



Oxenhope Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy



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A Jones	March 24	September 24

We are a community where each person is valued by God. We nurture confidence, delight and discipline in seeking the skills needed to shape life well.

Life in all its fullness; John Chapter 10 v 10.

School Vision

We provide the rich soil allowing children and adults to flourish and develop deep roots. We nurture **growth**, enabling children and adults to thrive as our Christian values blossom in their lives. We cultivate a sense of pride in our rural **community** where children and adults are **loved** and valued.

May our children flourish in their youth like well-nurtured plants. Psalm 144 v 12.

Throughout our curriculum and school life, along with our school vision, these three golden strands permeate through everything we do.

Community

Jesus often spoke of unity in our communities and encouraging one another on our journey. He spoke of bearing each other's burdens in love and helping those in need.

'Live in harmony with one another.' Romans 12 v 16



Love

It says in the Bible that God is Love and encompasses all that is loving and good. Jesus showed the ultimate unconditional love when he laid down his life for us on the cross. Therefore, this love should lead to a desire to love other people.

'Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us.' Ephesians 5 v 2



Growth

Just like a plant, we must endure the difficult times along with the good; but God has sent us his Holy Spirit to help and strengthen us so we can bear fruit and grow in the likeness of Christ.

'Grown in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.' 2 Peter 3 v 18



This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- Keeping children safe in education
- BDAT attendance policy
- Oxenhope C of E Primary School Safeguarding and children protection policy
- Child missing in education (within the Safeguarding and children protection policy)

Introduction

We aim to ensure that all children attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all our pupils.

Some pupils and families find it harder than others to attend school. This policy sets out how school staff will work with pupils, parents, and partners to promote, encourage, nurture and support regular attendance at school and remove any barriers to attendance.

Aims

- To set clear expectations and aspirations that all pupils have a high standard of school attendance and punctuality.
- To improve children's attainment through good attendance.
- To make attendance a priority for everyone.
- To ensure there is a clear process to identify and address emerging attendance concerns
- To work effectively with parents, pupils, and partners through building trusted relationships to work together to remove barriers to attendance.

To achieve these aims for our pupils, we are committed to the following:

- a welcoming, stimulating and safe learning environment;
- for all staff to feel happy to come to school to work with pupils, developing them to their full potential;
- listen to parents and pupils to understand barriers to attendance
- build trusted relationships with parents and pupils where attendance concerns can be discussed, understood.
- high expectations of our pupils and all staff;
- a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum;
- recognise and celebrate achievements in all areas of school life;
- equal access to all aspects of the curriculum and school life;
- high quality teaching using a variety of teaching strategies;
- a range of resources that are effectively used to support and challenge learning;
- provide experiences, which will develop our pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural understanding;

- support, guidance and training for all those who teach and work with our children;
- foster and maintain links with our wider community

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body

- The governing board 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

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

The designated leader responsible for attendance

The designated leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- 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 pupils and families

The attendance link officer (LA based)

The school attendance link officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data alongside the school attendance leader
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Working with the school and families to support with persistent absence
- Advising the school when to issue fixed-penalty notices, when needed

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Monitor the online absence form twice a day
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Talk to the school if they are finding attending challenging

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Work with families to attend school every day on time
- Ensure they help their families so they can arrive on time

Categorising Absence and Attendance

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department for Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.

Leave of Absence

Since September 2013, changes to Government regulations and guidance mean that Headteachers can no longer authorise leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. All absences associated with a holiday (without exceptional circumstance) during term time will be marked as unauthorised within the register. Any parents known to have removed their child from school for the sole purpose of a holiday may be referred to the Local Authority and be issued with a penalty notice fine or referred to the Local Authority to consider prosecution.

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Oxenhope C of E Primary School leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Oxenhope C of E Primary School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, the leave will not be considered by the Headteacher, and it will be marked as unauthorised.

Oxenhope C of E Primary School will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made.

