Attendance
Policy and Procedures

Overley Hall School

Approved by:	Support & Scrutiny Board	**Date:** 11/09/2026
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Introduction

Our attendance policy is reviewed and updated annually by the Head Teacher and Overley Hall Attendance officer. The policy is discussed with staff and placed on the website for parents and placing authorities to view.

Children of compulsory school age are required to receive a suitable full-time education. Young people are required to participate in education or training until age 18. During these ages of compulsory school age they must receive a suitable, full-time education. It is vital that they receive this education as it not only enhances their life in the present but also helps to prepare them for life as an adult.

Overley Hall School caters for up to 24 children and young people between the ages of 8 and 19 who have a range of complex needs and disabilities. The majority of these children/young people live within Wellingtonia Children's Home which is on the same site as the School.

Regular school attendance is vital for all children, but especially for those with learning difficulties and autism as it can help to reduce their anxiety and increase life skills and experiences. Many of the children and young people at Overley Hall School are several years behind their chronological age in their academic and developmental skills, and so we encourage daily attendance so we can help them achieve their full potential.

Overley Hall realises that effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Open communication is vital with all involved in the lives of our pupils and young people to ensure that they are safe and receiving the support needed to ensure their education maximises opportunity and potential.

During unusual circumstances such as the country experiencing a pandemic, the school will follow the guidelines set out by the DFE in connection with attendance.

Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (July 2026), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Emphasising the importance to all students (where appropriate) of maximum attendance at school as an essential pre-requisite for making full use of all educational opportunities and to maximising individual achievement
- Making explicit to all relevant parties (teachers, parents/carers, council and students) the school's expectations on attendance levels
- Promoting a consistent approach across the school towards all matters relating to attendance and clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Communicating to all relevant parties the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised"
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong, trusting relationships, and working together to put the right support in place
- Stress the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance. Use the Support First model: Working in partnership with pupils and parents to support in school, helping parents to access services of their own accord and/or a voluntary whole family plan to tackle barriers to attendance.

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory age attend regularly.

Principles

The school will:

- Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law,
- Complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session,
- Stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence,
- Celebrate good attendance rates and reward good and improved attendance of all pupils,
- Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence,
- Consult with all members of the school community and the Attendance Officer in developing and maintaining the whole-school attendance policy,
- Ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by senior managers, the Support & Scrutiny Team and SENCO,
- Share attendance data via the website
- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed
- Develop strategies on an individual basis for reducing persistent and severe absence, including conducting multi-disciplinary meetings and include access to wider support from authorities as required to remove barriers to attendance.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (July 2026) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (current version) and any subsequent updates
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

This policy is also informed by relevant provisions of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 and any subsequent statutory guidance relating to attendance, children missing education and elective home education.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

Roles and responsibilities

It is rare there is a problem with attendance or punctuality as most children are residents of Wellingtonia Children's Home situated on the same site as Overley Hall School. There is the potential to have a small number of day students at Overley Hall School and the policy offers guidance on the key roles and responsibilities of those involved with the young people.

The government expects:

Schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and act early to address patterns of absence. Parents to perform their legal duty by

ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.
- All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Attendance and Safeguarding

Poor attendance, persistent absence and patterns of missing education may indicate safeguarding concerns. Attendance information forms part of the school's safeguarding systems and is regularly reviewed alongside other indicators of vulnerability. Where attendance concerns suggest a pupil may be at risk of harm, the school will take appropriate action in line with its Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, including working with parents, carers, social workers, local authorities and other relevant agencies.

