

Attendance Policy

Last Reviewed: August 2023 (DHP)
Approved by Head: September 2023

Date of Next Review: Autumn Term 2024

This policy has been prepared in compliance with, and with regard to:

- *Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023*
- *Statutory Guidance on Children Missing Education, 2016*
- *OHS Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy*
- *GDST Safeguarding Procedures*
- *Working together to improve school attendance, 2022 (updated April, 2023)*
- *The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006*
- *Equality Act 2010*

Principles

At Oxford High School we see student attendance as critical to academic success and social integration. We strongly believe that maintaining good school attendance is everyone's business and we work proactively with parents and external agencies to remove any barriers students may face when it comes to attending school. The staff members who are responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school is the Deputy Head Pastoral at the Senior School and the Deputy Head Pastoral at the Prep School.

The school's admission and attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. We monitor attendance rates on an ongoing basis and teachers, tutors and pastoral leads will take action if a student's absence becomes a concern, as required by the law. Students are expected to attend school every day and parents have a legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly. Parents can only allow their child to miss school if they are too ill to go in or they have advance permission from the school.

Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and high attendance expectations should be set for all pupils, the school also accounts for the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts. The policy will always be applied fairly and consistently but, in doing so, the school will always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In development and implementation of this policy, the schools understands its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We ask parents to familiarise themselves with our policy guidelines and help us to promote the standards of attendance and punctuality which are essential for an orderly school environment where all pupils can get the maximum benefit from their education.

Reporting your daughter absent from school

Senior School

Good school attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Students are expected to attend school on time every day during term time. The school day starts with registration at 8:40am and ends with dismissal at 3:55pm. If students arrive at school after 8:45am they are required to sign in at reception.

It is a parent's responsibility to contact the school to report their daughter absent. This should be done by emailing attendance@oxf.gdst.net or by phoning the school office before 8:40am. If no contact is made the school will telephone the parents and at that time we will request written confirmation of the absence. Written confirmation will be required for each day of absence, preferably by email. Absence cannot be authorised without this procedure.

In the unlikely event that a student is absent without authorisation for 10 consecutive days the school will notify the local authority.

In most cases, it will be the responsibility of the student to make up any work lost as a result of absence. However, the school appreciates that some students may require assistance in doing so and, in this circumstance, the student should speak to her form tutor who will be best placed to advise her on how to prioritise catch up work. If an absence is known in advance, the student must approach individual members of staff for guidance.

Prep School

The gates open at the Prep and Pre-Prep sites at 8:00am and pupils can enter the buildings from 8:15am. Morning registration takes place at 8:35am with the first lesson beginning at 8:45am. Pupils arriving after 8:30am should enter through the main door and sign in at the school office.

Parents must notify the school of their daughter's absence as soon as possible either by phoning the Prep office and leaving a voicemail message or by emailing prep@oxf.gdst.net by 9:00am at the latest. If it is clear the pupil will be absent for consecutive days, this should be stated at the outset, otherwise, parents must contact the school on a daily basis.

Pupils should not be absent without permission for any activity known in advance. Parents must write to the Head of the Prep School for permission for a pupil to be absent. Similarly, permission must be sought in advance to attend appointments during school time.

In the unlikely event that a student is absent without authorisation for 10 consecutive days the school will notify the local authority.

Work is not set for pupils who miss school due to illness or holidays.

The school's approach to monitoring attendance

Oxford High School has a legal duty to promote attendance and to publish its absence figures. Parents will receive information concerning their daughter's attendance in written reports sent twice each year. At the end of each academic year, the school has to make a return to the DCSF giving details of both authorised and unauthorised absence.

The school is committed to working with parents to achieve as high a level of attendance as possible. We are obliged to provide attendance data to prospective employers and external organisations where requested, e.g. for university application purposes.

Poor attendance usually has a detrimental impact on attainment. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4 to 1. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).¹

Poor attendance is also a safeguarding concern. Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 states that all staff working in school need to be aware of the safeguarding response to children who are absent from education. Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future. This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community

The school will act promptly to work with parents to try to prevent absence from reaching such levels. We have a clear policy to deal with absence.

Senior School

Weekly attendance check

1. Heads of Year use OHS Inform to check attendance levels of students in their year group. Attendance is colour coded so that below 95%, below 98% and below 85% can be clearly identified. Students absent for consecutive days are also clearly identified.
2. Form tutor should have a one-to-one with anyone in their form who is absent for more than 3 consecutive days to see if they are okay and to check to see if they need help with catching up work.

