



MERCHANT TAYLORS'
OXFORDSHIRE
ACADEMY TRUST



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Version 1.0

November 2024

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*Wellbeing
Committee*

Version Control	
Policy	Attendance Policy
SLT	JKL
Reference	MTOAT Wallingford School Attendance Policy_Nov24
Committee	Wellbeing Committee
Circulation	Website
Status	Approved
Version	Version 1.0: 24 Oct 2024
Governing body approved	WBC: 05.11.2024 FGB: 20.11.2024
Review cycle	Annually

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1. Introduction

Our practice is designed to address the issue of raising attendance on an individual, case-by-case basis. There are, however, key approaches and practices which the school would wish to adopt. The core principle is that raising levels of attendance should be a concern of all staff, parents and the wider community.

2. Aim

To continue to raise levels of achievement and participation, by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.

3. Objectives

- To keep an accurate and up-to-date record of students' attendance and punctuality.
- To inform and involve parents if there are any attendance and punctuality issues.
- To identify the causes of non-attendance and work with parents and any other agencies to resolve the causes.
- To reduce absence through non-term-time holidays.
- To monitor and review the attendance processes.
- To give clear information on expected levels of student attendance.

4. The Tutor and Registration – Responsibilities

- Tutors are required to take the register electronically through the SIMS attendance monitor module at the beginning of each morning. AM registration opens at 8.40am and closes at 9.10am. Subject teachers will complete the legal PM registration at the start of period 5 each day.
- The SIMS attendance monitor module will enable the school to print a legal document, which is the only evidence related to actual attendance permissible in a magistrates' court should a prosecution of parents occur.
- All teaching staff must give attendance and punctuality a high profile.
- Tutors are responsible for collecting notes, both written and electronic, from parents to explain absence and entering the appropriate code into the SIMS attendance programme. (See section 8 for codes.)
- All tutors have 'live' attendance data on their classroom computer workstation and can make alterations and updates, and check for patterns of non-attendance.

- REGISTERS ARE TO BE TAKEN IN EVERY LESSON where the teacher/cover supervisor/supply teacher is present.
- Subject teachers should notify the on-call team of any suspected truancy and this will then be followed up in line with the school behaviour policy.
- The on-call team will – in the first instance – deal with any ‘internal’ truancy. (Where a student is marked as present in other lessons during the day.)

Tutors will regularly check attendance data for their group, so they can be proactive in dealing with emerging patterns of poor attendance.

- Heads of Year (HOY) will monitor attendance levels within their house and across tutor groups.
- Tutors should recognise their responsibility for contacting parents regarding absence and punctuality to help forge home/school links.
- Where students are regularly absent or fall below acceptable levels of attendance, the tutor will liaise with the HOY and attendance officer to ensure contact is made with parents.
- Where there are serious cases, the member of SLT with responsibility for attendance and punctuality will work with the relevant HOY and other key staff within the pastoral team where appropriate. Under certain situations, the school may ask an appropriate member of staff to visit the home address to help parents where a student is ‘school refusing’.

5. Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Absence can be deemed to be authorised (by the school) if:

- Leave has been granted by the school.
- The student is unable to attend for reasons of sickness or ill health, or any UNAVOIDABLE absence.
- On a day set aside specifically for a religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.

All other absences must be treated as unauthorised. If in doubt tutors should check with their respective HOY.

6. Procedures

- If a student is absent for more than three consecutive days (without a forthcoming explanation), the school will contact the parent(s) by telephone or in writing. If the absentee is a student about whom there are already concerns, the HOY, or attendance officer, will make every effort to contact the parent(s) immediately.

- Students who are late are monitored at Student Reception.
- If a student is regularly late, a detention may be imposed by the HOY.
- All lates/absences will be available daily for each HOY and tutor.
- This is intended to enable the HOY/tutor to identify those students who have been regularly late and for whom a detention should be imposed.
- If a student is persistently (or intermittently) late/absent, the tutor/HOY will write to the parents/invite the parents into school, and a parenting contract may be put in place.
- Parents may be asked to attend an attendance panel if there has been no improvement.
- If a student returns to school after a period of absence and fails to bring a note, or if the explanation offered by a note is not satisfactory, the parent/s will be contacted.
- The attendance officer will update registers to supply information on students whose parents have contacted the school to provide a reason for their child's absence.

CPOMS will be used to record ongoing work with families where attendance continues to be an issue.

The school will continue to make referrals to the county attendance team and enlist their support.

7. Promoting Good Attendance

A variety of initiatives will be in operation to support positive attendance such as:

- Positive attendance celebration through tutors, assemblies and whole-school rewards system.
- Standardised September letter sent to all families and termly letters with student's individual percentage to all families thereafter.
- Behaviour policy to be used accordingly when dealing with truancy or lateness.

8. Attendance Codes

Additionally: 1 indicates counts as a present mark; 2 indicates counts as authorised absence; 3 indicates counts as unauthorised absence.

Code	Signification
/	Present AM (1)
\	Present PM - Period 5 (1)
-	Register not taken (this is a temporary mark).
A	Insert if you know for definite student has truanted your lesson – not to be used for AM or PM – Period 5 – registration as this is specific to us. (Code not used.)
B	Educated off site (1)
C	Other authorised circumstances (funeral, family problems etc.) (2)
C2	Leave of absence – compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable.
D	Dual registration (student attending other establishment - e.g. college). (Only counts towards attendance at other site they are attending.)
E	Excluded (2)
F	Extended family holiday (authorised more than 10 days). (2)
G	Family holiday (not authorised or days in excess of agreement). (3)
H	Family holiday (authorised). (2)
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental appointments, etc.) (2)
J	Interview (1)
K	PE code (no PE kit). Used only by PE Department for students who are present in a PE lesson but do not actually take part in the lesson. (Do not override this mark.) (This will count as a Present mark.) (Code not used.)
L	Late (before registers closed). (1)
M	Medical / dental appointments. (2)
N	No reason yet provided for absence (this is a temporary mark).
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by other codes). (3)
P	Approved sporting activity. (1)
Q	Transport – bus arriving late for registration. (1)
R	Religious observance. (1)
S	Study leave. (2)
T	Traveller absence. (2)
U	Late after registers closed. (3)
V	Educational visit or trip. (1)
W	Work experience. (1)
X	Attendance NOT required. (Does not count within attendance.)
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. (Code not used.)
Z	Pupil not yet on roll. (Code not used.)
#	School closed to pupils and staff. (Does not count within attendance.)

9. The Penalty Notice System

The Law – the Education Act 1996 Part I, Section 7 – states:

‘The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

[a] to his/her age, ability and aptitude and

[b] to any special needs he/she may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.’

For educational purposes, the term ‘parent’ is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child. The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this act. Part VI section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school. In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask Oxfordshire County Council’s Attendance and Engagement Team to either issue a penalty notice warning, which could result in a fine, or take further legal action through the courts. A penalty notice is a fine that the Attendance and Engagement Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the magistrates’ court system.

A parent/carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- They fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision, regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six-week period.
- They allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school’s authorisation.
- They fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence.
- Their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed. A pupil becomes a ‘persistent absentee’ (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child’s educational prospects, and we need parents’ fullest support and cooperation to tackle this. The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority, and parents will be informed of this immediately.

- PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school, and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases will be referred to OCC's Attendance and Engagement Team and, if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence, a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or three months' imprisonment.

10. Texting

A SIMS module called 'In Touch' will alert parents/carers to their child's absence.

This operates on a 'first absence' basis.

- Parents are contacted asking them to provide us with a mobile, email or home phone number where we can leave a message informing them of their child's absence. We ask parents/carers which form of contact they would prefer.
- If the student is not marked as present in the morning registration, P1 and P2 AND we have not received notification from parent/carer, they will automatically be sent a message.
- When the parent/carer receives this message, they can reply to it directly or phone us at the school to give the reason for absence.
- We will also contact the parents/carers if the student subsequently arrives at school after we have sent messages. A message will be sent on the first day of absence. If no reply is received, on the third day of absence a phone call will be made to the parent/carer. If we still receive no contact after five days, we will discuss alternative next steps to make contact and, where necessary, escalate concerns with other agencies. Each HOY will have a target list of students that they have identified as needing to be monitored for attendance.