Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust

Pupil Attendance and Registration Policy

Reviewed: March 2026

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About Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust (OMAT)

OMAT is committed to the development of inclusive schools, sharing a common purpose to provide excellent education and improve outcomes for pupils.

OMAT strives to provide high-quality education for all children within our local communities by inspiring innovation, creativity and aspiration through an enriched curriculum.

OMAT is committed to the principles of co-operation, collaboration and sharing best practice with a strong focus on staff development.

OMAT is also committed to the preservation of the unique identity of all schools within the trust: each school will have a Local Governing Board (LGB) which is involved in decision making at school level, with autonomy to make decisions for its own school – in line with the scheme of delegation.

Pupil Attendance and Registration Policy

1. Policy Rationale

Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust and its member schools take steps to ensure that attendance is monitored regularly and that pupils whose attendance is giving cause for concern are identified so that interventions can be planned. This policy ensures that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware of and informed about attendance matters in school and to outline the schools' commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

2. Policy Aims

To improve and maintain good attendance by:

- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Providing clarity about the importance of good attendance and the legal requirements related to school attendance;
- Ensuring that statutory requirement for maintaining pupil attendance registers is met;
- Establishing procedures for monitoring and responding to pupil attendance and punctuality;
- Working with all stakeholders to encourage high levels of attendance across school.

3. Whole School Approach

- Good attendance is important for children to participate fully in daily school life.
- Encouraging good attendance for pupils is the responsibility of pupils, parents/carers, and school staff.
- Encouraging good attendance helps to safeguard and promote the welfare of all pupils.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence can seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Good attendance at school is one of the most important indicators of performance and attainment. Therefore, Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust aims to encourage good attendance for all pupils by:

- Ensuring each school is a warm, welcoming and nurturing environment;
- Ensuring that pupils are safe at all times in school;
- Ensuring the curriculum is accessible, interesting and appropriate for all pupils' needs;
- Providing a sympathetic response to any pupils' or parental concerns.
- Giving parents/carers information about attendance on our school websites newsletters
- Reporting to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- Contacting parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.

In order for children to have the maximum benefit from their education, it is vital that children are at school, on time, every day on which school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. By having excellent attendance and arriving at school on time, children are more likely to success long after they have left primary school. The table below puts into perspective the amount of school days are lost if a child is not at school, even if a child has an attendance figure of 90%+.

Attendance Figure	Full school days lost (out of 190 days)
97%	5 ½
95%	9 ½
93%	13 ½
90%	19
85%	28 ½
80%	38
75%	47 ½
70%	57

4. Safeguarding

Children may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility. At Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust Schools, promoting the welfare and life opportunities of children encompasses:

- Attendance;
- Behaviour management;
- Health and safety;
- Access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
- Anti-bullying.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of all stakeholders – parents/carers, pupils, and all members of school staff.

5. Attendance and the Law

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent/carer), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as:

- Illness;
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time (routine appointments should be arranged out of school time);
- Emergencies or other unavoidable cause;
- Days exclusively set apart for religious observance in a pupil's particular faith;
- Bereavement of close relatives (by 'close' we mean parents, siblings and other relatives with whom the child had frequent contact);
- Attending the funeral of a close relative;
- Religious observance (no more than two days per academic year);
- *Approved leave in term time where there are exceptional circumstances, as agreed in advance with the Headteacher.

*Leave of absence will not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. In Owlcotes Trust we interpret 'exceptional' to mean "very unusual, significant, unavoidable and short". This policy defines 'unavoidable' as an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. This policy defines "short" as instances of absence that are no longer than necessary to fulfil the requirements of the exceptional circumstance – with a maximum approval limit of 10 days where there are further extenuating circumstances. This will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and external advice from Owlcotes MAT may be sought.

Only the Headteacher (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing in advance on the form provided by the school. If a leave request is agreed then the absence will be authorised by the school. If the leave request is not agreed then the absence will be unauthorised by the school.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings which may include issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice or referring the matter to the Magistrates Court.

Unauthorised absence includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g., because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- Absences which have never been properly explained/where no reason is given;
- Parents keeping children off school because they have 'taken issue' with a school policy, procedure or situation;
- Shopping trips/haircuts/day trips etc.;
- Birthday/anniversary celebrations;
- Looking after other children or accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- **Family holidays taken during term time without additional agreed 'exceptional leave' (exceptional leave as defined above in section 5 of this policy);
- Other leave of absence in term time which has **not been agreed in advance** by the Headteacher.

***** Holidays in Term Time***

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" parents may receive a penalty notice if their child is absent from school without permission. From September 2013 to August 2024, the cost of these notices will be £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. From August 2024, the fine for school absences will be £80 per child, per parent if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.

School staff appreciate the challenges that some parents face when booking holidays, particularly during the school holidays. However, regular attendance at school is vital in helping children and young people to achieve their full potential and get the best possible start in life.

Further information on Leeds City Council's policy on fixed penalty fines and points of contact can be found here: https://www.leeds.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-absence-fines

6. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee'** when they **miss 10% or more** schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's education and we need a parent/carer's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly. If a child is seen to have reached the PA mark, or is at risk of moving towards that mark, the school will inform the parent/carer. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. PA pupils and their parents may be subject to a school-based meeting and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the Home/ School liaison officer or learning Mentor; Local Authority, Local Cluster Support or Social Care. We may use individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities to support us in raising attendance for individual pupils where this will benefit them.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

At Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust, we believe that all stakeholders have a role to play in encouraging good attendance.

School staff will:

- Clearly establish the expectations regarding pupil attendance and procedures for reporting absences at the start of the academic year;
- Monitor whole school and individual pupil's attendance;
- Implement systems of rewards for good attendance;
- Ensure the register is completed accurately with absences appropriately coded;
- Report any concerns regarding a pupil's attendance to senior school staff;
- Contact parents/carers on the first day of absence and record reasons for absence;
- Contact parent/carers as soon as possible in cases of pupil absence with no explanation received;
- Work with parents/carers whose children's attendance is a cause for concern to identify reasons for their child's attendance and agree on targets to achieve more regular attendance;

- Implement agreed actions where concerns regarding attendance and punctuality have been identified;
- Inform school governors of attendance records;
- In the event of a pupil becoming ill during the school day, parents/carers will be contacted to attend school and collect their child;
- Where appropriate, carry out home visits to parents/carers of children whose attendance in a cause for concern;
- Where appropriate, refer cases of unauthorised absences to the Leeds City Council Attendance Service.

Parents/Carers will:

- Ensure that children who are of compulsory school age attend school regularly;
- Ensure that children arrive on-time with appropriate attire and equipment for the day;
- Ensure the contact details provided to the school are accurate and inform the school in a timely manner of any changes;
- Inform school on the first day of a child's absence and provide a verbal or written explanation for the absence;
- In the cases of exceptional circumstances, complete an absence in term-time request form in advance of the request;
- Provide the school with the appropriate level of evidence for a 'Exceptional Leave' request; Endeavour to arrange routine medical appointments outside of school time;
- Work in partnership with the school and any external agencies in the best interests of pupils.
- Examples of evidence parents can use to

Governors in the Local Governing Board will:

- Ensure that registration procedures are carried out effectively and that appropriate resources are provided;
- Require the Headteacher to report school attendance and punctuality at each Local Governing Board meeting;
- Set aspirational annual attendance and absence targets;
- Support the school in challenging attendance that raises concern.

Trustees will:

- Review the attendance policy regularly;
- Monitor and review each school's attendance targets;
- Monitor attendance across all schools in the trust;

8. Registration Procedure

- The class teacher will take a register recording who is present and absent from school at the start of the morning session and the start of the afternoon session.
- The register officially closes at 9.30am and 1.30pm any pupil arriving after this time will typically be marked with an absent late mark for the session. In some circumstances an M code (medical absent code) may be used if the child has attended an appointment at the Doctors, Dentists or Hospital, etc.: An I code if an illness / medical reason prevented the child from arriving before register closed. On

some occasions, school may use the C code for circumstances authorized by the school. This should be agreed by the Headteacher and will depend on individual circumstances.

- Reasons for absence may be offered verbally by phone by parents or via email. When parents ring in or email, the absence is recorded and then entered onto the electronic registration system by staff in the school office.
- Any absence information received by Class Teachers will be forwarded to the school office.
- Each morning, a daily absence list is generated (by 9.30 a.m.)
- Each day the parents of the children who are absent, for whom we have not received a message regarding their absence are contacted by phone by a member of staff in the school office. If no response is received, then a voice mail is left and a follow up email is sent.
- Any children who are considered vulnerable, at risk, and who are not in school are identified. The parents are contacted by the relevant school staff to obtain a reason for absence and to ascertain whether there is any cause for concern. If there is a safeguarding concern, then this is passed to one of the CP designated officers.
- For children who leave our school at dates other than the normal time of leaving, we ascertain in advance details of the destination school. A CTF is then sent to the receiving school. For any children whose destination is not known at the date of leaving, then they remain on roll until such times as we receive confirmation of them starting a new school, or we would keep them on roll until the School Attendance Improvement Officer confirmed we could take them off roll, after which time we would send a CTF to record them as "Children Missing Education".
- Attendance information is presented to the Governors and Trustees at meetings of the Governing Board. Aspirational attendance targets are set each year.

9. Absence Procedure

If parents/carers know in advance that their child will be absent for school, they should inform their child's school by emailing or calling the school office.

If your child is absent with no prior notification to the school, parents/carers must:

- Contact the school as soon as possible during the first day of absence.
- Contact the school on a daily basis if you are uncertain how long the period of absence will last, for example, in cases of illness.

If your child is absent with no prior notification, and no contact is received, the school will:

- Contact parents/carers on the first day of absence;
- If necessary, contact the other contacts for the child, if the first point of contact is unreachable;
- Visit the home of the absent child to verify their whereabouts and safety if all points of contact are unreachable.

Failure to comply with expectations set by the school's Attendance and/or Safeguarding Officer may result in further actions, e.g., a request for further evidence, a referral to Leeds City Council for a fixed penalty notice or court prosecution.

Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its pupils. We believe all staff and visitors have an important and unique role to play in child protection. When investigating attendance and punctuality, any links with safeguarding will be fully explored.

If a child has been absent from school for a number of days and it has not been possible to contact the family, and/or if other circumstances mean that concerns about the child's safety exist (such as professionals not having seen the child for a number of days), then school may organise a welfare check. A welfare check may involve Police or social care authorities.

10. Attendance Targets

The school sets attendance targets at the start of every academic year. These targets are agreed by the Headteacher and school governors. The attendance targets will be realistic yet aspirational, and will be based on attendance figures achieved by the school in previous years and national average attendance figures.

11. Managing Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child which may encourage future absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who are late must report to the school office and have their names recorded on the school attendance system.

If a pupil has a persistent late record, the parents/carers may be asked to meet with the Headteacher / learning mentor or equivalent to discuss the pupil's punctuality. Parents/carers are welcome to approach the school at any time regarding their child's punctuality.

Being late to school can have a significant effect on the amount of teaching and learning they receive over the course of the academic year. Persistent lateness can result in the following amount of time lost during the school year:

Minutes late per day	Number of school days lost over the academic year
5 minutes	2 ½ days
10 minutes	5 days
15 minutes	7 ½ days
20 minutes	10 days
30 minutes	15 days

12. Changing Schools

If parents/carers decide to send their child(ren) to a different school, they must inform their current school as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school's roll until the following information has been received by Leeds City Council Admissions Service:

- The date the child(ren) will be leaving the current school and starting at the new school;

- The address of the new school;
- The new home address (if applicable).

The school will complete a 'Common Transfer File' (CTF) for all pupils leaving the school for another school. The child will remain on the current school's roll until confirmation has been received from the other school that the child has arrived at the new school. The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible.

In the event that the child has not arrived at the new school, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service as a 'child missing in education'.

13. Relevant Legislation

This policy has been written with due regard to the following legislation. Please note this list is not exhaustive.

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016;
- The Education Act 2002;
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;
- The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Equality Act 2010.

This Attendance and Registration Policy was adopted by Owlcotes Multi-Academy Trust on 10/03/2022

Chair of Trustees – Mrs Judith Norfolk		
Signature:		**J Norfolk**
Frequency of review:	2 years	
To be reviewed and approved by:	OMAT Full Board	
Date of next review:	March 2028	

REVIEW RECORD

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review
21/03/2024	Amendments to sections 3 and 5. Addition of section 4.	March 2026

Name:		Signature:	

on behalf of OMAT Full Board

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review
19/03/2026	Agreed review schedule.	March 2028

Name:			

on behalf of OMAT Full Board

Date of review	Reason for review	Date of next review

Name:		Signature:	

on behalf of OMAT Full Board