



Charlton-on-Otmoor Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Next review due by:	February 2027	

Introduction

Charlton-on-Otmoor Primary School we recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing. Good attendance is essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child the best educational experience possible. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.

It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child 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.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance through discussion, newsletters and end of term reports. School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is designed to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

Each year the school will formally examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets. The school together with governors, will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals. This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Pupils Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school to prioritise attendance and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.
- Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and help leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve 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
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

Class teachers

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

School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on Arbor
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the head teacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Use Arbor to record reasons for absences and identify parents/carers to contact where the school has not been notified of a reason for an absence. This will be done before 10am each day.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends, on time, every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent. (e.g. sickness)
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Provide the school with more than 2 emergency contact number for their child. (if possible)
- When needed, to work with the school and local authority to understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with any support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the head teacher, who can be contacted via the school office on 01865 331239.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school regularly, aiming for an attendance rate of 100%
- arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day
- inform a member of staff of any problem or reason that may hinder them from attending school.

Recording Attendance

School Procedures related to attendance:

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session.

will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

Only the Headteacher, or a member of staff acting on their behalf, can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be considered unexplained and must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Gates open: 8.40am

Registration starts: 8.45am

Registration closes: 9.15am

The school day starts at 8.45am when children can begin to come into school. Registers are taken on arrival and will be closed at 9.15am the registers. If your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site – 'U', but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean that they have an unauthorised absence. The school may contact parents/carers regarding punctuality concerns.

The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00 and will be kept open until 1:30.

Authorised absence

Absence will be authorised if the school has notification from the parents that the child is ill. This should usually take the form of an initial notification at the beginning of the period of absence.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. By contacting the school in person or via phone or email (office@charltonono.co.uk).

If the child has a medical appointment with a healthcare professional (e.g. doctor or dentist) that cannot be made outside school hours, this will be considered as an authorised absence. Regular absences for medical reasons will be raised as a concern with parents.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

For other planned absences, parents should request the absence via the appropriate form that can be requested from the school office. The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See below for which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the 2024 school attendance regulations. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. If the school refuses a holiday request, but the child is still taken on holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. No absence will be authorised during statutory testing weeks.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, these can be requested from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, these can be requested from the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to)::

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) 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
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9 am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via 01865 331239, office@charltonono.co.uk.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

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We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Unexplained Absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact police or the MASH team.
 - Identify whether the absence is approved or not
 - Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
 - Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.
 - Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
 - Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention.

Lateness, persistent and severe absence

If the child is repeatedly late, the school will initially contact parents expressing concerns about late arrival and offering support if required. If the situation does not improve, the Head will invite the parents in to discuss the issue and may request the support of the County Attendance Team if appropriate.

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where out of school barriers are identified signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.
- If the issue persists take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory pupils' social care.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of siblings.
- Agree a joint approach for severely absent pupils with the local authority.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Where a pupil has complex barriers, mental or physical ill health or SEND and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

The school will:

- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure joint work with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupils' EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.
- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at boards and governing body meetings and with local authorities

- The school will inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.

Legal sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Strategies for promoting attendance

The school will take the following steps in order to raise and maintain levels of attendance:

- Ensuring that the school is a place to which the pupils want to come: a place where the pupils are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place in which the pupils feel safe and secure.
- Parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of the school and to build and support their pupils' enthusiasm for attending school.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Celebrate good or improving attendance
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Target support to pupils and cohorts identified as needing additional support with their attendance.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see above)

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via the annual end of year report or more regularly where the child is, or is at risk of becoming, a persistent absentee.

Each child's attendance record is shared with the parents as part of annual written reports and at Parent Consultations, attendance is discussed.

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be 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.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour and Relationships 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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		

T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes

O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays