



Attendance Policy and Procedures

Signed by:	
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Chair of Governors	Suzanne Clarke
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1. Introduction

At Orchard Primary School our ambition is for all students to strive for 100% attendance. We set expectations of excellent attendance for all pupils and expect pupils to be in school every session and every day that school is open. We consider this paramount to pupils achieving their full potential and enhancing lifelong outcomes. Our attendance policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and is an integral part of our school ethos.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with parents/carers, pupils and relevant partner agencies to remove any barriers and build strong and trusting relationships. Promoting and ensuring excellent attendance is everybody's business within our school and community.

2. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which include:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils.
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.

- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance is everyone's responsibility, enabling all pupils to achieve excellence. Contact details for key staff relating to attendance are:

Name	Role	Contact Details
Sarah Bitcon	Head Teacher / Senior Attendance Champion / Designated Safeguarding Lead	Head@orchard.avonreach.org
Tracy Swoosh	Attendance Welfare Officer	Tracy.swoosh@orchard.avonreach.org

Governance

Governance, including the Trust Central Team, Academy Standards Committee, and Trustees, plays a crucial role in supporting children's attendance in school and their responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that the school complies with all relevant statutory requirements related to attendance and monitoring adherence to attendance regulations.
- Collaboration with school leadership to develop and review attendance policies and procedures, ensuring that they align with statutory requirements, provide clear guidance on monitoring, reporting and interventions, and are effectively implemented.
- Strategic oversight of attendance, considering attendance as a key performance indicator and monitoring trends and patterns in attendance data.
- Providing challenge and support to school leaders to ensure the school is taking appropriate action to address attendance issues and seeking ways to continuously improve attendance outcomes.

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher sets the tone for the school's attendance culture and oversees the implementation of policies and strategies to promote regular attendance, and their responsibilities include:

- Implementing attendance policies and procedures and ensuring that these are effectively communicated to all stakeholders
- Emphasising the importance of regular attendance and setting high expectations for all staff and pupils.
- Promoting a positive school culture where regular attendance is recognised and children feel motivated to attend school regularly.
- Establishing clear expectations for staff regarding attendance monitoring, recording and intervention, and ensuring all staff understand their roles in promoting regular attendance.
- Providing training and professional development opportunities for staff to enhance their knowledge and skills in attendance-related matters.
- Monitoring attendance data regularly, analysing trends and patterns and using this information to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Ensuring that vulnerable pupils, including those with medical conditions, special educational needs and safeguarding concerns, receive appropriate support to attend school regularly.
- Implementing incentives and recognition programmes to reinforce a positive attendance culture.

The Senior Attendance Champion

The role of the Senior Attendance Champion is critical in ensuring that children attend school regularly and achieve their educational potential. Their responsibilities include:

- Contributing to the development and implementation of attendance policies and procedures.
- Promoting a positive school culture where attendance is valued and pupils feel motivated and supported to attend regularly.
- Ensuring the school complies with legal requirements relating to attendance, including regulations governing authorised and unauthorised absences.
- Data analysis of attendance data to identify trends and patterns, using the information to pinpoint areas of concern.
- Identification of children at risk of poor attendance, recognising that early intervention is crucial and working with staff, parents/carers and pupils to address attendance issues as soon as they arise.
- Contributing to the design and implementation of interventions and incentives to motivate children to attend school and regularly evaluating the effectiveness of approaches.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns related to attendance to the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Attendance Welfare Officer

The Attendance Welfare Officer plays a vital role in supporting and promoting attendance and their responsibilities include:

- Contributing to the development and implementation of attendance policies and procedures.
- Making prompt daily contact with parents/carers where no reason for absence has been provided.
- Ensuring that accurate attendance records are maintained, monitoring those records and reporting data to school and Trust leadership and governing bodies.
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate.
- Supporting families by building positive relationships and engaging them in improving their child's attendance, including organising home visits, meetings and providing guidance on strategies to improve attendance.
- Connecting families with external resources and services that may help to alleviate attendance-related challenges, such as housing support, healthcare or social care services.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

Teaching Staff

Teaching staff play a vital role in monitoring and promoting attendance and their responsibilities include:

- Adherence to and implementation of the school's attendance policies and procedures.
- Creating a positive and welcoming classroom environment where pupils feel motivated and engaged.
- Recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions daily, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office promptly.
- Implementing strategies to reinforce positive behaviour related to attendance, such as recognising attendance and punctuality.
- Building positive and trusting relationships with children and contributing to the creation of a supportive and welcoming environment.

- Being alert to potential barriers to attendance, such as bullying, health issues or family problems and sharing this information with school leaders.
- Supporting with the provision of academic and emotional support to children who experience attendance challenges.
- Reporting any safeguarding concerns promptly.

Office Staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system (Arbor). Office staff will ensure the Pastoral Care Support Worker is informed of any urgent attendance related concerns.

Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers play an essential role in supporting good attendance and their involvement and commitment to their child's education can have a significant impact on attendance rates. Your responsibilities include:

- Establishing a daily routine that includes regular and punctual school attendance and emphasise the importance of attending school regularly and on time.
- Informing the school promptly if their child is going to be absent.
- Ensuring that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Seeking support from school, healthcare professionals or other relevant agencies if their child is facing challenges that affect attendance and keep school staff informed of any such involvement.
- Working collaboratively with school staff to address any attendance issues, exploring support and intervention if necessary.

