

Attendance Policy



Ouston Primary School

Approved by Governing Body – Autumn Term 2024
Next review date – Autumn 2025

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Document History Log:

Author of document:	This policy is adopted by Ouston Primary School from Durham County Council's Attendance Policy. Louise Lavelle Head Teacher	Job role:	Head Teacher
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Annual Review History:

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First document review	Autumn 2025		
2 nd Review			
3 rd Review			
4 th Review			

Revisions Log:

Revision	Date of revision	Reason for revision	Resulting version number	Signatories

Attendance Key Contacts

Please find the details of those with overall responsibility for attendance, attendance support and attendance improvement within our school below.

Name	Role	Contact details
Louise Lavelle	Head Teacher / Principal	01914102599
Annette Tyrrell	Senior Attendance Champion	01914102599
Joanne Wise	Other senior leaders with responsibility for attendance	01914102599
Kathryn Barrass	Governor with responsibility for attendance	01914102599

If a pupil, parent or family is having difficulty with attending school and requires advice, help or support then they can contact:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
W. Gill/ A. Tyrrell	Office Staff - Will advise on procedures and pass on information to class teachers	0191 4102500 info@oustonprimary.org.uk
L. Lavelle	Headteacher - Meetings with parents/carers to support/advise Organise support for pupils/families as needed	0191 4102599

Help & Support

Where help or support is needed with attendance the sooner school know about this, the quicker people can work together to support with this. Where needed this can involve other services to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Children Missing from Education

If pupil's whereabouts are not known following enquiries, schools can legally remove pupils from the admission register (the school roll) after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Pupils place in schools are at risk if whereabouts are not known. Children Missing from Education must be reported to the Local Authority and the matter may be treat as a safeguarding issue.

Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

Ouston Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents/carers to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Specific roles and responsibilities have been published in the [Working Together to improve school attendance statutory](#) guidance.

We recognise the link between regular attendance and the well-being, development and achievement of our students / pupils. We expect everyone to attend every session they are able to, to benefit from the learning and pastoral opportunities and support we offer.

Communication is vital to ensure we are able to work with our parents and pupils and support attendance.

We ask that parents check the contact details, address and emergency contact information held by the school are up-to-date are communicated to school as soon as possible as it is extremely important school can contact parents in an emergency, keep parents informed of events and progress or discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

The school day

Arrangements for dropping off and collecting children at our school are as follows:

Nursery – Morning drop off is 8.45am at Nursery door/Afternoon collection is 3.15pm from Nursery door

Reception – Drop off from 8.45-8.55am at the Nursery gate/Collection at 3.20pm from the Reception door (parents/carers wait in the Nursery yard)

Year 1 – Drop off from 8.45 – 8.55am at the KS1/KS2 yard steps/Collect at 3.25pm from the KS1 yard (wait on other side of the fence)

Year 2 - Drop off from 8.45 – 8.55am at the courtyard doors /Collect at 3.25pm from the courtyard doors

Year 3 - Drop off from 8.45 – 8.55am at the KS1/KS2 yard steps/Collect at 3.30pm from the KS1 yard (Wait on other side of the fence)

Year 4 - Drop off from 8.45 – 8.55am at the KS1/KS2 yard steps/Collect at 3.30pm from the KS2 yard

Year 5 - Drop off/Enter from 8.45 – 8.55am at the KS2 yard steps/Collect at 3.30pm from the KS2 yard (if child is not walking home)

Year 6 - Drop off/Enter from 8.45 – 8.55am at the outside classroom door/Collect at 3.30pm from outside classroom door (if child is not walking home)

Registration is 08:55am. The register will close at 09:05 am. Pupils must be in school to be marked present, otherwise another appropriate code will be used (Attendance codes appended).

Pupils arriving late for registration, but before the register has closed will be recorded as late (L code).

