



CHIPPING NORTON SCHOOL

WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY (NON STATUTORY)

Date reviewed:	June 2019
Next review:	June 2023 (every 4 years)
Member of staff responsible:	Natalie Hancock
Committee:	Impact Committee

Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Purpose of the policy

Why Regular Attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Make clear our expectations to all parties, in our Home School Agreement
- Give you details on attendance in our Heads of Year Letters 3 times a year
- Report to you through your child's Progress Report, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Celebrate good attendance by rewarding house points during tutor time;
- Reward good or improving attendance through Celebration Assemblies
- Award prizes for those pupils who achieve 100% attendance and publish high performing tutor groups.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. If this occurs, school will require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Excessive illness without medical evidence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, never cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times/routines
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;
- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence – you must do this even if you have already telephoned us; If no reason is given within 2 weeks the absence will become unauthorised
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Pastoral Leaders and/or Deputy Headteacher if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90%

If a student is away from school for three days without any communication from home and communication from school has not been successful then the student will be reported as a missing person. A letter will be sent home explaining the communication that has been attempted and asking the family to contact the school as a matter of urgency.

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to Oxfordshire County Council, County Attendance Team. The school will include details of the action they have taken.

For detailed procedures and roles and responsibilities see **Appendix A**

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your current contact numbers at all times. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Registration Procedures and Lateness

- 1 Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.40am. The registers will remain open for 50 minutes until 9.30am
- 2 Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.
- 3 In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered.
- 4 Afternoon registration will be at 12:25 and the registers will close at 12:30
- 5 Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late (L) before registers close.
- 6 When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are **outside** school hours but we acknowledge that this is not always possible.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parents/carers. The Attendance Officer will liaise with the County Attendance Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring, parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. We would encourage contact with the school at this point to discuss the issues. If it continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- To his age, ability and aptitude and
- To any special needs he may have
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

A pupil becomes a '**persistent absentee**' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for any reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be contacted. In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the County Attendance Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning per parent/carer, per child (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice for prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. This can result in a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500, a Community Order, Parenting Order or ultimately a custodial sentence). The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

Alternatively, parents/carers or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513 attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Penalty Notice may be considered in the following circumstances:

- At least 20 sessions (10 school days) are lost due to unauthorised absence in a period of no more than 10 weeks
- A leave of absence that has not been approved due to exceptional circumstances during term time, of at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a period of no more than 5 weeks
- Persistent late arrival at school after registration is closed, equivalent to 20 sessions of unauthorised absence in a period of no more than 10 weeks.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work. We will also ensure that the student receives the necessary support in order for them to feel comfortable in returning to school.

Exceptional Leave

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. It is widely known that:

- The link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable
- Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment.
- Graduates earn, on average, double that of young people that leave school with no qualifications
- All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave
- The Head Teacher may wish to meet personally with every family applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment
- Exceptional Leave is most unlikely to be authorised in Years 2, 6, 9 and 11
- Exceptional leave is most unlikely to be authorised when a student's attendance is less than 95%
- Exceptional leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy
- Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable
- Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process

The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave'. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days you will each receive a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated the County Attendance Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.

Attendance Targets

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Oxfordshire.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local Authority & the Department for Education. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment.

Monitoring and Evaluation

This policy will be monitored by the Impact Committee and reports made to the governing body at various points throughout the year. The policy will be reviewed every four years. The review will consider the impact of attendance on academic achievement of individuals and of groups. It will also be reviewed in terms of behaviour and inclusion. Exclusions will also be discussed at every Impact Committee meeting as these also impact upon the attendance figures.