

# **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

## **(Primary, Junior, Secondary & Alternative Provision)**

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## **\*Every Academy will have a Senior Attendance Champion**

### **Aims**

Outwood Grange Academies Trust (OGAT) is committed to maximising educational opportunities and achievement for all children and young people. For children and young people 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 and young people. OGAT actively promotes good attendance and discourages unjustified absence. OGAT recognises that promoting good attendance and punctuality prepares children and young people 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 a family of schools, 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 pupil will be supported on an individual basis tailored to their circumstances and that of their family. We will work with families and children and young people 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 pupil's wider wellbeing. In addition to the personalised support received from the academy, additional support may include collaboration with external agencies and/or the Local Authority attendance support team where appropriate.

#### **3. Practice**

**We:**

- **Expect**

Attendance matters - we aspire to high standards for all children and young people 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 will be 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 young people and parents to understand barriers to attendance and look at how we work together to resolve this. All academies will treat all children and young people and parents/carers with dignity and build a positive relationship between home and the academy.

- **Facilitate Support**

We will help children and young people 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 pupil's right to an education.

#### **4. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)**

On occasion, a student with complex needs may have difficulties within the academy which impact on their attendance. There is still a legal responsibility for the academy to provide an education and for the parent/carer to ensure regular school attendance.

If a statutory assessment is in progress for an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), it is expected that the student must still have full attendance throughout the process. Throughout the statutory assessment process, the attendance team should actively engage with the parent/carer to support them to ensure their pupil attends at their current school or to support alternative arrangements for education through the Local Authority or Alternative Provision to ensure the student's education is not compromised. Appropriate and tailored support must be put in place to ensure the academy's legal duty is met and the student is receiving a suitable full-time education that meets their needs.

Once an EHCP is granted, the Local Authority will undertake a formal consultation with the school(s) the parent/carer chooses for their child. Consultation takes 15 school days and the student will remain on roll throughout that period. The pupil may then remain on roll or move to another establishment if parents wish to name another school.

## **5. Technology and Data**

OGAT will effectively use technology and data systems to accurately communicate, track and monitor pupil 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 for Education.

## **6. Parental engagement**

Positive relationships with all stakeholders are essential to good attendance and open and honest communication between parents/carers and school is essential.

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 and young people'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 and young people 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 pupil can engage in all opportunities offered.
- Each Academy will work with children and young people and their families to ensure every pupil has good attendance and punctuality.
- Each Academy will challenge the behaviour of those children and young people 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 and young people' 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 pupil's absence is cause for concern.
- We will support children and young people to achieve good attendance and punctuality.
- We will support children and young people returning to school after prolonged absence.

### **What Outwood Grange Academies Trust expects from children and young people:**

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

### **Secondary Expectations**

- To be punctual to all lessons
- To ensure that they register for all timetabled lessons and inform the Attendance Office (Academy / Reception) where appropriate if they are not able to be registered.

- To ensure all messages and notes from parents/carers are taken to the appropriate place (as determined by each individual academy).

### **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. Registers will only remain open for 30 minutes during the morning and afternoon sessions.

The times the registers will be open and closed

### **Secondary Academies**

AM session - Opens at the start of the day and closes after 30 minutes.

PM session - Opens at the start of Lesson 4 and closes after 30 minutes

### **Primary Academies**

AM Session - Opens at the start of the day and closes after 30 minutes

PM Session - Opens at the start of the session after the lunch break and will close after 30 minutes.

### **Academy Expectations**

- Children and young people are expected to arrive 10 minutes before the start of the school day dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- Children are registered at primary academies at the beginning of the morning/afternoon session. At secondary academies, young people will be registered at the start of the morning/afternoon session and also at the start of every lesson during the day.
- Children and young people will be registered for all enrichment activities.
- Children and young people arriving after registers have closed, will be marked as unauthorised absence unless medical documentation (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 [‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’](#)

## **Punctuality**

### **Primary and Junior Expectations**

- Any pupil arriving late should sign in at Reception/School Office, giving their reason for being late
- Repeated lateness will be reported to parents/carers. 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.

