

Date	Minute number	Signed	Amendment
29/09/24			Added in updates linked to working together to improve school attendance.
30/04/2026			Updates to penalty notices.



St Oswald's C.E. Primary School

Attendance Policy April 2026

Introduction

Promoting good school attendance is everyone's responsibility.

St Oswald's strives to ensure that we create an environment which enables and encourages all pupils to reach their full potential. For pupils to achieve in accordance with their potential and to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with all pupils and parents.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance and supporting punctuality in attending lessons
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils parents.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Intervening early to address patterns of absence and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of other pupils
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance and ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [Missing Children and Adults - A cross government strategy](#)

publishing.service.gov.uk (2011)

- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [DfE's guidance on Children Missing Education \(updated September 2016\)](#)
- [Full-time enrolment of 14 to 16-year-olds in further education and sixth-form colleges - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance appropriate to their role.
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds including but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Holding the Head teacher to account for the implementation of the policy

As best practice, we utilise the Headteacher and report to Governors to share attendance figures at each full governors meetings.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.

- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- 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 penalty notices, where necessary.
- Working with parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs to develop specific support for attendance- this is done in conjunction with the SENDCo

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (The Head teacher and School Business Officer) with responsibility for attendance will:

- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes.
- Have an oversight of data analysis.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families. □ Work with the attendance officer to carry out all agreed actions.

The Headteacher with responsibility for attendance is Mrs Wood and can be contacted via 01335 342660 info@st-oswalds.derbyshire.sch.uk

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer will:

- Monitor and analyse attendance data, as detailed in section 8.
- Benchmark attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Provide regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher.
- Work with education welfare officers, and other professionals, to tackle persistent absence.

- Advise the Headteacher when to issue fixed penalty notices.

The attendance officer is Miss Simons and can be contacted on info@st-oswalds.derbyshire.sch.uk

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9am and 1.05pm.

- Class teachers should have initial conversations with parents when attendance starts to dip to encourage attendance and offer support where necessary.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the Headteacher pastoral lead in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time.

4. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

4.1 Absence

- Arrival at school after the register has closed

- Not attending school for any reason

4.2 Authorised Absence

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

4.3 Unauthorised Absence

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

4.4 Persistent Absence (PA)

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the academic year for any reason

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. 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.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether absences are 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm.

5.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as possible by contacting the school office staff (see also section 8).

Parents should telephone school on 01335 342660 and speak to the office or leave a voice mail on the school answerphone.

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Where a child has been absent without explanation, we will contact the family requesting the reason for absence. If we are unable to get the reason, then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

5.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parent should complete a Leave of Absence Form which can be obtained from the main reception outside the school office.

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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Any pupil who comes into school after 8.55am will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.00am will be marked as late after close of register (Attendance code U). This is an unauthorised absence for the whole session and will affect your child's overall attendance percentage and can be used to calculate absence thresholds for legal decision making.

5.5 Following up 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, conduct a home visit. If the pupil is classed as child protection or persistent absentee, a risk assessment is required. 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 other agencies as appropriate. E.g. Follow local procedures for Children Missing Education CME.

5.6 Reporting to parents/carers

Attendance is communicated at the two Parents Consultation evenings held in November and March as well as on the Pupil Progress reports which are sent to parents and on the annual report. Attendance reports are checked monthly and parents will also be notified if their child's attendance is below 90%.

6 Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Department for Education stipulates that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time, and any leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering 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, accessible via the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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.

6.2 Legal sanctions/penalty notices

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

- Term Time Leave

In August 2024 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers must not give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on an absence request form available from the school office and handed in 2 school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. Absence deemed for the reason of unauthorised leave in term time will be marked in the register with the Attendance code G.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

Unsatisfactory attendance

Penalty Notices can be issued to parents and carers for a child's non-attendance at school as part of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. A Penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution. It requires each person with parental responsibility parent to pay a fixed fine for each child's non attendance in order to avoid a court appearance.

Payment is £120 to be paid within 28 days of issue, as shown on the notice. If the fine is paid within 21 days, payment reduces to £60. The fine will apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend regularly and punctually.

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (Attendance code U) and unauthorised leave in term time (Attendance code G). If your child's absence falls into this category the school will decide if further offers of support is likely to improve the situation or if a request for legal action should be submitted to the Local Authority.