In line with government guidance the registers will close at 09:05 am. Pupils who are not present before the register closes but attend during the session will be recorded as a U code unless the reason means another code is more appropriate. The U code is an unauthorised absence.

Arriving late to school can be disruptive and unsettling to the child and the rest of their class. Parents/Carers should contact the Headteacher, L Lavelle if there are any issues which are affecting a pupil's ability to attend school on time.

If your child is late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded in our Late Arrivals book. Please note that children must be brought to the office by a parent/carer if they are arriving after registration closes (with the exception of Year 5/6 pupils who walk to school unaccompanied).

Where Year 5/6 children that walk to school arrive after registration closes, one of our office staff members will contact their parent/carer to make them aware of this.

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions

A letter will be sent to the child's parent/carer, giving details about the number of late arrivals to date and asking for improvement to be seen. The letter will also offer the opportunity to access support should the parent/carer feels they need this to address the issue.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality

The parent/carer will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher to discuss the concerns, offer support and put actions and/or targets for improvement in place. Support and actions may include:

Motivational target sheets/sticker charts for the child; transition/settling-in/sensory time at the start of the day; talking with a trusted staff member at the start of the day; entering school at the office rather than class entrance; weekly Time to Talk sessions.

Term dates and planned Inset days

These are available on our school website and are also in our 'Key Dates for Parents/Carers' information which is sent out to parents/carers by email and on Class Dojo at the start of the academic year.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are expected to restrict leave of absence in term-time to the specific circumstances in [regulation 11 of the School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#). There is discretion to consider exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts, circumstances and background behind the request. Permission should be requested in advance by a parent/carer the pupil normally lives with completing the form. These forms can be obtained from the school office or emailed out to parents/carers on request.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application is not made for leave, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

The DfE have stated that generally they do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

Our procedures on the first day of absence

If a pupil is to be absent for any reason, parents/carers are asked to contact the School Office by telephone providing a reason for the absence. If a pupil is absent from school and there is no contact from parents/carers then school office staff will contact home by telephone to find out why the pupil is not in school.

Medical appointments should be made outside of school time where possible. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they should do.

Periods of extended absence

Parents/carers should ring the school office for each day the child is absent unless a period of absence has been discussed and agreed on the first day due to the recommended exclusion/recovery time for specific illnesses or following medical treatment, hospital admissions etc.

No reason for absence provided

If parents/carers have not contacted school on the first day of absence and school office staff are not able to get in touch with parents/carers, they will use all other contact numbers on a child's contact card to try to ascertain reasons for the child's absence. It may also be needed to contact other services/ask for a welfare check where there are any safeguarding concerns about a child's absence.

If the school do not receive a reason for any absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised. Regular absence and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Where 10 or more unauthorised absences (10 sessions/5 days) are recorded in any 10 school week period the school must consider whether a penalty notice may be appropriate and if so will refer the matter to the local authority.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent/carers to provide medical evidence to support absences.

We want to support all our pupils to ensure they can access their education and will take a support first approach. This will sometimes require communications and conversations to better understand the circumstances which may lead to absence.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

As a school we do the following to promote good attendance and punctuality:

- Welcome children into school each day (class teachers and senior leaders are at each entrance door) ensuring a positive start to the day and being visible to parents/carers.
- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Build strong relationships and works jointly with families;
- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters, website and newsletters
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absences
- Celebrate and promote excellent attendance by sharing monthly class attendance data in our school newsletters and awarding the Ouston Attendance Bear in Assembly to the class with the best attendance. This class keep the Ouston Attendance Bear in their class for the following month.

Attendance data

We will use data we have such as whole school, year group, form/class and individual pupil level to look for and analyse issues with and/or patterns of absence which may require some support to improve. This is done on a half-termly basis. This helps us to identify areas of concern and children/families that may require support.

This analysis also helps us to monitor improvement with attendance for individuals/cohorts and consider the impact of any support and interventions.