### **Secondary Expectations**

- Any pupil arriving late should sign in at Student Information Desk (SID), Reception or Student reception (depending on each Academy) giving their reason for being late. Where appropriate the student’s planner will be stamped/late slip given.
- Children and young people who arrive late will receive a sanction according to the Behaviour Policy.
- Where a detention has been issued on the same day, parents and carers will be informed of the detention during the day. If contact cannot be made then the student will receive a consequences slip / sticker to take home stating that they will have a detention the following day.
- Children and young people arriving at first lesson without a stamp in their planner/late slip must be directed back to the SID office, Reception or Student reception (\*depending on the Academy) to sign in.
- Repeated lateness will be reported to parents/carers. 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 Reception (Primary and Junior) by telephone or Attendance Office (Secondary), by telephone or email on the morning of absence (by 8am where possible) giving a reason and an expected date of return.
- Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as:
  - o looking after brothers/sisters/unwell parents/carers
  - o 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 pupil 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 pupil to arrive late to the academy, confirmation of the appointment (as above) must be provided or a late detention will be issued (Secondary only).
  - Following an explanation from parents/carers regarding their 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 pupil 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. All parents/carers will receive a telephone call and will also receive an 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 reason for the absence is gained, the Academy will 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, phone call, home visit, letter or email.
- We may conduct a welfare check/home visit on students we have not physically seen.
- All absence notes will be retained for a period of 3 years.
- Where a pupil'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, email, 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 pupil 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 pupil's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. Any pupil 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 pupil'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 their 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.



# NATIONAL CHANGES TO PENALTY NOTICES FOR ATTENDANCE

From 19th August 2024, a New National Framework will be introduced by the Government. We've outlined below what this means for parents and carers.



## PENALTY NOTICES WILL BE ISSUED FOR

### Term time leave:

Penalty Notice Fines will be issued for Term Time Leave of 5 or more consecutive days

OR

### 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period:

A Penalty Notice may be considered/issued when a pupil has had 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week\* period.

\*School Weeks

1

#### First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular Attendance the amount will be £60 per parent, per child paid within 28 days

Reduced to £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days

2

#### Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or irregular Attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days

3

#### Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to Magistrates Court. Magistrates' fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child

Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on the parent's future DBS certificate, due to failure to safeguard a child's education

## **Re-integration following Long-term Absence**

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

- Welcome the pupil back to the Academy and value their return.
- Provide support for the pupil 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 pupil's return.

## **Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality**

- It is the belief that all children and young people 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 and young people.
- Children and young people are regularly informed of their attendance levels and, if appropriate, how they can improve.
- Good and improved attendance and punctuality will be promoted and recognised. NB children and young people who have medical issues or whose attendance is impacted by significant events will not be omitted from academy praise and reward systems.
- Children and young people, parents/carers and staff are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the Academy Attendance Team 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 and young people whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Children and young people who have been absent for extended periods of time will be supported as appropriate to reintegrate back into the Academy.
- Effective links are made with feeder schools to facilitate the smooth transition to Outwood Grange Academies Trust.
- Children and young people's attendance will be reported six times a year in line with Praising Stars©

## **Attendance Data and Targets**

- The target for all children and young people is to strive for 100% attendance. Only by achieving full attendance can children and young people 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 pupil 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 2024.
- 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 and young people to lessons.
- Will ensure all children and young people are accurately registered.
- Will ensure that children and young people know the register is being taken.
- Will identify pupil absence from lessons and take appropriate action.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.

#### **Personal Development Staff (Secondary)**

- Will discuss absence and attendance weekly with children and young people.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will work with identified children and young people, setting targets to improve attendance and monitoring progress towards those targets.
- Will ensure that all absence notes or verbal messages are sent to the Attendance Office.

#### **Learning Managers (Secondary)**

- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly.
- Will discuss absence and attendance concerns with children and young people.
- Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified.
- Will support children and young people to improve their attendance.
- Will promote attendance through assemblies.

- Will work with other members of staff to share information and support children and young people and their parents/carers to improve attendance.

### **Reception**

- Will receive calls and messages from parents/carers regarding pupil absence.
- Will contact parents/carers regarding pupil absence.

### **Attendance Teams**

- Will issue the Cumulative Attendance report to relevant staff on a weekly basis.
- Will take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the Academy, including improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.
- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will liaise with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified and provide support to improve their child's attendance.
- Will support children and young people to improve their attendance.
- Will work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual children and young people.
- 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 2026

By Claire Jackson - Trust Strategic Lead for Family and Community Programmes and Partnerships, Steve Merifield – Associate Executive Principal, Laura Knitter - Trust Strategic Lead Attendance, Jo Broadhurst - School Standards Improvement Partner, Katie Collins - School Standards Improvement Partners, for implementation in September 2026

## **APPENDIX I**

Attendance codes can be found in Chapter 8 of DFE Guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance\\_applies\\_from\\_19\\_August\\_2024 .pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf)