



ATTENDANCE POLICY

for adoption by all CDAT schools

This policy is informed by the Christian values which are the basis for all of CDAT's work and any actions taken under this policy will reflect this.
'Blessed are those who act justly, who always do what is right'
Psalm 106:3

Approved by	Date	Review Schedule	Date of next review
Trust Board	May 2025	Annually	May 2026

Statement of Intent

At Overleigh, we ensure a welcoming, safe and supportive environment, based on strong and trusting relationships with everyone in our school family. We take a whole-school approach to securing excellent attendance. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school.

We aim to:

- Ensure that this policy is clear and easily understood by everyone.
- Build strong relationships with families and ensure equality and fairness for all.
- Proactively support children and their families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Work collaboratively with other schools and agencies in the area.
- Ensure parents understand and 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.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's attendance champion is Emma Drew (Headteacher), the deputy champions are Tanja Martell (Assistant Head), Pippa Redmayne (TA/Pastoral Lead) and Isabel McCord (Administrative Assistant). They can be contacted via admin@osm.cheshire.sch.uk.

1. AIMS

- CDAT is committed to providing a full education to all pupils that embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.
- CDAT schools provide a welcoming and caring environment where every pupil feels safe and valued.
- CDAT recognise that regular attendance and excellent punctuality are essential in ensuring pupils make sustained academic progress and social development.

Our schools work in partnership with pupils and their parents or carers to promote the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Regular and punctual attendance is vital in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum, as valuable learning time is lost when pupils are absent or late.

As a Trust, we are committed to meeting our obligations with regard to school attendance, including:

- 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
- Identifying and acting promptly to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the right support in place to ensure they attend school.
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending school.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Regular attendance at school is vital to support pupils to achieve and help them get the best possible start in life. Good attendance is central to pupils' academic achievement and personal development.



Going to school helps to develop:

- friendships
- social skills
- team values
- life skills
- cultural awareness
- career pathways

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY - LOST LEARNING HOURS

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent Days	Equivalent Sessions	Equivalent Weeks	Equivalent Lessons Missed
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	1.4 Weeks	45 Lessons
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	3.4 Weeks	95 Lessons
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	5.4 Weeks	145 Lessons
80%	36 Days	72 Sessions	7.1 Weeks	180 Lessons
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	9.3 Weeks	240 Lessons



LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE document 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (September 2024) and refers to the DfE statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and responsibilities 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, 2023 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2024
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024
- Mental Health Issues Affecting a Pupil's Attendance: Guidance for Schools (February 2023)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Trust Board

The Trust Board is responsible for:

- Setting Trust-wide policy, ensuring that this meets statutory requirements and is adopted by all of the Trust's academies
- Setting high expectations of trust leaders in relation to student attendance
- Regularly reviewing and challenging Trust-wide attendance data and holding Trust leaders to account around the application of the Trust policy

Trust Central Team

The Trust's central team is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of student attendance across the Trust
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Holding school leaders to account for the application of this policy and the impact of this on attendance data
- Reviewing and challenging attendance data on a regular basis
- Provide schools with training and updates
- Share effective practise across schools

Headteacher

Responsibilities include:

- Acting as or appointing a member staff as Attendance Lead
- Implementing their school attendance policy and reviewing its effectiveness
- Monitoring school-level absence data and sharing this information with the LGC in the Headteacher's Termly Report.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate training
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed penalty notices where necessary
- Having an oversight of data analysis regarding attendance
- Work with families to support attendance.

Communicate with the SENDCo, Mental Health Lead and the LA to support attendance.

Ensuring there are clear procedures for reporting absence.

Attendance Leads

Schools may appoint an attendance lead with delegated responsibilities, including:

- Development and review of the attendance policy
- Producing and distributing attendance information for parents/carers
- Setting and monitoring targets for improving attendance within the school, and evaluating targets with the senior leadership team
- Supporting all school staff in their work related to attendance
- Collating attendance data as required for senior leadership team, DfE, LA and LSB
- Identifying individual pupils with known punctuality/attendance issues, and ensuring these pupils are monitored closely
- Referring pupils to the EWO when attendance gives cause for concern, and liaising with the EWO to develop strategies to support these pupils/families.
- Liaising with other partner agencies and services towards improving and developing strategies to raise levels of attendance.

Class Teachers

- Complete registers accurately and promptly as per the school's attendance policy
- Give attendance a high profile and emphasise the importance of school attendance
- Make pupils feel welcome and support them after an absence or when late to school
- Liaise with other school staff and respond to attendance issues promptly.
- Support the Trust/whole school ethos of promoting good attendance.

