

Oscott Manor School

Pupil Attendance Policy

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Oscott Manor School
Inspire Learning

1. Aims

Regular attendance at school is vital to maximise the educational opportunities that Oscott Manor School can offer each pupil. As a school we will seek to promote high levels of attendance for all pupils, to follow up all unexplained absences and identify any patterns in absence when they begin to emerge.

Attendance at school is mandatory and it is the parents' duty to ensure that any child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where they are registered.

There are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19):

- Pupils with symptoms of coronavirus should self-isolate and get a test
- If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household must self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test
- Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting a culture of regular good attendance with punctuality 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 and analyse attendance data, which in turn will inform future policy and practice.
- Maximising the attendance of all pupils by working with parents and carers, thus increasing achievement within school.
- Providing a school in which pupils feel welcomed, cared for, secure and valued as individuals.
- Monitoring, supporting and communicating with pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership to develop an action plan with parents and carers to resolve any issues or difficulties, including the offer of home visits.
- Providing home learning and daily safe and well calls for pupils who are absent due to self-isolation or shielding
- Providing access to laptops for pupils in order that they can access home learning

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

Although many children with autism also suffer with co-morbid conditions such as anxiety, this is not a reason to not attend school. The school will work closely with a range of partners from SEND, health and social care professions to ensure that reasonable adjustments are made in order that all children can access education.

Attendance below 90% is considered to be of significant concern and their families are contacted by the Pastoral Manager and offered support to make improvements. This is part of the school's early help offer. Support will be tailored to the individual needs of children and families.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and the **addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year**, 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](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [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.

The school also follows the statutory guidance set out in "Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School" December 2015

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools 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 once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent

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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **9.00am** and will be kept open until **9.20am**. The register for the second session will be taken at **12.55pm** and will be kept open until **1.15pm**.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on each day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by **8.50am** or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). Parents/ carers must inform the school via the school reception phone number which is 0121 360 8222. Out of hours a message may be left. **Contact must be made with the school directly by parents/carers, as we are unable to accept messages passed on by pupil guides.**

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. In these cases, pupils may be referred to the school nurse.

Pupils **MUST NOT** attend school if they have symptoms of coronavirus as this can put others at risk.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences which should be presented to the Pastoral Manager.

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**.

If a medical appointment is necessary then a copy of the appointment letter or card should be produced and a copy made available to the Pastoral Manager in advance.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance to the Headteacher.

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, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Minutes late will be recorded for monitoring purposes.

At Oscott Manor School, many pupils access travel assistance in order to attend school. We understand that some pupils are occasionally late due to school transport issues and will record this in order to provide additional context.

Ongoing punctuality issues will be monitored by the Pastoral Manager and where necessary parents and carers will be contacted to begin to develop an action plan to reduce missed learning hours. If a pupil has ongoing punctuality issues due to school transport, this will be escalated to Travel Assist and parents will be informed.

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.

The Pastoral Manager will follow up any absences after the close of registers and ensure all absences are correctly coded. The school must be informed via telephone by a parent or carer prior to this if an absence is to be authorised. Informing a pupil guide, fellow pupil or other person of an absence is not sufficient.

Keyworkers will phone families on each day of an absence from school to check on safety and wellbeing. They will also offer advice and guidance on accessing home learning.

Home visits will be conducted in accordance with section 6 of this policy. Home visits may be attempted outside of this, at the discretion of the leadership team. Home visits may be carried out by any member of staff.

3.6 Reporting to parents

We report to parents on attendance annually through the pupil reports and also in the pupil annual review. Parents and carers can request a copy of their child's school attendance certificate at any time.

4. 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'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- death of parent/carers or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carers recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (leave request to be made within 6 months of recovery and medical evidence required)
- leave for armed forces personnel who are prevented by operational duties to take their leave at any other time
- leave of absence already granted by a previous school or local authority (granted within the last six months and supported by documentation from the previous school)

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. Headteachers are within their rights to turn such applications down and refuse authorisation for parents/carers to take their children out of school during term time.

Parents and carers should plan all holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments where genuine and/or proven by producing a letter or appointment card – 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

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 academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance and addressing persistent absence or lateness

At Oscott Manor School we maintain daily contact with parents through the pupil planner or by telephone or email in order to communicate about and resolve any issues and acknowledge successes or achievements. Regular contact with parents and carers promotes positive attendance. All pupils have a key worker to be the link between home and school.

Our Pastoral Manager offers additional support for persistent absentees or those with a significant immediate attendance concern. The Pastoral Manager takes rapid action to promote regular attendance and this will include:

- Daily attendance phone contact to establish reasons for absence and offer support and guidance***
- Daily home visits for pupils who are on a child protection plan and are absent from school***
- A home visit for every pupil on the fifth day of any absence from school***
- An offer of early help for families in need of additional support***
- An offer for parents or carers to access the Teen Life training specifically aimed at parents or carers of autistic children between the ages of 10 and 16***
- School attendance review meetings and action planning***

6. Attendance monitoring

The Pastoral Manager monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents/carers are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

Parents/carers are expected to call the school each day a child is ill.

We will liaise with parents/carers daily to discuss the reasons for non-attendance and offer support if appropriate.

If after contacting parents/carers a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will meet with parents for action planning and will consider seeking consent for an early help assessment.

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

Pupil-level absence data 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.

At Oscott Manor School we use attendance data to track the attendance of individual pupils as well as using data to identify whether there are particular groups of pupils whose absence is a cause for concern. We use data to monitor and evaluate children who are identified as being in need of intervention and support.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The Governing Board

The governing board's safeguarding, inclusion and behaviour committee is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a termly basis. It also holds 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 supports the Pastoral Manager and other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and liaises with the Local Authority to issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The Pastoral Manager

The Pastoral Manager:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with Local Authority Attendance Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Decides with the Headteacher approval, where necessary, the correct attendance codes to use

7.4 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a twice daily basis, by taking the register and submitting this information to the school office via paper or electronically.

7.5 Administrative staff

Administrative staff will take calls from parents about absence and inform the Pastoral Manager and keyworkers.

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 with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

10. Fast track to attendance

The school follows the “fast track to attendance guidance” adopted by Birmingham City Council. This is an early help approach to improving pupil attendance.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance. In addition the following advice will be followed:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-attendance-recording-for-educational-settings>

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced and partial enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

KEY

Present
Authorised absence
Unauthorised absence
Approved Education Activity (Present)
Not counted in possible attendances