



*“Our School community is built on the following fundamental values for all;  
Safety, Kindness, Adaptable, Aspiration, Communication for All,  
Achievement, Happiness”*

# **The Shires School Oakham and Stretton**

## **Education: Pupil Attendance and Absence Policy**

<b>Policy Review Process</b>	
<b>Created by</b>	<b>Jamie Hill – Head of Education</b>
<b>Date of implementation</b>	<b>December 2020</b>
<b>Date for policy review</b>	<b>December 2021</b>

## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 Governance

Lynette Edwards – Regional Director, and Debra Eason – Principal, are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. They also hold the Head of Education to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 3.2 The Head of Education

The Head of Education is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it via governance.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.

### 3.3 The attendance officers (Deputy Head / DSL / School Administrator)

The school attendance officers:

- Monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Report concerns about attendance to the Head of Education.
- Work with parents and multi-professional team (MDT) to tackle persistent absence.
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents and MDT to discuss attendance issues.

### **3.4 Class teachers**

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

### **3.5 School administration staff**

School administration staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 9:20am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1:20pm.

### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:20am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/carers should telephone Mandy Pickersgill on 01780 411944 or email [mandy.pickersgill@theshires.org.uk](mailto:mandy.pickersgill@theshires.org.uk).

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **4.3 Planned absence**

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

Parents/carers should telephone Mandy Pickersgill on 01780 411944 or email on [mandy.pickersgill@theshires.org.uk](mailto:mandy.pickersgill@theshires.org.uk).

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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

### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

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

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

We recognise that all of our pupils are at different stages of their educational journey so we will always work in conjunction with parents and carers to support pupil attendance and punctuality and will operate reasonably on a personalised basis.

### **4.5 Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason.

Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.

Identify whether the absence is approved or not.

Identify the correct attendance code to use.

### **4.6 Reporting to parents**

Pupil attendance will be reported termly to parents/carers via end of term written progress reports.

## **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The Head of Education will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head of Education's discretion.

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

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

## 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Again, because of the various complex challenges our pupils face to attend their educational offer we will endeavour to work with families and professionals to explore and overcome any presenting barriers preventing them from attending school. This work would be done with the pupils needs at the heart of the decision making process and families and wider professionals consulted in order to explore possible solutions.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At The Shires we aim to recognise all achievements linked to consistent attendance and progress made in relation to improving attendance.

- Termly Attendance Awards
- Yearly Attendance Awards
- Improving Attendance Awards

## 7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officers at our school monitor pupil absence on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

The parent should maintain regular contact with the school should their child be absent for more than one day, ensuring regular updates are maintained.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer from the relevant local authority.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

The school collects and stores attendance data via Double First MIS, and it may be used for internal purposes to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Monitor and evaluate those pupils identified as being in need of intervention and support.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Head of Education. At every review, the policy will be approved via governance processes.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

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

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

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