The Local Governing Committee

- Will receive information from the Headteacher on attendance in the Headteacher's termly report.
- Will support the school in setting attendance targets.
- Will support the school in planning a response where attendance is a cause for concern.
- Will support the school in its efforts to raise attendance.
- May support the school by attending strategic meetings or attendance panels as appropriate.

Office Staff

School office staff may be responsible for taking calls from parents/carers and pupils about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it accurately. They will also transfer calls from parents/carers and pupils to the correct pastoral staff, attendance officers or SLT in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance. They will input codes accurately and ensure that late students and students leaving during the day are accounted for. Office staff work closely with the attendance and safeguarding tea



What our schools expects of pupils:

- To attend school every day, unless in exceptional circumstances.
- To arrive on time, appropriately prepared for the day
- To report to their class teacher for registration, or to the school office if late
- To tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school

These expectations depend upon the age and needs of individual pupils.

What our schools expects of parents/carers

- To fulfil their statutory responsibility by ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time.
- To ensure they contact the school as per reporting procedures if their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure their child arrives on time, and is well prepared for the day (equipment, homework completed, PE kit etc.)
- To contact the school (class teacher/headteacher/admin staff) whenever a problem arises that may keep their child from attending school.
- To inform the admin staff of any forthcoming appointments and, where possible, make appointments outside of the school day. Evidence of an appointment must be shown to the school office staff.
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- To take holidays in the school holiday period only; special leave in term time will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances – see appendix for list of absence codes.

What parents can expect of their school

- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- First day contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing prior notification
- Prompt action when any problems are identified
- Close liaison with the Education Welfare Officer, LEA and Early Help Team to assist and support parents and pupils
- Notification to parents/carers of their child's attendance record through annual reports sent home.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES



Registration procedures

- School gates open at 8:30am.
- Doors into school open for children at 8:40am.
- Doors close at 8:50am when the school day starts and the register is taken.
- Pupils attending after 8:50am will receive a late mark to show that they were on site, but late for registration.
- Registration closes at 9:10am and any child arriving from this time will receive a U mark. A U mark counts as an absence.
- If a child arrives after 8:50am, parents must log their arrival at the main office, providing a reason.
- The afternoon register will be marked in class once children have finished their lunchtime break.

Parents are required to contact the school office via telephone or email on admin@overleightmarysce.cheshire.sch.uk before 8:50am on the first and each subsequent day of their child's absence. They will be expected to provide a specific explanation for the absence. E.g. vomiting/temperature rather than unwell which is not specific.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by 9:10am to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone as soon as is possible but before 10:30am on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness, or the frequency of absence is unusual.

Safeguarding

Children may be at risk if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility.

Failing to attend school on a regular basis is considered to be a safeguarding matter.

As part of first day call procedures outlined, schools may make home visits to ascertain the wellbeing of pupils. In any instance, where a pupil has not attended and the school has not been contacted with what it deems an acceptable reason, then a home visit will be considered. The school will speak to their safeguarding leads for additional advice where necessary, and where appropriate DSLs contact their Local Authority Safeguarding Partnership for support.

THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO ATTENDANCE ISSUES/FOLLOWING ATTENDANCE PATHWAYS

- The school will identify and monitor pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern. The Trust will set a target for attendance, to be reviewed each academic year.

The Trust target for the academic year 2025-26 is 96%. / THE SCHOOL'S TARGET IS 98%

- Pupils falling below 95% will receive their first 'light touch' letter and monitor at 3-4 week intervals, sending letters 2 and 3 if there is no improvement.
- If attendance continues to fall to below 90%, as defined by the DfE a child will be deemed to be 'Persistently Absent' (PA). Absence at this level is likely to cause considerable damage to a child's educational prospects and the school will need parent/carer's fullest support and co-operation to address this. If not taken up already, Early Help support should be offered again. Parents will be invited to a formal attendance meeting in school with the Headteacher/Attendance Champion or other member of SLT.
- After a monitoring period of 3-4 weeks, if there is no sign of improvement the school may start

the formal Local Authority attendance pathway, informing the LA Inclusion and Attendance team and beginning with letter 1.

- A support plan will be created for the family, and further professional help accessed if not already in place. Regular review meetings will be held in school to monitor progress.
- Children whose attendance continues to fall to below 50% are deemed to be Severely Absent (SA) and will need a specific targeted plan. This should be created in liaison with support from the school's Local Authority.
- Parents should be advised that failure to comply with the above interventions could eventually lead to the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices, or prosecution in court. The Local Authority will contact parents regarding the issuing of fines or any other legal action.

All absences will be assessed against current DfE guidance;

When a child receives 10 unauthorised absences in any rolling 10 week period, the school must consider the next steps. This could include unauthorised absence (O codes), unauthorised lateness (U codes), unauthorised term time leave (G codes) or a combination of these codes.

CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENT- TARGET SETTING

As a trust, we strive for all children to have good attendance, but recognise that at times 100% attendance may be unachievable for very good reasons. The trust aims to value all attendance over 96% as 'good' and has aspirational target of all schools achieving 98% attendance for all pupils. However, it is important that all children aim for 100% attendance wherever possible, ensuring that they are given the very best opportunity to achieve.

Authorising parental absence requests

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Parents are required a leave of absence form at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. **The school is not able to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.**

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend an appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s). Even if a license has been awarded, absence for this purpose will not be authorised for children with current attendance at less than 96%.

Religious observance

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

Leave during lunch times

Parents are not permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times unless they attend the Nursery class.

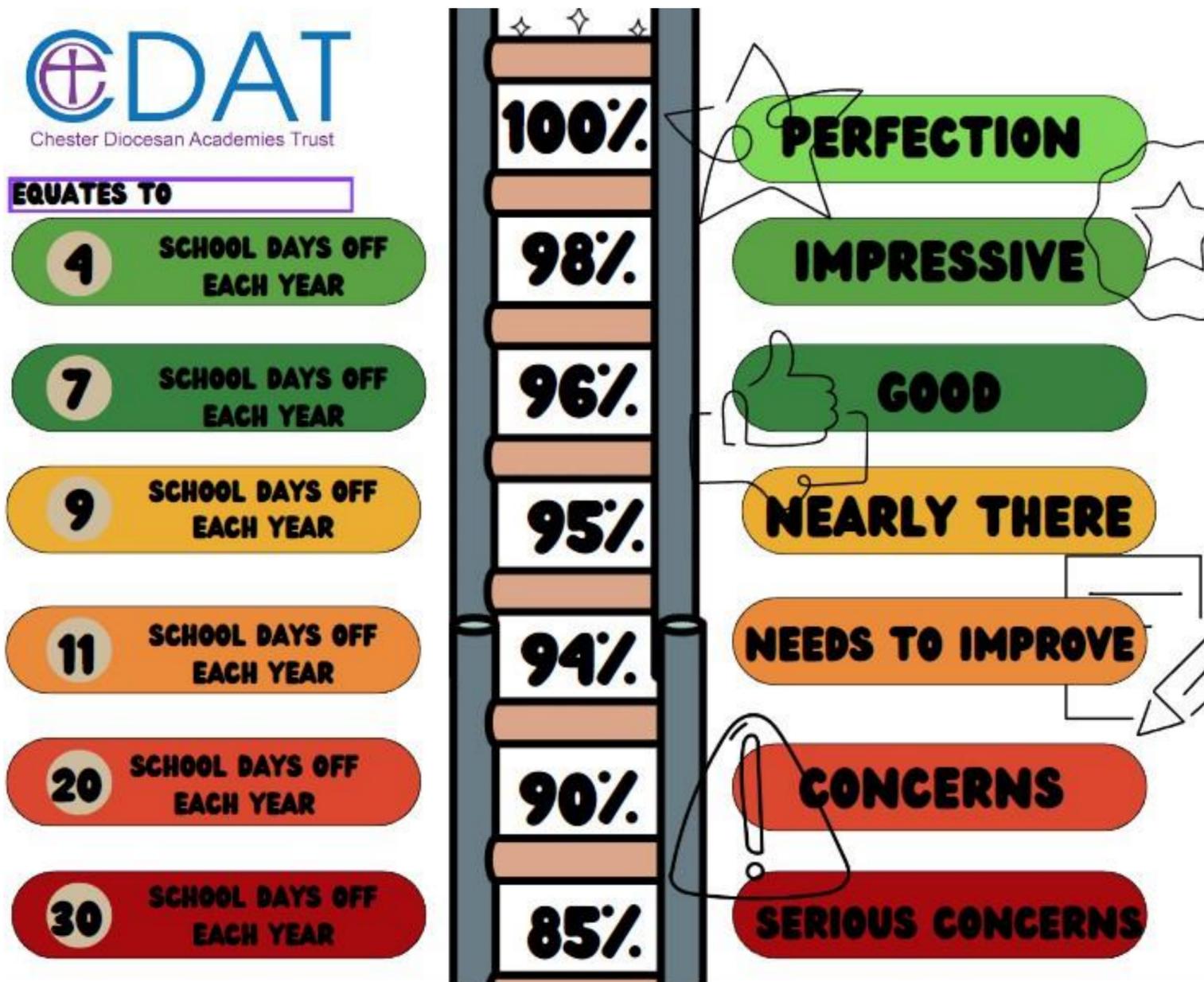
Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.