A penalty notice request or a referral for prosecution may be submitted to the Local Authority should:

- The parent fails to submit a leave of absence request in advance of taking the leave.

- A longer period is taken more than the agreed number of days.
- It is found out after the child has returned to school that the family has taken a holiday and lied to school about their child's absence

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated (please read the safeguarding and child protection policy).

Supporting families with medical and SEND needs including appointments and absence due to illness:

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible.

Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must report to the school office and sign out using the computer system.

No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily.

In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging a pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend school-led support meeting as an appropriate early intervention strategy.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition or SEND need, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support. We will also consider whether an Educational Health and Care Plan is required.

When a child is struggling to attend school due an SEND need a huge amount of compassion is needed when working with the family. We will create a bespoke plan to support the child and family ensuring that this is then discussed at any further review meetings about the child's needs. We may consider a reduced timetable, remote learning or further support from the SCIL team. However the school will look at this on a case by case basis.

Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Oxenhope C of E Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority.

Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils are among the lowest achieving groups of pupils at every key stage in education, although some GRT pupils achieve very well at school. There are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of GRT pupils.

Schools and Local Authorities can make a big difference to their life chances through:

- Clear high expectation of all pupils, regardless of their background
- An inclusive culture that welcomes all communities
- Strong engagement from parents

In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted.

This provision applies only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around West Yorkshire, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school, then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. Oxenhope C of E Primary School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended Oxenhope C of E Primary School in the last 18 months.

Parents can register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at Oxenhope C of E Primary School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it is accepted as such by the school.

The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes

- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend

Our Procedures

Register Keeping and Recording

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended by 2016 regulations, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Late Arrival at School

At Oxenhope C of E Primary School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year.

The school day begins at 8.45am. The school doors open at 8.30am.

The school register will be taken at 8.45am.

All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign their children in on the computer and provide a reason for their absence.

If their arrival is after 9.05am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9.05am.

Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival.

Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return.

If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9.05am and where no reason for absence is known.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned.

- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out
- School will telephone home if a pupil leaves the school without permission.
- Visit the home of the pupil
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement
- Refer to an external agency/ support service to offer support, guidance, and advice
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or consulting with the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.

Attendance monitoring:

At Oxenhope C of E Primary School we will investigate any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

Attendance is monitored fortnightly in school, any pupils whose attendance is at 90% are reminded of the importance of regularly school attendance by class teachers and/or the school attendance lead.

Attendance is discussed regularly with parents, particularly at parent's evening.

Any pupil whose attendance dips under 90% will be sent a letter stating that there is a period of a month to improve school attendance. If attendance still does not improve then fast track proceedings will begin.

Certificates are awarded to children with 100% attendance on a termly basis. Certificates are awarded for a year of 100% attendance.

"Persistent absenteeism" (PA) as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

"Severe absence" (SA) as:

- Missing 50% or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Support Systems

At Oxenhope C of E School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life.

This may be related to problems at home and or in school.

Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Accessing support from our Attendance lead.
- Accessing support through our Educational Social Worker
- Signposting to and referrals made to mental health agencies or NHS services where appropriate.
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To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

Persistent Absence and the use of legal interventions

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when their attendance drops to 90% and below for any reason.

Over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 days).

Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects. The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA.

Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate and support appropriately as we understand that each case is different.

Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court. Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a financial penalty.

Reduced timetables

All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so.

We will not use a reduced timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour.

A reduced timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime or be provided with alternative provision. The time limit will be developed in cooperation with the family and the local authority.

The school must inform the local authority if they are using reduce timetables for children.

We will never put a reduced timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family.

Deletions from the Register and elective home education

At Oxenhope C of E Primary School we will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations.

In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving.

At Oxenhope C of E Primary School we will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

We follow our Child Missing Education procedures (found in the Safeguarding and Child protection policy) and will inform the Children Missing Education Team and admissions of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. The Bradford Elective Home Education Team will engage with the family and complete a home visit before removal can take place.

The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Bradford Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above.