



Attendance and Punctuality Policy (Primary and Junior)

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Version	Date	Author	Note of revisions
V1	Jan 2015	LW	
V2	22.08.2018	LW	Revisions to fully align with secondary policy including start times
V3	Oct 19	LW	Revision made due to the guidance on punctuality
V4	Oct 20	LW	Revision made to PA section
V5	Jan 22	LW	Policy review - no updates
V6	27.09.21	C.Gill	Appendix 2 - Addendum to the Attendance Policy in response to Covid-19 (from 1 September 2020) Dfe sub codes published 4th March 2021
V7		S Merifield / Jane Clayton	Appendix 2 removed Greater detail included under the 5 principles; in line with latest guidance. 'Practice' principle includes DfE recommendation on procedures. 'Parental engagement' section reflects DfE best practice flow chart Reference to new category of 'severe absence'

			<p>References to guidance updated to most recent versions</p> <p>Clarification on legal action</p> <p>Reference to Local Authority differences in protocols</p>
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ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Aims

Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) is committed to maximising educational opportunities and achievement for all children. For children to gain the best from their time at OGAT, it is vital that they achieve excellent attendance and punctuality. We strive for 100% attendance for all children. OGAT actively promotes good attendance and discourages unjustified absence. OGAT recognises that promoting good attendance and punctuality prepares children for the disciplines of adult working life.

The overarching strategic approach to improving attendance and reducing persistent absenteeism, across all key groups, is captured by our following **5 principles**:

1. Policies and procedures

OGAT, as 'One Outwood', has in place robust policies and procedures informed by the latest guidance and research. This is supported by explicit, and clear, best practice handbooks ensuring consistency and clarity. These are regularly reviewed and updated. All elements of the Dfe ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) guidance are used to inform best practice. We work in a collaborative and supportive way with the Local Authority and combine resources to support excellent attendance.

2. Personalisation

OGAT has a variety of different mechanisms of support available within its academies to promote good attendance through personalisation of an individual's needs. Each child will be supported on an individual basis tailored to their circumstances and that of their family. We will work with families and children to identify any barriers of attendance to school and create a personalised plan of intervention. This will ensure good attendance which will in turn support attainment and the child's wider wellbeing. In addition to the personalised support received from the academy, additional support may include collaboration with external agencies and/or the LA attendance support team where appropriate.

3. Practice

We:

Expect

Attendance matters - we aspire to high standards for all children and parents/carers and build a culture where all can be in the academy. Attendance is a priority across our Trust.

Monitor

Attendance data will be used to identify patterns of poor attendance and shared with parents/carers on a regular basis to ensure we can work together to resolve any issues.

Listen and understand

We will work together with children and parents to understand barriers to attendance and look at how we work together to resolve this. All academies will treat all children and parents with dignity and build a positive relationship between home and the academy.

Facilitate Support

We will help children and parents to access support that is available to overcome barriers, both inside and outside of school. This may include referrals to outside agencies, Early help or whole family plans.

Formalise Support

Where voluntary support isn't working or being engaged with the academy staff and external partners will work with parents/carers to explain the consequences and ensure support is in place to enable families to respond. This may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, statutory intervention or prosecution will be enforced to protect the child's right to an education.

4. Technology and Data

OGAT will effectively use technology and data systems to accurately communicate, track and monitor child attendance in order to promote the importance of school attendance and support families. We will use a range of technologies to communicate with parents and external agencies to ensure the continued promotion of the importance of school attendance.

Data systems will also be used to record and supply statutory returns to external agencies including the Department of Education.

5. Parental engagement

Many cases of poor attendance are a direct result of a lack of effective engagement between parents and the school. This may be through parents not contacting the school – either to report and talk about the reason for their child's absence and to seek support, or not being aware of, or understanding, the Academy's expectations.

Research shows that effective engagement often leads to increased attendance and it can also be linked to higher academic achievement and to a positive effect on children's attitude to learning and on their behaviour.

Whilst it is the parent's responsibility to contact the school to report an absence and provide a reason, communication has to be a two-way process. Research has shown that using a range of tools has made communication between parents and schools more timely, efficient, and productive.

Even when an Academy has established an effective engagement strategy there are likely to be some parents who remain hard to reach and it is this group of parents who are often those that a school needs to have more contact with. Their reluctance to engage may be due to their own experience of school or because they have difficulty with communicating, for example their own low literacy skills, their understanding of the English language or cultural differences.