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Promoting good school attendance is everyone's responsibility.
- To promote good attendance our school uses the following strategies:
- The schools pastoral lead supports families with falling attendance, persistent absence or regular lateness. This could include home visits to provide support with establishing effective routines.
- Safeguarding Newsletters to parents promote good attendance and are circulated to parents every term.
- Monthly Newsletters highlight the importance of attendance.
- Attendance leaflets for parents are provided in the school reception area.
- Attendance information, support and advice is held on the 'parenting support' page of the school website.
- Certificates, badges, rewards.

8. Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring and analysing attendance

The attendance officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence as soon as possible.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g., pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g., pupils with SEND, LAC, and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils who have an allocated social worker or are known to social care.
- A pupil who is absent for prolonged periods, or repeated occasions, which may indicate a safeguarding concern, such as CSE or CRE, particularly county lines.
- Pupils at risk of Persistent Absence.

The head teacher will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half termly, termly, and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The head teacher will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. Specifically, where there is a safeguarding concern for a pupil absent or missing from education, the attendance officer will alert the DSL in accordance with the school's established safeguarding recording and reporting processes.

The head teacher will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The Local Governing Body will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the Headteacher in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

8.2 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide termly attendance reports (or sooner if attendance is a concern) to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

8.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school.

Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Ensure notes are added to Arbor to generate an evidence trail that can be cross referenced with safeguarding software
- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.

- Hold regular meetings with the parents 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 access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

9. Monitoring arrangements

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

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Behaviour policy
- Children Missing Education 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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent
		due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations

T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code <i>O</i> if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to halfterm/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Key Contacts

Safeguarding Role	Name and Role	School contact details
Attendance /Education Welfare Officer	Mrs Wood	Info@st-oswalds.derbyshire.sch.uk 01335 342660

SENCo	Mrs Mansfield	Info@st-oswalds.derbyshire.sch.uk 01335 342660
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Other Key Local Attendance Contacts

	Derby	Derbyshire
Education Welfare and Local Authority Children Missing Education (CME) Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CME: 01332 641448 or cme@derby.gov.uk See Children Missing Education for further information and CME referral form and for notification forms for child on roll, removal from roll and removal from roll to Elective Home Education (EHE) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michelle Briddon CME: 01629 532817 ☐ CS.CMECoordinators@derbyshire.gov.uk See Children missing from education (CME) policy and guidance and removal from school roll for further information
Virtual School for Looked After Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Virtual School Head - 07812 301044 or graeme.ferguson@derby.gov.uk Specialist Education Support Officer for LAC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rachel Moore, Head of the Virtual School for Children in Care 07798 882876 Specialist Education Support Officer for LAC or other role
Public Health Nurse/other health contact/s	School Nurse - 01246 515100 School Nursing Team Support, Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	
	Derby	Derbyshire
	https://derbyshirefamilyhealthservice.nhs.uk/contact-us	
Emotional Health and Well-being Services	CAMHS Derby and Southern Derbyshire 03001239164 https://www.camhsnorthderbyshire.nhs.uk/specialist-community-advisors Action for Children - Build Sound Minds Derby and Derbyshire https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/mental-health-wellbeing Derbyshire School Nurses https://derbyshirefamilyhealthservice.nhs.uk/contact-us 01246 515100	

Homelessness or at risk of homelessness	Derby city council homelessness webpages	Derbyshire county council Preventing homelessness webpages
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Key National Contacts

Organisation	Description and contact details
NSPCC helpline for adults	Helping adults protect children 24 hours a day. For help and support, including anyone needing advice about female genital mutilation, young people affected by gangs, concerns that someone may be a victim of modern slavery contact the NSPCC trained helpline counsellors on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text 88858 • 0808 800 5000 • help@nspcc.org.uk
NSPCC helpline Report Abuse in Education	Bespoke helpline for children and young people who've experienced abuse at school, and for worried adults and professionals who need support and guidance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0800 136 663 • help@nspcc.org.uk
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	Hosted by Refuge , Helpline 0808 2000247
Operation Encompass	Resources for schools include free advice from an Education Psychologist about how best to support children via National Helpline 0204 513 9990
Report Abuse in	☐ Young people who have experienced abuse at
Organisation	Description and contact details
Education helpline	school and parents and teachers who are concerned about sexual abuse in education settings can call the Report Abuse in Education helpline on 0800 136 663 or email help@nspcc.org.uk

An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed for this policy.