The Support and Scrutiny board

The Support and Scrutiny board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
    - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
    - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those focus areas
- Receiving and scrutinising regular attendance information, challenging trends and ensuring attendance remains a strategic priority across the school's policies, safeguarding arrangements and improvement planning
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Ensure training on attendance is included in the schools CPD offer for all staff. Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher – Attendance Champion

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Support and Scrutiny Board
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- for championing and improving attendance in school and liaising with pupils, parents and external agencies where needed
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Notify the safeguarding team of absences of vulnerable pupils
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels and devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
    - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
    - Communicating with the relevant local authority regarding pupils who are, or are likely to be, unable to attend school for a significant period due to medical needs, illness, mental health needs or other barriers to education, in accordance with statutory guidance and local authority requirements
    - Notify the authority of any pupil who fails to attend regularly

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring teaching staff are aware of current codes and ensure the correct ones are being entered
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data and providing comparison data for school records and the website
- Conducting half termly, termly and yearly attendance analysis and providing data to the Scrutiny and Support Board as required
- Providing attendance data for reviews and authorities upon request (including LAC pupils)

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Monitoring weekly attendance for patterns and trends and discuss interventions and support in a targeted way with staff, families and where necessary multi-disciplinary teams
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Attending training provided to fulfil specific role of Attendance Officer

The attendance officer is Lorna Deakin and can be contacted via 01952 740262 Ext: 232 or lornadeakin@overleyhall.com.

Class teachers/Tutors

Class teacher's/ tutors are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1) along with:

- Keeping an accurate, up-to-date (recorded at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions) online attendance register of their Tutor Group using correct category codes.
- Keeping records of pupils who arrive late and the reason for this.
- Correcting any inaccuracies which may occur in the attendance register/or notifying the attendance officer who will then make the alterations needed.
- Following up absences as outlined in this policy
- Liaising with the Assistant Head or Attendance officer about attendance
- Informing the Attendance officer or Assistant Head if they receive any communication that a pupil will need to leave the school premises part way through the day by prior arrangement e.g. for a medical appointment
- Telephoning pupils' homes or Children's Home as necessary re attendance
- Passing on information re attendance to relevant staff
- Keeping records and inform outside agencies as necessary to comply with local and national policy and procedures

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment
- Contact the school on the first morning of absence by contacting one of the personnel below:

    - **Attendance Officer**: Lorna Deakin
      Lorna.deakin@overleyhall.com
      01952 740262 Ext 232

    - **Assistant Head:** Dee Marshall
      dee.marshall@overleyhall.com
      01952740262 Ext 216

    - **Head Teacher (designated senior leader responsible for attendance):** Beverley Doran
      bev.doran@overleyhall.com
      01952 740262 Ext 214

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Inform the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time

- Talk to the school as soon as possible about a child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with
- Make requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Attend every timetabled session, on time.

Local Authorities

Authorities who place their children and young people with us by law are responsible for making sure that registered pupils of compulsory age regularly attend school. The Government also has a priority in reducing unnecessary absence from school. Pupils attending Overley Hall School are more vulnerable and have greater needs than the majority of their mainstream counterparts. This means that they may have more genuine absences from school for medical reasons or experience greater social need than others. It is our responsibility as educators to do all we can to encourage and support regular and frequent school attendance. Parents and carers are also responsible for ensuring their children attend school.

Overley Hall recognises that the council is responsible for making sure that parents and Overley Hall School fulfil their responsibilities to ensure attendance is very high. Councils have services available to help parents meet their obligations placed on them by successive Education Acts and Childcare legislation such as 'The Education Access Service'. If required the council can allocate an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to advise in the managing of whole school attendance. At Overley hall we are aware that EWOs have the right to monitor

the whole school attendance on a regular basis and may request information on all children with less than 87% attendance.

EWOs work with:

- parents/carers
- pupils
- school staff
- education support staff
- psychologists
- social workers
- police
- health personnel
- other voluntary and statutory agencies

Children in Care

The school recognises the additional vulnerability of children in care and will work closely with corporate parents, social workers, virtual schools and residential providers to promote attendance.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording all pupils' attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised. A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order.

We will keep an electronic attendance register through School Pod Online (using the attendance tab) and place all pupils onto this register.