4. Recording Attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register (Arbor) and place all pupils on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending a place other than school
- Absent
- Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

See Appendix 2 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity where 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 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.45am and ends at 3.15pm. Pupils must arrive at school by 8.43am. The register for the morning session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1pm (EY and KS1) and 1.15pm for KS2).

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. A copy of the appointment letter should be brought to the school office.

Where possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, and attend school before/after their appointment. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible.

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.

Unplanned absence

If a child is too unwell to come to school, parents/carers should contact the school office by **8.30am** on the first day of absence. Alternatively, they can leave a message on the 24-hour answerphone (01386 552515) or email attendance@orchardprimary.org.uk. If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school on each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness

In line with guidance from Public Health England, it is our policy that any child with diarrhoea and/or vomiting symptoms must stay away from school until they have been free of symptoms for **48 hours** (the "48 hour" rule) and feel well.

Details about exclusion periods for infectious diseases are available from the school office or the school website under the Parent Tab – *Is my child too ill for school?*

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

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, the school may conduct a home visit or contact the police.
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or family support worker.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, we may issue a notice to improve, a penalty notice or other legal intervention.

Reporting to parents

Attendance can be viewed by parents/carers using the Arbor Parent Portal/app. The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels via half-termly text messages. Letters will be sent to parents each half term where their child's level of attendance is a cause for concern.

5. Authorised absence

The Head Teacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad.
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.
- Study leave.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable.
- Exceptional circumstances.

A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare and unexpected circumstances which are unlikely to reoccur, for example medical emergencies, family emergencies (eg death of a relative).

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, available from the school office. The Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance. Pupils should attend school on the days surrounding those set apart for religious observance.
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place.
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made).

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and not just penalise pupils for poor attendance.

Excellent and improved attendance will be rewarded with an award from the Head Teacher.

7. Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Our school will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

7.1 Attendance contract

We may use attendance contracts as a form of attendance support.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular attendance at school. An attendance contract is not legally binding, but it provides a more formal route where previous support has not worked or would not have been appropriate.

Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and the school cannot agree an attendance contract in a parent's absence.

Where an attendance contract would be an appropriate form of support, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent (and pupil if they are old enough to understand) to discuss how we can work in partnership to improve the pupil's attendance.

Where parents fail to comply with an agreed attendance contract, the school may seek an alternative course of action. In the first instance, this will include discussions with the parents to seek explanations and determine whether the attendance contract remains useful. Where there is further non-compliance following these discussions, the school may take further action.

7.2 Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans and attendance contracts have been unsuccessful; we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and will set up a meeting.

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but **not** criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 upon conviction.

7.3 Notice 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.

A notice 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.

It will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences.
- 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, or prosecution considered, 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.

7.4 Penalty notices

The Head Teacher, 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 school wishes to issue a penalty notice, we will forward the necessary documentation to the local authority to enable them to process the penalty notice.

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 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.

8. Approved Educational Activity

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site, that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all their education, our school will arrange for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative setting as code B (off-site educational activity). We will liaise regularly with alternative providers to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a weekly basis, with the alternative setting.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP setting.

9. Pupils on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

10. Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out using the Visitor Signing In/Out System. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without an adult.

11. Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with Regulation 8 Education law. The school will use the Worcestershire Children's Services Portal to report any children leaving our school, on part time timetables, attending irregularly, or joining the school outside of usual transition phases. If we have any CME related concerns we will contact CME@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

12. Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school therefore will facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- The importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances;
- The law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of pupil registers;
- The school/Trust's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance;
- Processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support for pupils who need it.

For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils experiencing attendance challenges.

12. Attendance monitoring

12.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

9.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

13. Policy Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Head Teacher, or more frequently if there are changes to legislation and guidance. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

14. Links with other policies/procedures

This policy is linked to the following policies:

- Safeguarding
- SEND
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions
- Pupil Mental Health and Wellbeing



Appendix 1

Absence Escalation Procedure

Percentage	Responsibility	Action
94% - 96%	Pastoral Care Support Worker / Admin Staff	Parents/carers sent details of %age attendance via text.
91% - 94%	Pastoral Care Support Worker / Admin Staff	Monitoring – Letter stating %age attendance sent to parents/carers from Spring Term.
90% or below	Pastoral Care Support Worker / Admin Staff Outside agency support offered	Pupil is classed as having persistent absence. Letter sent to parents/carers; if no improvement then a meeting is arranged with Pastoral Care Support Worker. Outside agency support offered, if applicable. If there is still no improvement, a meeting will be arranged with the Head Teacher.
50% or below	Pastoral Care Support Worker / Attendance Officer	Pupil is classed as having severe absence. Advice sought from Worcestershire County Council. Outside agency support offered, if applicable. Consider Family Front Door / Social Services referral.
Absence of 10 consecutive days		School will notify the Local Authority of children who are absent for 10 consecutive days without authorisation by completing the form on the Children's Services Portal or by emailing CME@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes

Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays