

Old Dalby Church of England Primary School



**Kind hearts. Open Minds. Courageous Spirits
Together, we will explore life in all its fullness.**

Attendance Policy

Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good.

Hebrews 10:24

Formulated by	Governors
Approved	Summer 2024
Review date	Summer 2026

Our Vision

Kind hearts. Open minds. Courageous spirits.
Together, we will explore life in all its fullness.

This is a promise that we, as a whole school, will educate children to be accepting, thoughtful and courageous. Our pupils will show kindness and love to everyone around them, our pupils will understand, accept and celebrate diversity, they will recognise injustices and speak up when they see them.

This will be achieved through a curriculum based on a skills progression of our eight Christian values. We will ensure that the pupils build the skills to live our values. Our curriculum will provide knowledge of historical and current events to provide our children with context and understanding of the values. Children will learn to challenge what they see as an injustice and seek to right this. They will be ambitious, have the courage of their convictions and be empathetic to others. Through working closely with the local community and church, we will provide a warm, nurturing environment to foster ambition, curiosity, spirituality and love.

The following attendance policy is carried out within the context and spirit of the School's vision. It supports our vision and is supported by our acceptance and celebration of all children within our community.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

Promoting and ensuring good attendance is a collaborative task, we recognize the vital role that parents play in ensuring their children attend school, but also the importance of ensuring that children want to come to school. The whole school community has a part to play in maintaining good attendance.

We also understand there are times when children can struggle to come to school, whether that is a result of transport issues, illness, emotional barriers or something else. In these instances, our school community must work together to identify the barriers and work to overcome them. We can ensure this through direct and clear communication between all parties and support where it is needed. In some instances it is appropriate to work with outside agencies such as Early Help or the Inclusion Team at Leicestershire County Council.

School is the best placed service to support families due to our relationships with them and knowledge of the children and will lead in a holistic approach to support families struggling with attendance.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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](#)
- [Working together to improve school attendance \(2024\)](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent and severe absence thresholds.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Parents will:

- Ensure their child attends every day that the school is open, unless a statutory reason applies eg illness
- Ensure their child arrives on time, between 8:50 and 9:05am.
- Notify the school of their child's absence before 9:15am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence unless the length of absence is agreed with school, eg 48 hours for sickness, and advise when they are expected to return
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance
- Book medical appointments around the school day, whenever possible
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Work with the school to promote good attendance

3.2 Pupils will:

- Attend school every day, on time

3.3 The School will:

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website, which all staff, pupils, parents and carers can understand
- Maintain a whole school culture which promotes good attendance and its benefits
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers, using the correct codes at the start of every morning and afternoon session. Morning registers are completed by 9:15am and afternoon registers by 1:40pm
- Have robust processes to follow up absence
- Work with Leicestershire County Council Attendance Team to promote good attendance

3.4 The Headteacher will:

- Be the dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance
- Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends in absence, identifying which pupils and cohorts to focus on
- Report attendance data to governors
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of any attendance strategies
- Implement the Attendance Policy
- Apply for fixed penalty notices, where necessary
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Work with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

3.5 The Governing Board will:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, supporting school to prioritise attendance by working with the Headteacher to set the whole school culture
- Ensure the Headteacher and other senior leaders fulfil their statutory duties
- Understand patterns of attendance and compare with local schools, identifying areas or progress and where greater focus is needed
- Ensure school staff have opportunity to receive training on attendance

3.6 School Office Staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls, messages and emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on Arbor
- Follow up any unexplained absences on the class registers with a phone call on the first morning of absence. If there is no answer then a text and email will be sent, asking parents to contact school.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

School will keep an attendance register, and make sure all pupils are included.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon 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 also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:05 am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:30pm and will be kept open until 1:40pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:15am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office or sending an email (see also section 7).

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 or has been persisting for a longer than expected period of time, 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 notify school by either calling the office or sending an email to office@olddalbyschool.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
- Where a pupil is regularly late, the Headteacher will contact the parent/carer to discuss the impact of this on the pupil but will also identify ways the school can support the family in arriving on time.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason, if there is no response, this will be followed up by a text or email. If there is no response from the parent/carer within half an hour, then the school will contact the child's emergency contacts.
- If none of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the police or social services if it is deemed appropriate.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will keep parents up to date about their child's attendance and absence levels via the Arbor app where parents can see individual attendance data including the current school day.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be '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 define 'exceptional circumstances' as family bereavements, family weddings, religious reasons or relating to military deployments.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Before choosing to apply for a fixed penalty notice, the school will consider the circumstances around the unauthorised absence.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- Whether a fine is the best method to improve future attendance through altering parent behaviour or would a different legal intervention be appropriate
- Whether a different form of non-punitive support would be appropriate
- Whether issuing a fine contravenes the School's obligations under the Equalities Act 2010

The threshold for issuing a fixed penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 weeks.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If there are more than two fixed term penalty notices issued within a rolling three year time period, prosecution may follow if this deemed appropriate.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

School promotes and celebrates good attendance through discussions in class and children understanding the need to be in school. When discussing attendance with parents we highlight the importance of children being in school for both their social and academic progress.

Regular reminders are included in the weekly newsletter.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data monthly, half termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern eg SEND or Service families

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.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

In order to prevent pupils becoming persistently absent, the school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Work with pupils and their families who are at risk to identify reasons for absence, both in and out of school, and help them to address these

7.4 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.

Parents are expected to:

- work with the school and be honest in their communications
- proactively engage with the support offered from school and other agencies

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Through discussion, try to identify barriers to attendance and ways school can support or co-ordinate support through wider services as part of a multi-agency effort, making any necessary referrals
- Issue letters to parents when attendance is below 95% to offer support in improving attendance
- Hold formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in the future.
- For severely absent pupils, agree a joint approach with the local authority

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 2 years by the Headteacher and the Curriculum Committee of the Governing Body. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

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
Authorised absence		
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
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day