All classes will have their class preloaded into their class section (if any alterations are needed please ask for help)

1. Press the Attendance Tab
2. Date
3. Select class
4. Select Period
5. Click radio button next to pupils name and choose from drop down box correct category (add comments if needed)
6. Continue down pupil list

For further information please see BehaviourWatch/SchoolPod: Record and Report on Attendance - Eduspot Support

The attendance register will be taken at the start of each school day and after lunch. The school day starts at 9am and ends at 15.40pm for our learners. The register closes at the end of the first lesson at 9.30am and after the lunch period at 1.30pm.

The attendance will be recorded, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, 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 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.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Authorised and unauthorised absence in relation to Overley Hall School means absence granted or not granted by the Head of the School. The Head Teacher will only consider authorising an absence during term time where an application has been made in advance and where they are satisfied that there are exceptional or special circumstances to justify the request. A leave of absence is granted solely at the Head teacher's discretion.

The school promotes the highest possible attendance for every pupil. Attendance expectations will be considered individually, taking account of a pupil's special educational needs, disabilities, health needs, therapeutic requirements and personal circumstances. We also believe that the positive attitude towards school motivates our young people to want to attend. We analyse attendance to look for patterns across groups of young people as Day vs Residential; LAC vs non LAC; Girls vs Boys; School vs Sixth form, ethnic group etc. Any patterns established would lead to action targeted through the school development plan.

Attendance information may be shared through Annual Reviews, PEPs and statutory reporting processes where appropriate. Overall school attendance is also published on the School Website.

Attendance and punctuality are not typically awarded with certificates as it is an expectation that students attend and are punctual. However, if a child becomes anxious and becomes reluctant to come to school as a result of their autism, an award may be given out to celebrate an improvement in punctuality and reduction in anxiety.

What is an acceptable attendance rate?

Attendance is a national priority. All schools must submit data every term. It is a key indicator of an effective school and, as such, will be scrutinised by Ofsted National data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance rates and high examination performance.

The school promotes the highest possible attendance for all pupils. Expected attendance levels will be considered in the context of each pupil's needs and circumstances, whilst maintaining high aspirations for engagement and participation in education. Sickness comes usually in a block of time over a continuous period; what we look for are unbroken weeks (i.e. those where the pupil is marked present on all ten sessions); students should **not** have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of an academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the school.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school staff, who can be contacted via

- **Attendance Officer**: Lorna Deakin
  Lorna.deakin@overleyhall.com
  01952 740262 Ext 232

- **Assistant Head:** Dee Marshall
  dee.marshall@overleyhall.com
  01952740262 Ext 216

- **Head Teacher (designated senior leader response for attendance):** Beverley Doran
  bev.doran@overleyhall.com
  01952 740262 Ext 214

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.

Where appropriate, including where absences are prolonged, frequent or there are concerns regarding authenticity, the school may request 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Attendance of pupils with a social worker will be monitored particularly closely and attendance concerns will be shared with the relevant social worker at the earliest opportunity.

Planned absence

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

However, we encourage parents 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 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.

Lateness and punctuality

Procedures for following up lateness:

L - Pupils who arrive late but before the register is closed for the session (i.e. 9.30am & 13.30) should be marked as an L. This is with the exception of any students for whom we know the reason for their late arrival i.e. medical/dental/illness.

U - Pupils who arrive after the close of registration should be marked with a U to indicate they are late and arrived after registers closed. This is with the exception of any students for whom we know the reason for their late arrival i.e. medical/dental/illness in which case the register

will be marked. These absences are regarded as unauthorised absences if no satisfactory explanation is given in a note or by telephone by the parents/carers. Parents or carers dropping pupils off late must report to School Reception and explain the reasons for lateness.

/ - Where a pupil is on site but experiencing anxiety, autism-related difficulties or other barriers to engagement, and is working with school staff as part of an agreed support plan to access or re-engage with learning, they should be recorded using the appropriate attendance code in line with DfE guidance and the pupil's individual circumstances.

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer (if the student is returning from home) or care staff if the student is coming into school from Wellingtonia, to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence if they are not going to be in school. This can be done by leaving a message on the answerphone, phoning when the school office opens at 8.00am.

If a parent/guardian fails to let the school know the reason for absence the school will make contact with them and where deemed necessary the parents/carers will be reminded of the legal requirements regarding school attendance. Overley Hall School takes its Safeguarding Duties very seriously and therefore will ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. This situation is very unlikely to occur here at Overley Hall School; however we have a small number of day students.

Following up unexplained absence

Attendance and Safeguarding

Poor attendance, unexplained absence, persistent absence and patterns of missing education may be indicators of safeguarding concerns, including neglect, abuse, child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation or other forms of harm. Attendance information forms part of the school's safeguarding systems and is considered alongside other indicators of vulnerability. Where concerns are identified, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) will work with parents/carers, social workers, local authorities and other relevant agencies in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Follow ‘First day contact’ procedures and contact the parent by telephone, or if the parent is unavailable send a standard letter requesting information
- If first day contact is unsuccessful, inform the young person’s social worker
- Consider sending a second letter if an explanation has still not been received after three days of unexplained absence or send a School Attendance Letter
- Refer to the school’s nominated attendance person (NAP) or Education Welfare Officer (EWO), to follow up absence if no response is received after 5 days of absence and consider a referral to the ‘Children & Family Locality Services’ or contact ‘Family Connect’ if no contact can be made with the parent
- Invite the parents into school for an ‘Attendance Concern Meeting’ (ACM) after a maximum of 10 days absence unless other action is planned. This meeting should include a senior member of staff, SENCO and parent/carers or guardian. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance
- Discuss any concerns with Family Connect 01952385385 for further guidance on available support. In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education
- Attendance, absence and exclusions are closely monitored. Overley Hall is committed to inclusive practice and seeks wherever possible to avoid suspension and permanent exclusion through proactive support and intervention. The DSL will monitor unauthorised absence and take appropriate action, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions and/or are missing for periods during the school day
- We follow the DfE legal requirements for schools in respect of recording and reporting of children who leave school without any known destination
- The school will comply with all statutory requirements relating to Children Missing Education (CME), children not in school, elective home education and the removal of pupils from the admission register. The school will work with local authorities and other

relevant agencies to share information where required by legislation and statutory guidance to help ensure that children are safe and receiving a suitable education.

- Where a pupil has 10 consecutive school days of unexplained absence and all reasonable steps* have been taken by the school to establish their whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to the pupils' local authority

*Reasonable steps include:

- Discussion with the Wellingtonia Registered Children's home manager
- Discussion with other residential settings who accommodate our pupils
- Telephone calls to all known contacts, home, local authority representative such as social workers
- Letters home (including recorded delivery)
- Possible home visits where safe to do so
- Aim to have eyes on the learner after 3 days of absence, this could be through a video call to the home setting to see the young person and/or talk to them, SW or case worker. If parents/cares are unwilling or unable to allow this we will report to education welfare and/or family connect for further guidance
- Enquiries to friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts
- Enquiries with any other Service known to be involved with the Pupil/family
- All contacts and outcomes will be recorded on the pupil's file.

Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels in Annual reviews and in termly PEP's.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher 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
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

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

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum; **routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible.**

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, taking into account 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, see Appendix 2 of this policy. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. If a pupil is over compulsory school age (e.g. sixth form), leave can be requested or agreed by the pupil or a parent they normally live with.

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

- Illness (including mental-health 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 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
- Parent(s) 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
- Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):
- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

The school remains responsible for monitoring attendance, educational engagement and safeguarding arrangements when pupils access alternative provision, off-site education, dual registration placements or other approved educational provision. Attendance information will be obtained and reviewed regularly to ensure pupils are safe and receiving appropriate education.

Unauthorised Absences

These are absences where:

- Parent (s)/carers provides no letter or acceptable explanation;
- The reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of **authorised** absence above.

DFE guidelines state that the following activities would be classified as **unauthorised:**

- Minding the house;
- Caring for relatives;
- Awaiting repair people;
- Shopping;
- A birthday or family celebration.

There are clearly some grey areas. The DFE guidelines look at the area of **Special Occasions** and make clear that only **truly exceptional** occasions should be classified as authorised; for example, absence resulting from a pupil attending the graduation of an older brother or sister could be counted as authorised; a birthday treat to a theme park would **not**.

Holidays

We strongly discourage holidays being taken in term time as learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child.

We ask parents who feel it is absolutely unavoidable that they take their annual holiday (or any other proposed special occasions) during term time to notify the School, in writing using the attached proforma at appendix 2, **at least four weeks in advance of the proposed date,** explaining the circumstances.

The School will **not** authorise absence retrospectively. Any requests for term time absence will necessitate a discussion with the Head Teacher.

The decision whether to authorise an absence rests with the Headteacher and will be made in accordance with relevant legislation, attendance regulations and the individual

circumstances of each case. Information provided by parents/carers will be carefully considered; however, notification of an absence does not automatically mean that the absence will be authorised.

Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of 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.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), 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 the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

The school recognises that legal intervention may not be appropriate in all cases, particularly where attendance difficulties arise from SEND, health needs, care arrangements or other vulnerability factors.

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.

Notices 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.

Notices 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.

They 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 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 time period 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

Strategies for promoting attendance

Home/School Partnership

Securing a high level of attendance requires the school and home to work closely together. To this end, we ask parents/carers to:

- Do all they can to ensure their child arrives **on time** for morning and afternoon school sessions; Morning registration begins at 9.00am and afternoon registration is at 1.30pm. We will monitor persistent poor punctuality and action will be taken; **Persistent lateness may contribute towards unauthorised absence and may result in support, attendance intervention or legal action where statutory thresholds are met.**
- Notify the school **on the first day** if their child is ill with an estimation of the likely length of absence
- Send in a written note with their child on the first day s/he is back at school. This should be taken to the Admin office that will then pass it on to the Head Teacher. This is needed for our records and also authenticates the telephone message
- Get in touch at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attitude towards school.

School will:

- Contact home on day 1 of absence if no message has been received from home;
- Contact home over any unexplained absences;

- Follow up promptly any concerns parents pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing in, school;
- Regularly and consistently remind students of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Reward excellent or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND and Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Overley recognises that learners have complex needs that can impact on their attendance. Overley works with parents/cares and authorities to put the right support in place for learners to feel confident and secure to return to school. Overley's therapy offer supports learners through considering their emotional and physical wellbeing.

Where attendance concerns emerge, the school may develop an individual Attendance Support Plan in collaboration with parents, carers, social workers, residential staff, local authorities and other relevant professionals. The plan will identify barriers to attendance, agreed support strategies, responsibilities and review arrangements, with the aim of improving attendance and ensuring the pupil can access education successfully.

The school recognises that attendance difficulties may arise from anxiety, autism-related needs, emotionally based school avoidance, trauma, sensory regulation difficulties or mental health needs and will adopt supportive interventions to address barriers.

Remote Education and Reintegration

The school believes that, wherever possible, pupils should attend school in person and engage in face-to-face learning. In exceptional circumstances, where a pupil is temporarily unable to attend school due to illness, anxiety, emotionally based school avoidance, medical needs or other significant barriers, remote education may be provided as part of a planned and time-limited package of support. Attendance coding will continue to be recorded in

accordance with DfE attendance regulations and statutory guidance. Remote education will not be viewed as a long-term alternative to school attendance and will be used alongside a clear reintegration plan, agreed with parents/carers, social workers, local authorities and other relevant professionals where appropriate. The school will regularly review arrangements and continue to work towards a successful return to full school attendance as soon as it is appropriate and safe to do so.

