

Langford Village CP School
Attendance Policy

Date: September 2026
Review date: September 2028

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 our 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.

Why is regular attendance 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:

- Give you details on attendance in Headteacher's Update letters
- Report to you at Parents' Evenings on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments

- Celebrate good attendance

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. Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. We analyse all absences carefully and draw trends based on pupils' characteristics, vulnerabilities, days of the week, subjects missed and repeat illnesses. We focus our attention on addressing these trends of absence.

Understanding different types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to 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.

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 cause. If this occurs, the 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

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents, and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, never cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bedtimes
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast

- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)

Exceptional Leave

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and a Penalty Notice to be issued.

1. It is widely known that the link between a pupil's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
2. Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education, and employment.
3. All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising requests for holidays.
4. The school will communicate with every family applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
5. Exceptional leave is most unlikely to be authorised when a pupil's attendance is less than 96%.
6. Exceptional leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
7. Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
8. Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

The Penalty is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, increasing to £160 if paid between day 21 and day 28. This amount is prescribed by the Education Penalty Notices (England) Regulations 2007. 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 3 year period will be charged at a higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80. (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.

Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

The school recognises that some pupils may experience significant emotional barriers to attending school, sometimes referred to as Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). This may present through anxiety, distress or physical symptoms and can lead to persistent or severe absence.

In line with the Department for Education's *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* guidance, the school will work with pupils and parents/carers to understand and address barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity. Support may include an individual attendance or reintegration plan, pastoral support, reasonable adjustments and involvement

from the Local Authority, Mental Health Support Team (MHST), health professionals or other relevant agencies where appropriate.

The school will maintain high expectations for attendance while providing sensitive and individualised support. EBSA does not automatically mean that absence will be authorised; absence will be recorded and considered in accordance with statutory attendance requirements and the individual circumstances of the pupil.

Any temporary part-time timetable will only be used in exceptional circumstances as part of a clearly defined, time-limited plan, with the aim of supporting a return to full-time education as soon as possible. Attendance and support will be regularly reviewed, with the priority of safeguarding the pupil, removing barriers and supporting successful re-engagement with education.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence with the reason for the non-attendance.
- Or you can call into school and report to reception.
- Be honest about the reason for absence, including if you are on holiday.

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you by 9.00am
- Visit you at home if we have not heard from you by day 3 of absence.
- Follow School Attendance processes including inviting the parent/carer to a meeting in the school to identify the barriers to attendance and ensure support is put in place.
- Offer a Strengths and Needs form (Early Help).
- Gain the voice of the child to ensure we are taking a child centred approach.
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90%.

Contact details

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your current contact numbers and email addresses at all times. So, please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number and email address – if we do not then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on contact details throughout the year. Please ensure we have both parents, where applicable, and at least a third emergency contact person's contact details.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage time keeping

The school day starts at **9.00a.m,** with early bird activities/interventions in the classrooms from **8.40am.** We expect your child to be in class at 9.00am. If your child arrives to school and register as expected, they will receive a present mark **(/)**

Registers are marked by **9.00a.m.** and your child will receive a late mark **(L)** if they are not in by that time.

At **9.00a.m.** 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 directly following the lunchtime period 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 **(\ )**

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.

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 absence 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, use of circle time, individual incentive programmes 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 can 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.

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

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs Sarah Tomlin, Headteacher
Mrs Laura Oliver, SENDCo
Mr Rob North, Deputy Headteacher
Governing Body

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 and the Department for Education. Our school is obliged to share all attendance data daily with 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.