



# Attendance Policy

Tetsworth Primary School

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Attendance Policy</b>
<b>Adopted</b>	By: Full Governing Board Date: September 2025
<b>Signed on behalf of the board</b>	Fiona Morris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Spencer
<b>Review period</b>	Annually
<b>Date of next review</b>	September 2026



## Summary of Key Information for Parents

This policy is based on the new government guidance, "Working together to improve school attendance". For children to get the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly and are at school on time every day.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility.

Here are the key points you need to know:

- **Our Expectations:** The minimum level of attendance for this school is 9

### Punctuality:

- The school day starts at **8:45 am**.
- The register is marked at **8:50 am**. Pupils arriving after this time are marked as 'Late' (L).
- The register closes at **9:00 am**. If your child arrives after this, they will be marked with a 'U', which counts as an **unauthorised absence** for the whole morning session.

### Reporting Unplanned Absence (e.g., Illness):

- You must notify the school on the first day of an absence by **9:30 am**.
- You must be honest and specific about the reason for the absence.
- For absences longer than 3 days, or if there are doubts, the school will ask for medical evidence (like a doctor's note, prescription, or appointment card).

**Medical Appointments:** Please make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. If this is not possible, please notify the school in advance.

### Leave of Absence (Holidays):

- The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence in "exceptional circumstances".
- It is **unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday**.
- Taking a holiday in term time that has not been agreed upon will be marked as an unauthorised absence and may result in a Penalty Notice.

### Monitoring and Consequences:

- **Persistent Absenteeism:** A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of schooling for any reason. We will contact you immediately if your child is at risk of this.
- **Penalty Notices (Fines):** The school or Local Authority can issue a fine (Penalty Notice) for unauthorised absences.
- The threshold for a fine is 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period.
- A first notice is **£80 per parent, per child**, which rises to £160 if not paid within 21 days.



## Introduction:

This is a successful school, and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

## Aims:

This policy shows our commitment to meeting our obligations with regard to school attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's (DfE) statutory guidance *Working together to improve school attendance* (effective from 19 August 2024). Through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, we will:

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promote good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Build strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support they need to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## Legislation

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance *Working together to improve school attendance* (effective from 19 August 2024) and *School attendance: parental responsibility measures* [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is underpinned by the following legislation, which sets out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996 [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002 [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(as amended in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016\)](#) and 2024
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#) and 2024

It also refers to:



- [DfE School Census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

### **Why Regular Attendance is so important:**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Children are best safeguarded from exploitation and other risks in the wider community by attending school regularly where they are supervised by qualified and caring professionals.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

This policy works to meet the mandatory requirements laid out in [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Promoting Regular Attendance:**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

### **To help us all to focus on this we will:**

- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is.

### **School targets, projects and special initiatives:**

The school has targets to improve attendance, and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is 95% attendance, and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.

Our target is to achieve better than this, however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling, and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Oxfordshire.

**You can support by:**

- Ensuring regular and appropriate bedtimes.
- Helping with additional learning at home.
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before.
- Providing a healthy breakfast.
- Reporting any academic or social concerns to us quickly.
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive).

**To help us do this we will:**

- Give you details on attendance in our newsletter and on our website.
- Report to you at least termly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments (this can be seen on the Arbor App).
- Celebrate good attendance in school, with all staff members playing an important role in doing this.
- Share ideas and resources with you which can have a positive effect on your child's attendance.

**Why being punctual is important:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child missed the start of the day they can miss important opportunities to prepare for the day and be ready to learn.

Minutes late per day	Equivalent of missing
5 minutes	3.4 school days a year
10 minutes	6.9 school days a year
15 minutes	10.3 school days a year
20 minutes	13.8 school days a year
30 minutes	20.7 school days a year

We prioritise our morning routines to ensure that all children have a positive start to every school day. Late arriving pupils can disrupt this routine and can cause the child arriving late to be embarrassed. This embarrassment can lead to absence to avoid being late.

**Recording Attendance:**

We will keep an electronic 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 at the beginning of the second session. We will mark, 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

**We will also record:**

For pupils of compulsory school age 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.

**Contact details:**

- There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to always have at least 2 current contact numbers and email addresses.
- There will be regular checks on contact details throughout the year.
- Please ensure we have both parents and at least a third emergency contact person's contact details.

**How we manage time keeping:**

The school day starts at **8:45am.** and we expect your child to be in class at that time. If your child arrives at school and registration as expected, they will receive a present mark (**I**)

Registers are marked by **8:50am.** and your child will receive a late mark (**L**) if they are not in by that time.

