

Oxfordshire Hospital School Attendance Policy

Person responsible for Policy:	Headteacher
Date to Governors:	
Date Agreed:	
Review Due:	September 2020
Is this Policy to appear on school website:	
Is this Policy to be displayed in Reception:	

Headteacher's Signature:	
Date:	
Signature of Chair of the Governors:	
Date:	

Contents

1. Aims	2
2. Legislation and guidance	2
3. School procedures.....	3
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence.....	5
6. Attendance monitoring.....	6
7. Roles and responsibilities	6
8. Monitoring arrangements.....	7
9. Links with other policies.....	7
Appendix 1: attendance codes.....	8

1. 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

Attendance in education or training is a legal requirement between the ages of 5 -18 years. However we may also have Rising 5's who will access school from time to time. Young people are entitled to formal education during this phase of their lives. It is important that they receive the entitlement for their present and future lives.

Many pupils attending Oxfordshire Hospital School are highly vulnerable and have greater needs than the majority of their mainstream counterparts. This means that they may have more genuine absences from school for medical reasons or experience greater social needs than others. It is our responsibility as educators to do all we can to encourage and support regular and frequent school attendance.

Parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school. Oxfordshire Hospital School is committed to ensuring that families understand how important this is. We give high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are factors which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and support in partnership with parents/carers and pupils a solution to those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) 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](#)
- [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.

3. 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 once during 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.

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 – as soon as practically possible.

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.

The Leader of Learning should be notified in the event of any absence.

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.

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.

The Leader of Learning should be notified in advance of a medical or dental appointment.

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

3.5 Following up absence & lateness

Outreach

Pupils who arrive late will be marked with an L, an explanation from the parent/carer /pupil must be given to confirm why the pupil is late.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact Oxfordshire Hospital School on the first morning of the child's absence. This can be done by leaving a message on the office answering machine or phoning when the office opens at 8.00am. In any case a parent/carer should contact prior to the pupils start time/taxi collection time. If this contact is not made Oxfordshire Hospital School will contact the parent/carer by telephone or, if the parent is unobtainable, send a text or email and/or write a letter requesting information.

Oxfordshire Hospital School will continue trying to contact the parent/carer to obtain a reason for the absence. The schools head of Outreach may be informed and the parent/carer may be invited to Oxfordshire Hospital School for a meeting. The meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school.

Highfield

The Highfield unit is an acute inpatient psychiatric unit with 4 day places available.

The OHS school provision at Highfield is a central part of the daily structure for all patients. All patients have a personalised timetable that takes account of both their current health needs and their educational needs.

All patients are expected to attend school, however due to the severity of their mental health needs this can be challenging at times.

It is the responsibility of all Highfield staff to encourage attendance at school. If a young person feels unable to attend a lesson the following procedures are in place:

- The teacher on collect duty will try to encourage them upstairs; this will often involve an agreed time scale for them coming upstairs, and the teacher will then go back if they have not arrived.
- The subject teacher may go and speak to the young person to ascertain what is preventing them from attending.
- If a young person is still unable to attend the lesson the nursing team will be alerted and asked to encourage or explore what is preventing them from attending.

There are times when a young person is too unwell to attend group or 1-1 sessions in the school area. If at all possible they will be taught on the ward and in HDU. All decisions about education input for this group of young people is made in consultation with Senior Medical Staff.

Children's' Hospital

The Children's Hospital and Helen House Hospice are inpatient units and in addition there are some day patients at the Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre.

- Attendance at hospital school is dependant on the pupils' health during admissions.
- If pupils are deemed to be medically well enough to engage but choose not to, teachers work collaboratively with them and their parent/carer to try and negotiate an agreed timetable of attendance.
- If this is unsuccessful, and where appropriate, the medical team are often called on to help to encourage attendance.

- In the event of non-attendance during admissions, teachers strive to maintain contact with the pupil and their parent/carer with the aim of establishing attendance at a later point
- Home schools maintain responsibility for tracking and recording attendance for pupils on their roll during and after admissions. The hospital school supports this by encouraging & helping parents to keep home schools informed of their child's attendance and by actively supporting good lines of communication between parents, home schools, alternative provisions and the medical team.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Oxfordshire Hospital School will report pupils' attendance and unauthorised absences to home and to the pupils' home school in accordance with the legal requirement outlined in the latest government circular.

3.7 Missing persons

If a pupil in our Outreach Service does not arrive at their specified teaching location and we are unable to make contact with their parent or other named contact, we may need to report them to the police as a missing person.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

It is acknowledged that due to individual needs of pupils at Oxfordshire Hospital School, the Headteacher may apply special consideration to requests for compassionate leave and where a parent/carer can demonstrate external funding has been awarded to a family for a holiday. This decision will be made in conjunction with the pupils' home school.

It may be necessary for the school to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of the reason for absence e.g. medical certificate or a letter from the GP.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

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

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.

6. Attendance monitoring

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 after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer. 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.

1. All weekly attendance should be sent to the school office by the end of the staff members' working week.
2. All absent pupils will be contacted on the first day of their absence if no contact has been made by the parent/carer.
3. A non-attendance form will be completed on the day of the absence with as much information as possible and sent to the attendance officer as soon as possible. Alternatively, the staff member can phone or text the OTS Attendance Officer with this information.
4. If no contact is made with a parent/carer the key teacher must show what action they have taken to contact the family, the same day or the next.
5. A text message from a parent must be followed up by a phone call.
6. If the pupil is absent for 5 consecutive days, a doctor's note must be requested.
7. If staff are concerned about the reasons given for a pupil's absence then the key teacher and head of sector will be informed of any concerns and the home school will be contacted.
8. If a child has three consecutive unauthorised absences then the attendance officer at the home school will be informed and a review meeting may be convened to discuss if OTS is the most appropriate provision to meet a child's educational needs.
9. The non-attendance form will be kept as an individual record for each pupil in a pupil non-attendance monitoring file.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least 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 also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.

7.3 The attendance officer

The administrator with responsibility for attendance:

- Maintain a record of pupil attendance on the schools computer system.
- Telephone pupils' homes as necessary re attendance
- Pass on information re attendance to the relevant staff.
- Keep records and inform outside agencies as necessary to comply with local and national policy and procedures
- Store notes from home in the pupil file.

7.4 Teachers & HLTAs

- Keep an accurate and up-to-date attendance register of their pupils.
- Correct any inaccuracies which may occur in the attendance register.
- Follow up any absences as outlined above (see "pupil absence monitoring system")
- Liaise with the Head of Sector about attendance.
- Inform office staff if they receive any communication that a pupil will need to leave part way through the day.
- Monitor pupils' attendance and punctuality to lessons.
- Notify the safeguarding lead of absences of pupils on the Child protection register.

7.4 LoLs

- As and when the need arises, enable attendance and lateness to be discussed with parent/carers and the home school and appropriate action to be taken.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years 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

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

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
---	------------------------	---