Intervention by interaction is a key priority of our Trust and Academies support parents at all levels ensuring:

- increasing levels of communication dependent on need
- establishing trust
- support to remove barriers to attendance
- signposting to supportive agencies
- home visits
- allocation of mentors
- transport in exceptional circumstances
- parenting support

Guiding Principles

- Each Academy emphasises that it is the responsibility of everyone in the Academy to improve attendance and punctuality.
- OGAT needs to ensure that all its children access a full-time education which meets their needs and allows all to realise their potential.
- Each Academy will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each child can engage in all opportunities offered.
- Each Academy will work with children and their families to ensure every child has good attendance and punctuality.
- Each Academy will challenge the behaviour of those children and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Each Academy has an effective system of communication with parents/carers together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- Each Academy will continue to develop ICT-based attendance recording systems in order to provide accurate information and to use suitable tracking strategies to recognise any trends that can damage good attendance and learning.
- Each Academy will support all aspects of the Education Act 1996 and the Children's Act 2003: 'Every Child Matters' by implementing this policy in a consistent manner.
- Each Academy will have regard to the Equality Act 2010 and reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.

What you can expect from Outwood Grange Academies Trust:

- We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- We will work closely with parents/carers where a child's absence is cause for concern.
- We will support children to achieve good attendance and punctuality.
- We will support children returning to school after prolonged absence.

What Outwood Grange Academies Trust expects from Children:

- To attend regularly and on time on those days that it is open, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- To be punctual to all lessons

What Outwood Grange Academies Trust expects from Parents/Carers:

- To ensure their child attends the academy on those days it is open, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- To ensure their child attends every day the Academy is open unless they are too ill to do so.
- To avoid keeping their child away from the Academy for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation (see below).
- To avoid arranging holidays during term time
- To immediately inform the Academy Attendance Office / Academy if their child is unable to attend (by 8.00am where possible), including the reason for absence and expected date of return.
- Parents/carers should contact the Academy on each day of absence.

Registration

- The law requires the register to be taken twice a day – at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon session.
- Children are expected to arrive by 8.45 am (8.30 am in Brumby Junior).
- Children arriving after registers have closed, will be marked as unauthorised absence unless medical evidence (prescription etc.) has been provided or in exceptional circumstances.
- The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes (see Appendix I).
- Guidance on applying the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 can be found in [‘School Attendance’](#) guidance published in May 2022 by the DfE.

Punctuality

- Any child arriving late should sign in at the academy’s reception.
- Repeated lateness after the register has closed may be dealt with in the same way as absence. Parents/carers may be issued with a Penalty Notice or even prosecuted in the Magistrates Court.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the Academy has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the Academy can do this.

- Parents/carers should contact the academy's reception on the morning of absence, preferably before 8.00 am, giving a reason and an expected date of return.

- Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as:
 - looking after brothers/sisters/unwell parents/carers
 - birthdays
 - days out, e.g. The Yorkshire Show
 - shopping trips
 - family holidays where permission has not been granted (please note, family holidays during term time will not be approved).
 - special occasions, where the Academy does not agree that the absence should be granted.

- Medical/dental and other appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible. Where an appointment requires a child to take time out of school, parents/carers should ensure their child comes to school before the appointment, signs out and returns after the appointment. Confirmation of all appointments by way of appointment card, letter or electronic/text confirmation must be provided for any absence to be authorised. If medical appointments are attended at the start of the day, causing the child to arrive late to the academy, confirmation of the appointment (as above) must be provided.

- Following an explanation from parents/carers regarding a child's absence, the Academy will decide whether or not it accepts the explanation and authorise/unauthorise accordingly.

- An absence which hasn't been explained will remain as unauthorised.

- Parents/carers should not take their children out of school for holidays, days out, to attend sporting events, etc.

How we respond to Absence/Lateness

- If a child is absent at morning registration without contact from a parent/carer to explain the absence, the Academy will contact parents/carers. We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will always do our best to contact parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of their child's absence. Contact will be via automated message which will text mobile numbers for contacts with parental responsibility. Parents/carers are able to reply to the text message with a reason for their child's absence. Parents/carers contact the Academy directly to inform us of the reason for their child's absence. The academy asks that parents/carers ensure that their respective academy has their most up to contact details at all times.

- If no response is received to the automated service, the Academy may telephone, or in some cases, make a home visit to parents/carers to fulfil our legal duty to establish the whereabouts of their child. Unexplained absences may be followed up by text, letter or email.
- All absence notes will be retained for a period of 3 years.
- Where a child's absence is a cause for concern, the academy has a clear procedure that it uses to improve attendance. Contact and support may be by any or all of the following: telephone, letter, meeting in school, home visit, formal attendance monitoring, involvement of the Local Authority.
- Where no sustained improvement in attendance is demonstrated despite intervention, legal action may be issued in line with each relevant Local Authority's Code of Conduct.

Persistent/Severe Absence

A child becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. Any child whose attendance has reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention. Intervention may be via:

- An action plan to improve attendance will be created which may involve referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant Academy staff and parents/carers.
- Where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the Academy, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed.

Persistent Absence data is communicated to the relevant Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

Any absence interrupts the continuity of a child's learning. Government Legislation now states that only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence, please refer to the Department for Education for the latest guidance. **Parents/carers are strongly urged not to take children out of school for holidays during term time.** All requests for leave of absence are dealt with on a case by case basis and are always at the discretion of the Principal of the individual academy.

It is expected that a Request Form (or letter, depending on the academy) is submitted to the academy at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed absence. All factors that need to be considered must be stated on the request form. The Academy has the right to serve a Penalty Notice on parents/carers who insist on taking their children out of school without authorisation. Penalties require **each parent to pay a fine of £60 per child** if paid within 21 days or **£120** if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay within the specified timescale could result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure regular school attendance. This legislation also applies to any child taking leave of absence without prior notification to the Academy.

NB There may be a localised difference depending on the Local Authority protocols.

Re-integration following Long-term Absence

Where a child has been absent for a prolonged period of time, perhaps due to illness, the Academy will:

- Welcome the child back to the Academy and value their return
- Provide support for the child in consultation with parents/carers to enable a successful return to the Academy.
- Ensure that all relevant staff are informed of the circumstances.
- Work with other agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a successful outcome.
- Consider a personalised programme of return if appropriate
- Nominate a key member of staff to monitor and review the child's return.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

- It is the belief that all children are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is engaging and personalised to meet their needs. The curriculum is monitored and revised on an annual basis so that it meets the ability needs of all children.
- children are regularly informed of their attendance levels and, if appropriate, how they can improve.
- Good and improved attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded.
- children, parents/carers and staff are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the Academy at any time to discuss their child's attendance.
- Regular meetings may be held with the appropriate members of staff/external agencies to identify and support those children whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- children who have been absent for extended periods of time will be supported as appropriate to re-integrate back into the Academy.
- Children's attendance will be reported six times a year in line with Praising Stars©

Attendance Data and Targets

- The target for all children is to strive for 100% attendance. Only by achieving full attendance can children expect to achieve their full potential.
- Attendance data will be collected and analysed and used to inform the Academy's attendance practices and interventions.
- Individual child data will be analysed and monitored to enable early intervention.
- Attendance data is provided on a termly basis to the Academy Council.
- Attendance data and persistent absence data is communicated to the Local Authority and is published via Analyse School Performance ('ASP')
- Each academy will use a Cumulative Attendance Tracker to monitor attendance on a weekly basis.

Statutory Requirements, the Law and the Local Authority

- Registers are legal documents; regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.
- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents/carers are responsible to ensure their child receives a suitable education.
- Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a parent who fails to ensure their child attends the school at which they are registered, is guilty of an offence.
- The Academy works together with the relevant Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibility. There are a range of legal sanctions that may be imposed for dealing with unauthorised absence: Penalty Notices, Parenting Contracts and Orders, Education Supervision Orders or referral to the Magistrates Court which can recommend fines (up to £2500) or up to 3 months in prison.
- All sanctions are used to improve attendance and punctuality and reduce absence.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities:

All members of the Academy have a role to play in improving attendance and reducing absence.

Teachers

- Welcome and value the attendance of all children to lessons.
- Will ensure all children are accurately registered.
- Will ensure that children know the register is being taken.
- Will identify child absence from lessons and take appropriate action.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will work with identified children, setting targets to improve attendance and monitoring progress towards those targets.

Safeguarding and Attendance Officers

- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly, by use of the weekly Cumulative Attendance report.
- Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified.
- Will support children to improve their attendance.
- Will promote attendance through assemblies
- Will work with other members of staff to share information and support children and their parents/carers to improve attendance
- Will monitor registration on a daily basis.
- Will receive calls and messages from parents/carers regarding child absence.
- Will contact parents/carers regarding child absence.
- Will identify absence trends or concerns and raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers and liaise with relevant members of staff.

Attendance Teams

- Will take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the Academy, including improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.
- Will work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual children.
- Will provide data to the Principal, Senior Leaders and the Academy Council on a regular basis.

The Principal and Senior Leaders, including the Academy Council

- Will ensure that the Academy attendance policy is implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Will ensure the whole Academy ethos promotes excellence in attendance and punctuality.
- Report to the Academy Council and OGAT Board on attendance
- Monitor the curriculum to develop ways of improving the provision of educational experience.
- Utilise attendance data to inform strategic planning

This Policy will be reviewed every year. Next review due: June 2023

By: Jane Clayton, Executive Principal, Primary

APPENDIX I

DfE ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS (adopted September 2006, and amended Feb 2013 and Sept 2015, Nov 2016 and Sept 2018)

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING	FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES
/	Present (AM)	Present	
\	Present (PM)	Present	
B	Off-site Educational Activity	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence	
D	Dual Registered – at another educational establishment	Not counted in possible attendances	
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence	
G	Family holiday (NOT authorised by the school <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence	
H	Family holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence	
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence	
J	Interview (with prospective employers, or another educational establishment)	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence	
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence	
P	Approved supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	
S	Study leave	Authorised absence	
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Authorised absence	
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present

W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
X	Not required to be in school (Non-compulsory school age absence)	Not counted in possible attendances	
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (Enforced Closure)	Not counted in possible attendances	
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances	
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Not counted in possible attendances	