The diagram below is a useful visual to help children and parents understand the numbers around attendance and what this means in real terms.



LEAVE OF ABSENCE (INCLUDING HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME)

The law states that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for term time holidays. The Trust will not authorise holidays in term time. Our schools will refer any cases of unauthorised holiday absence that meet Local Authority thresholds for the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Under new DfE Guidance, Local Authorities will only issue two fixed penalty notices in a rolling 3 year period. Fixed penalty notices are issued per parent, per child for any leave of absence of 5 days or more.

Offence 1 – FPN of £160 per parent/per child This FPN will be reduced to £80 per parent/per child if paid within 21 days.

Offence 2 – FPN of £160 per parent/per child. No reduction.

Offence 3 – LA will consider prosecution through magistrates' court.

If parents do decide to take their child out of school during term time, school should be notified by the completion of a leave of absence request form at least 20 days prior to the date of absence.

Families requesting leave of absence for the purposes of Religious Observance should speak to their headteacher for guidance.



PART TIME TIMETABLES

CDAT recognise that in some circumstances, a part-time timetable might be appropriate for a pupil.

In some circumstances, pupils' education may be provided partially at school and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Time away from school to receive education in other ways must be recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate codes.

The trust must be notified of any such arrangements.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible.

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Have the agreement of the Trust Inclusion Lead.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process.
- In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a parttime timetable for a prolonged period.

Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.

If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record the absence accordingly (C2)

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION/ABSENT FROM EDUCATION

Children/students who cannot be located, or their families contacted, will be considered missing from education. The LA Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with specific Local Authority procedures. If the family/ child is still deemed missing after 20 school days they may lose their school place and be removed from the school roll.

Similarly, schools will pay particular attention to those pupils whose persistent absence is impacting severely upon their education, and classed as 'absent from education'.

These cases will be discussed with SLT/Safeguarding leads to ensure that appropriate and robust action is taken to address concerns.

KCSIE Sept 2024: Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to Local Authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community. These cases will be discussed with SLT/Safeguarding leads to ensure that appropriate and robust action is taken to address concerns.



ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

Should, after careful consideration, a parent decide to educate their child at home, the school should ask for confirmation of this in writing. The school may then remove the child from the school roll immediately, informing Elective Home Education. The school is under no obligation to keep the child's place open.

The school uses SIMMS / COMPASS to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities. The DfE also access this information system.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, and the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way.

Absence Codes:

According to the DfE guidance the following codes are used on the register.

Code	SIMS Description	DfE Description / Explanation
/	Present (AM)	Present for school morning session
\	Present (PM)	Present for school afternoon session
B	Attending any other Approved Education Activity	Attending any other approved educational activity. Not to be used for Virtual learning
C	Other authorised circumstances	Leave absence for exceptional circumstance
C1	Leave of absence – regulated performance	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence – Temporary part-time timetable	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered	Dual registered to another school
E	Suspended or excluded without alternative provision	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence as pupil on a family holiday, not agreed, or is taking days more than an agreed family holiday
I	Illness	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
J1	Leave of absence – Interview for employment or transfer to another educational institution	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
K	Alternative provision provided by LA	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
L	Late (before registers closed)	Late arrival before the register closed
M	Medical or dental appointment	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment



Absence Codes:

According to the DfE guidance the following codes are used on the register.

N	No reason yet provided for absence	Reason absence not yet established
O	Absence in other or unknown circumstance	Absence in other or unknown circumstance
P	Participating in sports activity	Participating in sports activity
Q	Unable to attend – lack of access arrangements	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observance	Religious observance
S	Study leave for public examination	Study leave for public examination
T	Traveling with parent for occupational purposes	Traveling with parent for occupational purposes
U	Late (after registers closed)	Late (after registers closed)
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Attending an educational visit or trip
W	Attending work experience	Attending work experience
X	Not required to attend-non-compulsory school age pupil	Not required to attend-non-compulsory school age pupil
Y1	Unable to attend – Transport not available	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being provided
Y2	Unable to attend – widespread travel emergency	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend – unavoidable partial closure	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.
Y4	Unable to attend – unavoidable full closure	Unable to attend due to the whole schools' site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend – criminal justice detention	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend – Public Health Guidance / Law	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law





Thank you for your continued support in promoting excellent attendance at Overleigh St Mary's CE Primary for your child.

"Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success"
Henry Ford