At **9:00am.** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark (**U**) that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

Whilst there is no mandatory time for **pm** registration, the school will seek to take the register following the lunchtime period at **13:30pm** in order to support safeguarding and early identification of pupils who are Late to return or who do not return. If your child is present for this registration they will be marked (**I**)

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with a member of the School Leadership Team and/or Attendance Officer to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.





### **Unplanned absence:**

- If your child is absent, you must notify us of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible, by phone or via email.
- Make sure you are honest about the reason.
- Where the absence is longer than 3 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance.

### **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 parents on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- If the school cannot reach any of the child's emergency contacts, the school may visit the home.
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent.
- Call the parents on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90%.

### **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 (at least 1 week, unless it is an emergency) by contacting the school office –

[office.2456@tetsworth.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.2456@tetsworth.oxon.sch.uk)

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.



### **Lateness and punctuality:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child arrives late, they miss important learning time and key information from their teacher at the start of the day. Arriving late also disrupts lessons, can make your child feel uncomfortable, and may lead to further absences.

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.

### **Authorised and Unauthorised absence**

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. If this occurs, school will require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school late after the register has closed and are therefore given an unauthorised absence mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Excessive illness without medical evidence

There may be times when you need to request a leave of absence during term time for exceptional circumstances. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as situations such as family emergencies or unforeseen events. If you need to request a leave of absence, please contact the office immediately to request a leave of absence.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets specific circumstances set out in the 2024 School Attendance Regulations.

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

As leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose 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 two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, which can be requested from the school office – [office.2456@tetsworth.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:office.2456@tetsworth.oxon.sch.uk) The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absences thoroughly. Any child that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan, and the plan may include allocation of additional support through a Mentor or an LSA, use of circle time, individual incentive programs and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the County Attendance team. If your child becomes a PA pupil, we will seek your consent to complete a Strengths and Needs form with you and consider convening a Team Around the Family.

### **Severe Absenteeism (SA):**

A pupil becomes a 'severe absentee' when they miss 50% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing significant damage to any child's academic and social progress will have lifelong consequences. All SA pupils at our school will have an Individual Attendance Plan which will incorporate multi-agency input. You will be expected to engage with all partners to improve your child's attendance to 96+%. SA pupils are our highest priority at our school.

### **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.

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

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).

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.

Failure to pay a Penalty Notice within the prescribed period may result in prosecution for the underlying offence of failure to secure regular school attendance.

Any second Penalty Notice issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling three-year period will be charged at the higher rate of £160, with no option to pay the lower £80 rate. (The three-year period begins from the date of the first Penalty Notice issued on or after 19 August 2024.)

**Please note: Penalty Notices are issued per parent/per child.**



## **Removal from Roll and Children Missing Education (CME)**

In line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the school will notify the Local Authority of any pupil who is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in Regulation 8.

If a pupil fails to attend school and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will take all reasonable steps to locate the pupil. If these measures are unsuccessful, and the pupil has been absent for 10 consecutive school days, the school will notify the Local Authority immediately, treating the pupil as a potential Child Missing Education (CME). This is a critical safeguarding duty.

### **Notices to improve:**

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate but offers of support have not been engaged with by the parent or have not worked, notice to improve should usually be sent to give parents a final chance to engage in support.

Schools or Local Authority will issue the notice to improve after support (if appropriate) has been implemented and prior to a penalty notice being issued (if appropriate).

### **The County Attendance Team:**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the County Attendance Team at Oxfordshire County Council for consideration of legal proceedings.

At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer,

Or take action via a Non-Attendance referral, the legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

The County Attendance Team, with the school, will encourage you to engage with a Strengths and Needs form. Education Supervision Orders may be discussed with you to support rapidly improved attendance.

Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513  
[attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk)



**Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:**

Mrs Emily Holmes and Mrs Alison Andrews, Administrators

Mrs Sarah Spencer, Headteacher

Mr Paul Hankey, Executive Head Teacher

Chair of Governor or Governor with responsibility for attendance

**Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to report and publish its absence figures & its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to Oxfordshire County Council, & the Department for Education. Our school is obliged to share all attendance data daily, Oxfordshire County Council and the Department for Education.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly and on time.

We have a lead Governor who scrutinises our attendance arrangements on behalf of all our pupils.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Regular attendance supports optimising your child's attainment, mental health and social well-being.

**Strategies for promoting attendance:**

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families.



We will work together to:

### **Expect**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

### **Monitor**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched. Monitoring will be done termly with closer monitoring for persistent and severe absentees.

### **Communication**

Send a letter to parents to report on any attendance that is slipping below 96%.

### **Listen and understand**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

### **Facilitate support**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

### **Formalise support**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

### **Enforce**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education