We can support through:

- Clinical Psychologist support for parents/carers and learners
- School staff working with parents/carers and taking learning to the learners home, spending time with the learner in their familiar environment to maintain relationships and support them to engage with education at a level appropriate to their needs and through their interests
- Plan a graduated return to the school environment with parents/carers support and the support of the therapy department
- Working alongside external professionals and authorities when additional support is required.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school promotes the highest possible attendance for every pupil. Attendance expectations will be considered individually, taking account of a pupil's special educational needs, disabilities, health needs, therapeutic requirements and personal circumstances. It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Head teacher and SENCO to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In school we rely upon parents and care staff to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed of our concerns.

Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral to EWS from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns. In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order. The Education works with the school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

Help and Intervention

Early intervention is proven to ensure that attendance remains a high priority by school staff and parents and helps to identify and resolve issues before they become entrenched.

Education Welfare Officers work closely with:

1. Parents/carers
2. Pupils
3. School staff
4. Education support staff
5. Psychologists
6. Social workers
7. Police
8. Health personnel
9. Other voluntary and statutory agencies

Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level. Data will be collected each term and published on the school website. Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

With the large number of authorities that place with us, various authorities daily monitor attendance and the attendance officer is required to provide attendance daily through a variety of means including:

- The ePEP system
- Welfare Call
- Synergie
- Capita One
- Directly to authorities on request

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 .

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 8.4 below)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

While the national definition of persistent absence is below 90%, Overley Hall School sets higher internal expectations reflecting the importance of routine, wellbeing and engagement for our learners.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- The school will identify and support pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent before attendance falls below 90%.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:

- Discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
- Explain the help that is available
- Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions

- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
- School will follow the procedures as outlined above and complete the proforma at Appendix 3. All correspondence will be logged on this proforma until the matter is resolved.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Lorna Deakin Attendance Officer. At every review, the Support and Scrutiny Board will approve the policy.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Final Word

We feel attendance levels are an indicator of how effective and caring a school is. Failure to attend can be an indication that all is not well at home so that there is a welfare aspect to attendance as well. Equally, it is clear that regular, consistent attendance is an essential pre-requisite for effective learning.

We take attendance seriously across the school and have put a lot of time and support into getting our procedures as efficient and effective as possible. We urge you to give this matter the priority it deserves.

The school recognises that each placing authority has valuable guidance on matters relating to attendance. If parents have any concerns or need further clarification, we suggest they contact their relevant council websites for respective local authority policy.

Telford	**https://www.telford.gov.uk/info/20025/school_information/341/attendance_support** For more advice, you may wish to contact the Attendance Support Team Telford & Wrekin Council, Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford, TF3 4JA. **Telephone:** 01952385220 **Email:** attendancesupportteam@telford.gov.uk
Shropshire	**Shropshire Council** **https://shropshire.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-attendance-or-exclusion/** For more advice, you may wish to contact the Education Access Service Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND. **Telephone**: 01743 254397 **Email**: educationaccessservice@shropshire.gov.uk

Staffordshire	https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/Children-and-early-years/Childcare-providers-and-professionals/Attendance-Policy.aspx
Central Bedfordshire	https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/4/pupil_support/522/school_attendance
Leicestershire	https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/education-and-children/schools-colleges-and-academies/school-attendance
Westminster	https://www.westminster.gov.uk/school-attendance-and-child-employment
Birmingham	https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50157/education_legal_intervention_referral/690/pupil_attendance_advice_for_schools_and_professionals
Buckinghamshire	https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-attendance-and-supporting-children-in-education/school-attendance-guidance/
Peterborough	https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/attendance
Solihull	https://www.solihull.gov.uk/Schools-and-learning/school-attendance
Essex	https://www.essex.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/schools/school-attendance-and-absence
Northamptonshire	Attendance, behaviour and home schooling | North Northamptonshire Council

Appendix 1 Staff Guide to Registers and Associated Procedures:

This section complements the Attendance Policy and should be read in conjunction with it. It deals with the practicalities of completing the registers and associated procedures to do with attendance. Registers are important legal documents and we rely on accurate input in order to follow up any concerns as well as for data analysis.

Marking the register

Class Tutors will be responsible for following up absences and communicating reasons to the Head Teacher/SENCO (Attendance Officer).

The school day starts at 9am and finishes at 15.40 for our learners. Registration closes at 9.30am (end of first lesson) and 13.30 after the lunch period.

Reading the registers

The registers information is read every morning after registration (period 1). It is imperative that the data entered is accurate and that there is a mark for **EVERY** pupil (everyone **must** fall into one of the three categories of present, absent or late!). Staff must enter either 'present', 'absent' or 'late'. **Schools have a responsibility for safeguarding the children in their care and it is vital that the information we have is as accurate as possible.**

We operate a policy of First day response regarding absence across the school. The tutor's team phone parents of any child not registered in Lesson 1.

Communication with/from parents

The DFE guidance strongly recommends a policy of same-day contact as this has been shown to be the single most effective strategy in improving rates of attendance; it is also important from a Child Protection perspective.

We have stressed to parents the importance of their contacting the school as early as possible on the **first** day of absence to notify us of their child's absence; there is a dedicated line on which parents can leave messages about absence.

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We require parents/carers to notify the school of all absences as soon as possible, preferably on the first day of absence, by telephone, email or other agreed method of communication. Parents/carers should maintain appropriate communication with the school regarding ongoing absences. The school may request additional information or evidence where this is considered necessary, for example where absences are frequent, prolonged or where there are concerns about the reason for absence. Absence notifications and supporting information received by the school will be recorded appropriately and should relate to the specific period of absence concerned. Any written correspondence relating to attendance should be forwarded to the Headteacher or Attendance Officer for recording and monitoring purposes.

Housekeeping procedures:

- Take accurate registers during am and pm registration, making use of appropriate codes (present, absent, late).
- Monitor attendance of individuals.
- Raise issues of attendance and punctuality with student, parents and Head Teacher as necessary.

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

Attendance codes are used in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and subsequent DfE updates.

Appendix 2 Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time (for all reasons)

Attached is an application form for you to request permission for your child to be absent from school to take part in any requested absence. Before completing the application form, please read these notes carefully:

- The law states that you do not have the right to take your child out of school for holidays during term time. The Local Education Authority works with schools to reduce the numbers of children missing school because of holidays taken in term time and schools can refuse your request to take your child out of school.

- If you wish to take your child on holiday during term time, you must apply for permission in writing using the attached form. Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Headteacher. There is no entitlement to a fixed number of days

- There are certain times of the year when a child may experience problems because of missing school. These include examination periods, at the time of starting a new school and at the start of a new school term. In deciding whether to authorise your child's absence and give permission for a holiday in term time, the school will take these and other factors into account.

- If the school refuse your application and you still take your child out of school the absences will be treated as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences may lead to a Penalty Notice or a Summons being issued against you for irregular school attendance.

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child to accompany you on holiday during term time then please complete the application attached. This form should be returned to your child's school as far in advance of the proposed holiday as possible.

PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO BEV DORAN GIVING AT LEAST 4 WEEKS' NOTICE OF INTENDED ABSENCE

APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S
LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Pupil's Name …… Tutor Group/Class ……

Family Home Address ……..……...

……

I wish to apply for my child to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of Last day at School …….. Date of Return to School ……..

Total number of school days missed …….

Reasons for absence from school:

…….

…….

…….

…….

I make application for my child named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice or a Summons for irregular school attendance.

I have informed my child' social worker of my request and provided them with the address of our holiday destination (please circle) Yes / No

Name of Parent/Carer making application ……..

Signed ……

Date ……

Appendix 3

Persistent absence log of events

Young Person		DOB:	Date Log Started:	

Circumstances:	

Date:	Action Taken:	Evidence:	Reference Number for Documentation:	Sign:

Conclusion/ Resolution: (include any recommendations from lessons learnt)	

Matter resolved and all paperwork on file			
Signed: Attendance Officer		Signed: (Head Teacher)	