We will also consider different pupil cohorts such as all pupils, those who have free school meals, those with special educational needs or disabilities, pupil premium, children who have a social worker or are looked after etc to identify where additional support may be required.

We will use the information to inform what we do to support and aid discussions between staff, pupils and families.

Sometimes we are asked to share data about a child's attendance with other professionals. This is usually where Early Help professionals are working with the family, a Team Around the Family is in place or there are safeguarding concerns. We are also asked to report on attendance for Children in Care as part of their Personal Education Plan (PEP) review.

Absence concerns

Parents may identify concerns about school attendance early if there is a change in child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns should be shared with school so people can work together to ensure that school attendance does not decline. The earlier concerns are identified and shared, the quicker they may be resolved.

Persistent absence

Pupils who miss 10% or more of their sessions at school are persistently absent.

In order to prevent persistent absences, we do the following once we identify an issue for an individual:

- An initial letter to parents/carers if Attendance falls below 95% to ensure parents/carers are aware and to offer support if needed
- If no improvement seen and/or attendance is around 90% or lower, a letter to parents/carers inviting them to a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the concerns and look at potential support/actions needed.
- Develop a package of support for the individual and/or family. This may include:
 - Target sheets/Reward charts for the child
 - Flexibility within the school day timings/structure. This may include a school/home transition activity overseen by a staff member (colouring, lego etc), entering and leaving school via the school office rather than busy entrances/exits, time-table adjustments etc
 - Time Talk counselling sessions
 - Monitor jobs and other responsibilities given to motivate and raise self-esteem
 - Referral to Early Help services
 - Regular meetings with the child and parents/carers to review attendance/impact of actions and support

Severe absence

Pupils who miss 50% or more of their sessions at school are severely absent. To prevent pupil absence reaching this level, where pupil absence drops below 70% (and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with) partners will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. This may include formalising support through an attendance contract and the school is likely to request support from the Local Authority Attendance Officer.

National framework for penalty notices and other legal intervention

To improve consistency of practice across the country there is a national framework for penalty notices.

At the point where there are 10 unauthorised absence sessions recorded in any 10 school-week period, schools must consider if:

- further support is appropriate.
- support is appropriate but is not being engaged with.
- support is appropriate but is not improving attendance.
- support is not needed, such as in cases of term-time leave of absence.

If support is appropriate, this should continue.

If support is appropriate but is not improving attendance or is not being engaged with, then a referral for consideration of legal intervention should be made to the local authority. This can include, but is not limited to a Notice to Improve, an application for an Education Supervision Order, Penalty Notice or Offence investigation Interview (PACE caution).

If support is not appropriate, such as where a holiday in term-time has taken place, a referral for a penalty notice will be made. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct](#))

Penalty notices offer the opportunity to deal with an irregular attendance offence without the need to go to court. Penalty notices are issued at a rate of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

There is an escalation policy which means that if a second notice is issued within a three-year period, the second notice will only be payable at the rate of £160. Further offences will not be eligible for the offer of a penalty notice and parents may be prosecuted in court. ([DCC - Penalty Notice Leaflet](#))

If penalty notices are not paid then a prosecution for the original irregular attendance offence will take place.

If convicted at court under section 444 of the Education Act for failing to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil at school, a parent may be fined up to £1000 for each offence. If there is evidence that a parent knowingly failed to secure the attendance and there is no reasonable justification for this, they can be fined up to £2500 and/or face up to 3 months in prison, be subject to probation supervision or have a curfew imposed as maximum sentences.

Pupils with specific needs

This Policy should account for the specific needs of individual pupils and pupil cohorts, This Policy must be applied fairly and consistently and consider the individual needs of pupils/families who have specific barriers to attendance.

In development and implementation of the policy, consider obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This policy is supported by our policies on:

Child Protection

Positive Behaviour for Learning

Anti-Bullying/Child on Child

Inclusion

APPENDIX 1

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances 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, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.