendance has been raised as an issue.

Parent/Guardians of day and weekly boarding pupils should ensure their child attends School by 08:15 for morning registration. They should ensure they collect pupils in line with agreed times submitted at the start of term.

1.3 Registration and attendance checks

- **Morning registration is at 08:15.**
- **Afternoon registration is at 13:15.**
- Once the morning and afternoon registers close, a pupil will be recorded as absent if not present with the correct coding used.
- If a pupil is absent when the register started being taken, but arrives before the register is closed, they will be recorded as a late arrival (code L).
- If a pupil arrives after the register has closed but before the end of the session, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (code U) and the reasons given/not given will be recorded.
- Registers will also be taken at the beginning of each lesson or activity; any absences will be followed up. Staff are expected to complete this within 15 minutes of the lesson/activity starting.
- The lesson/activity register should be taken on ISAMS (academic lessons) or SOCS (sport/co-curricular sessions). Any reported absences will be followed up as per school procedures.



1.4 Reporting absence

If a pupil is to be absent from school for any reason, the Parent/Guardian should contact the pupils House by email / telephone by 08:00am on the morning of absence.

Where a pupil is ill, the School should be notified of the nature of the illness.

1.5 Applications for an authorised leave of absence

Authorised absence means that the School has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away (granted an authorised leave of absence) or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

- Parent/Guardians must inform the School in writing and seek permission from the Senior Deputy Head if their child is going to miss more than 24 hours of school. No pupil should be leaving school for Long Leave Outs and school holidays before the calendared date and time stated in the Red Book. Early departures will be classified as 'unauthorised' unless permission is given.
- Term time is for education. This is the priority. Pupils have a significant number of weeks off school, so it is right to prioritise attendance during term time. The default school policy should be that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Pupils must honour any school commitment that they have been selected for, including after-school and weekend fixtures, unless adequate notice has been given. Pupils who miss school commitments without giving their teachers at least 72 hours' notice (i.e. the Wednesday before a Saturday fixture) will be sanctioned, in line with the School Rules.
- The School will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances, the pupil's past attendance record and the relevant background context behind the request.
- Apart from illness or where there are additional needs, no pupil should be away from School without prior permission.
- Every attempt should be made to ensure dental or medical appointments are made during school holidays except in cases of emergency when the pupil's House should be informed.
- A leave of absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which Parent/Guardians and pupils belong. Parent/Guardians are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence in advance.



1.6 Long-term absence

- When pupils are absent and are unable to come into school, access to learning resources will be provided via MS Teams and MS OneNote, where possible. However, it should be recognised that the best place for learning is in school.
- The School will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a period of 15 school days or more. A referral can then be made under the term Child Missing from Education (CME).
- The School also recognises its wider reporting duties following deletions from the admission register, in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, to help identify children who are missing education and/or otherwise at risk of harm.

1.7 Long Term Sickness

- Where a pupil has a long-term illness, after a period of 15 school days, the school may require supporting medical information where appropriate. Regular contact will be kept between the School and pupil and/or Parent/Guardians and every effort will be made to ensure the pupil is supported back to education at an appropriate time. This may well be a phased return.
- Where a pupil is not well enough to attend school but is deemed well enough to continue their education from home, the School will make every effort to provide an appropriate amount of work to facilitate a phased return to education. The School will be mindful of the pupil's needs and will work with Parent/Guardians to ensure the pupil is not overwhelmed.

This will be reviewed by the Head of Section and Housemaster/mistress, feeding back to the Deputy Head Pastoral and the DSL.



Appendix 2 Admissions register

2.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended), the School will:

- a) maintain an admissions register of pupils admitted to the School (also known as the school roll); and
- b) inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the School's admission register at non-standard transition points.

The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil in the School, including their date of admission, information regarding Parent/Guardians and carers and details of the School they last attended and if they are a boarder or day pupil.

Where the School notifies the local authority that the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admissions register, the School will provide it with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil.
- the full name and address of any Parent/Guardian with whom the pupil lives.
- at least one telephone number of any Parent/Guardian with whom the pupil lives.
- the full name and address of the Parent/Guardian who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable.
- name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable.
- the grounds (prescribed in regulation 8) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.



Appendix 3 Attendance register

- i) Attendance of compulsory school-aged pupils is recorded and monitored in accordance with the statutory requirements and the School has adopted the national codes system to enable it to monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations.
- ii) The attendance of boarding pupils will be recorded in the same way so attendance can be monitored, unexplained absences are investigated, and the School can ensure their safety and welfare.
- iii) The School will also use these records to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) and work with pupils and Parent/Guardians to resolve any issues before they become entrenched.
- iv) The School is required by law to take attendance registers twice daily – once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.
- v) Registration will also be taken at the start of every lesson and or activity. All pupils are expected to attend.
- vi) On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil is:
 - Present
 - Absent
 - Attending an approved educational activity
 - Unable to attend school due to an exceptional circumstance

3.2 Recording absence

Absence will be recorded as set out in tables 1 and 2 below using national absence codes correlating to:

- i) authorised absence
- ii) excluded (while still on the admission register)
- iii) holiday authorised by the School
- iv) illness
- v) medical or dental appointments
- vi) religious observance
- vii) study leave
- viii) Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence



3.3 Authorised absence from school

All applications for an authorised leave of absence from school should be made with reasonable notice and addressed to the Senior Deputy Head.

Only exceptional circumstances will warrant an authorised leave of absence. The School will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and the relevant background context behind the request.

If an extended leave of absence is granted, it is for the Head to determine the length of the time the pupil is authorised to be away from School.

Absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which Parent/Guardians and pupils belong. Parent/Guardians are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence in advance.

3.4 Unauthorised absence

The "unauthorised absence" code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been sought or given and where the School is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence or delayed attendance meaning that the code for "unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance" is not appropriate. Examples include:

- i) holiday has not been authorised by the School or is more than the period agreed.
- ii) the reason for absence has not been provided.
- iii) a pupil is absent from school without authorisation.
- iv) a pupil arrives in school after registration has closed and without reasonable explanation.



Attendance codes Table 1

Code	Meaning	Type
/ \	Present at the school '/' morning '\ ' afternoon	Present Mark
B	Attending any other approved educational activity - Alternative Provision not arranged through the approved framework	Present Mark
C	Authorised Circumstance (see next page for breakdown)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual registered at another school • Attending Inclusion Centre • Attending Alternative Provision at another school site • CAMHS inpatient • Hospital education • Education at a secure / residential site • Off-site direction / managed move	Present Mark
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	Authorised Absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school or Term Time Leave not granted by the school	Unauthorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised Absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Authorised Absence
K	Attending education provision arranged by the Local Authority • Home Tutoring • Approved Framework for Alternative Provision • Blended Learning	Present Mark
L	Late arrival before the registers have closed	Present Mark
M	Attended a medical appointment	Authorised Absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Unauthorised Mark



O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	Unauthorised Absence
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Present Mark
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	Not expected to attend
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Must be used sparingly with revision opportunities in school.	Authorised Absence
T	Parent/Guardian travelling for occupational purposes, and the pupil has attended for at least 200 sessions in preceding 12 months.	Authorised Absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Unauthorised Absence
V	Attending an Educational Trip or Visit	Present Mark
W	Attending Work Experience	Present Mark
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	Not expected to attend
Y	Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause (see next page for breakdown)	Not expected to attend
Z	Prospective or previous pupil not on admission register	Not expected to attend



Attendance codes Table 2

Code	Meaning	Type
The Y code: Unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause, is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason:		
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	Not expected to attend
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	Not expected to attend
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed. For example, this may be due to damage or teacher strikes.	Not expected to attend
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed. For example, extreme weather, damage, no hot water, or heating.	Not expected to attend
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention. For example, in police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or detained under a sentence of detention.	Not expected to attend
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law. Contrary to or prohibited by any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease.	Not expected to attend
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. For example, an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending. The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not just the Parent/Guardian.	Not expected to attend
The C code: Authorised Absence is broken down into the following sub codes to provide better differentiation of the reason:		
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.	Authorised Absence
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised Absence
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.	Authorised Absence

Complete guidance can be found through the following link:

[Working together to improve school attendance](#). Specifically chapter 8.