



Oathall Community College Attendance Policy

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1	17/09/18	New Policy
2	04/10/21	Amendments
3	19/05/23	Minor amendments re timings of the school day
4	23/10/24	Changes to coding, Updates from Working Together to Improve School Attendance August 2024
5	11/11/2025	Minor amendments
6		

Distribution list		
Governors		
Head		
Leadership Team		



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Policy statement

This policy sets out the roles and responsibilities of the whole college community in maintaining high levels of attendance. The principles have been agreed with all secondary schools in this area.

Statement of principle

- The college aims to provide a safe and secure environment where students can enjoy their education and feel valued, safe and secure.
- The college will work with students, parents and the pupil entitlement: investigation team to ensure policy and procedure supports a consistently high level of attendance.
- The college expects all students to be at college, and in class, on time and prepared for their lessons.
- Good attendance means at least 96%.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#)

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.



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I. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and makes referrals for the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The headteacher is responsible for approving holiday absence requests

The headteacher may delegate these duties to other staff as appropriate

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- first day contact and informing Heads of Year (HoYs) of reasons for absence
- monitoring and ensuring speedy and accurate processing of registration procedures (registers/absence reports etc.)
- producing attendance letters for unexplained absences at weekly intervals
- producing attendance statistics and reports on request (internally or outside agencies)
- compiling whole school attendance data monthly
- signing in students who are late

The form tutor is responsible for:

- marking the electronic register accurately
- in cases of absence the form tutor has the first line of responsibility in raising concern about a student's attendance
- reading all letters of explanation concerning absence and making the correct insertion in the register
- discussing attendance procedures, absences and issues with members of the tutor group, notifying the attendance officer/HOY / Assistant Head of Year (AHOY) after unexplained absence if concerns need to be raised.

The head of year with the assistance of the assistant head of year is responsible for:

- checking any suspected truancy
- employing a range of early intervention/preventative strategies and work with disaffected students



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- working with students, parents, form tutors, Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team and other agencies to introduce and support strategies for maintaining high levels of attendance
- in the case of long-term medical absence, notifying staff about the expected absence and supporting the effective reintegration of the student on their return to school
- liaising with parents, heads of faculty and teaching staff and outside agencies where appropriate to ensure that appropriate support for learning is given

Subject teachers are responsible for:

- recording attendance of students at the start of every lesson
- reporting any students unexplained absence during the day to the attendance officer
- supporting students who are working remotely

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring their son/daughter comes to college on time in uniform and with all the equipment they need
- informing college of any absence by telephone by email or by letter.
- Provide school with more than one emergency contact number for their child

2. Recording attendance

Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day, tutor time and once during the second session, period 5. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

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



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See annex 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry on the attendance register will be preserved for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by **8.40 am** on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken

- at **8.45 am** and will be kept open until **9.05 am**.

The register for the second session will be taken

- at **2.05 pm** and will be kept open until **2.15pm**

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked late, using the appropriate code, but absent for registration and any lessons missed which will be classed as an unauthorised absence.

Repeated lateness to school will result in a sanction being issued and may lead to further consequences if the issue persists. It could also contribute to a Fixed Penalty Notice if the lateness affects lesson time.

3. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence (for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health) by **8.45 am** or as soon as practically possible.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt or to ensure safeguarding practices are followed the school may ask parents to provide 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence



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Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we encourage parents 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.

Please contact the attendance officer in advance of the appointment by email or phone or letter so she can code the register correctly and be aware that your son/daughter may need to sign in or out.

Approval for term-time absence

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a reason that prevents the leave of absence being taken during normal holiday times and where the timings are out of the parent/carer's control.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- 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 parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils 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

- Study leave is not granted by default. Students in year 11 will be expected to continue to attend school and lessons or study rooms until May half term.

Unauthorised holidays (coded G) may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Unauthorised absences of 10 or more sessions in a rolling period of 10 school weeks may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice or referral to the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team.

4. Following up absence



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The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

5. Legal sanctions

Schools refer to Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Team parents when there is an unauthorised absence of a child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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



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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 offenses

- 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

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. Parents are expected to do this on **each day** of absence. Weekly communication of confirmation of absences are acceptable in agreement with the school for exceptional circumstances.

If a pupil's absence goes below **93%**, we will notify parents, if attendance remains a concern parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the poor attendance.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an the Pupil Entitlement Investigation team by completing a referral.



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The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

The severe absence threshold is 50%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 50%, the pupil will be classified as severely absent.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.



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Annex 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Meaning
/	Morning session – present at the school when attendance register begins to be taken
\	Afternoon session – present at the school when attendance register begins to be taken
B	Attending a place for any other approved educational activity
C	Absent with leave for other circumstances
C1	Absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance
C2	Absent with leave, of compulsory school age and temporary reduced timetable does not require them to attend
D	Attending another school at which they are a registered pupil
E	Excluded from the school
G	Absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday
H	****WITHDRAWN NO LONGER IN USE**** prior to 01/09/24 denotes an agreed (authorised) holiday in term time.
I	Unable to attend because of sickness
J	Approved education activity as pupil is attending interview
J1	Absent with leave for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
K	Attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by LA (under section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 of the Childrens and Families Act 2014). Where schools use code K, they must also record the nature of the educational activity
L	Absent from the school when attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended



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Code	Meaning
M	Absent with leave for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
N	Absent - circumstances not yet established
O	Absent - other circumstances
P	Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity
Q	Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements by LA to facilitate their attendance
R	Day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs
S	Absent with leave for the purpose of studying for a public examination
T	Mobile child whose parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and is travelling with that parent and the child is considered a 'mobile child' and deemed to be of no fixed abode - waiting on further clarity from DfE as to what is a 'mobile child'.
U	Absent for registration - arrived in school after registration closed
V	Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a visit or trip
W	Attending a place for an approved education activity that is work experience
X	Absent with leave, not of compulsory school age and timetable does not require them to attend

YI	Unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of pupil's home and transport to and from school normally provided is not available
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Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national, or international emergency
Y3	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and pupil cannot be accommodated in parts of the premises that remain in use
Y4	Whole school closed when school was due to meet for a session, but session has been cancelled
Y5	Unable to attend because pupil is subject to a sentence of detention
Y6	Travel to or attendance at school would be contrary/prohibited by guidance/law relating to incidence or transmission of infection or disease
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Z	Pupil's name entered in advance of start date **
#	Planned whole school closure – no session to take place **