¹ Working Together to Improve School Attendance, 2022 (pg. 7)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073616/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

Year to date absence reports

1. Heads of Year monitors student year to date attendance. Absence in the autumn term is monitored closely for any emerging patterns.
2. If a student's attendance falls below 95% from the spring term onwards the Form Tutor will contact home, copying in the Head of Year. If attendance continues to fall after initial contact a meeting with the Form Tutor and Head of Year will be arranged.
3. If a student's attendance falls below 90% from the spring term onwards the Head of Year will contact home, copying in the Deputy Head Pastoral/DSL. If attendance continues to fall a further meeting with the Head of Year and Deputy Head Pastoral/DSL will be arranged.
4. If a student's attendance falls below 85% the case will be assessed by the safeguarding team to see if a referral to social services to support the family is required.

The school understanding that some absences, such as ongoing medical illness, are outside of the family's control. The school will always take a supportive approach and will assess each case individually to ensure the right level of support.

Prep School

1. When a pupil's attendance record is at 95%, parents will be advised that this threshold has been reached.
2. If attendance reaches 90%, parents will be contacted by the Head of Prep to discuss the situation, and this will be followed up in writing.
3. Should the absences continue, and the attendance figure drops to 85% or lower, the pupil is considered missing from education and the case will be passed to the DSL for assessment, or referral to the local children's social care agencies.

Reasons for absence

Illness

Parents are requested to inform the school on the first day if their daughter is ill.

Medical and Dental Appointments

Routine visits to the dentist, optician etc., should be arranged during school holidays or out of school hours where possible. Authorisation for medical and dental appointments can be given in an emergency or other unavoidable circumstances. In the Senior School please contact attendance@oxf.gdst.net and copy in your daughter's Form Tutor and Head of Year to report absence due to a medical or dental appointment. In the Prep School please email prep@oxf.gdst.net and copy in the class teacher.

Bereavement

It is helpful if we are informed of family bereavement so that we can offer students sympathetic support. Absence under such circumstances will, of course, be authorised.

Religious Observance

Absence can be authorised on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a student's parents belong.

Family/Domestic Problems

Looking after other children, minding the house, or shopping within school hours are not acceptable reasons for absence under the law.

Special Occasions

Exceptional occasions may be sanctioned through authorised absence. Such events might include a sibling's graduation or family wedding. Attending sports events or concerts are not sufficient cause for authorisation.

Study Leave

Study leave may be authorised during the official examination period for Years 11 and 13 only. A letter is always sent to parents before study leave commences. Parents are asked to note carefully the dates on which study leave commences.

Although most girls prefer to study at home during examination periods, there are always study facilities available in school for those who wish to work in school. Authorisation for absence for studying will not be given for periods outside those indicated to parents.

Study leave is a privilege which may be withdrawn if a student seems unlikely to use the time profitably.

Work Experience

Students in Years 12 and 13 are encouraged to gain work experience during the school holiday periods. In addition to this there may be a period of work experience for specific year groups scheduled on the school calendar. Some sixth form students may also be permitted to carry out work experience during times of the day when they have a study period. This must be agreed with the Director of Sixth Form.

SIXTH FORM

Flexible day

Sixth formers have a flexible day, recognising their growing maturity and bridging the gap between formal schooling and post 18 study or work. They must attend school every day, arriving in time for morning registration and form time. They must attend all timetabled lessons. All regular appointments, driving lessons etc. must be scheduled for non timetabled times. Permission to miss taught lessons will not be given, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Should a student be unable to attend school, parents/careers should notify the school in the usual way.

Open Days

Sixth Form students are expected to visit Universities and Colleges during school holidays. However, a maximum two Open Days may be attended during term time if appropriate letters or emails requesting authorisation for absence are sent.

Interviews

Sixth formers must, of course, attend interviews at Universities and Colleges at the times and on the dates allocated by the institutions. It is essential that they keep their Form Tutors informed of these dates.

Returning to school

Sometimes a student who has been off school for some time finds it difficult to return. In such circumstances it is of paramount importance that parents contact the Head of Year and Deputy Head Pastoral in the Senior School and the class teacher and/or the Head of Pastoral Care in the Prep School to discuss procedures for supported reintegration.

Punctuality

Students are expected to be prompt for registration. If a student is late, she must register with her form tutor if possible. Otherwise, she must sign in as soon as she arrives. If she fails to do this, the school will assume she is absent. Lateness without reasonable cause will be deemed to be unauthorised absence. Lateness after 9.30am will be deemed as an absence and will require a note of explanation from a parent.

Attendance Policy; Senior School Pastoral Team Intervention – Appendix 1

Weekly Attendance Data

This will be reviewed by Heads of Year weekly on OHS Inform. The Head of Year should send relevant details regarding attendance and lateness to the form tutor. The form tutor should have a one-to-one with anyone in their form who is absent for more than 3 consecutive days to see if they need help with catching up of work. Conversation is noted on CPOMS. (HoY and DH Pastoral included.)

Year to Date Data

1. Heads of Year monitors student year to date attendance. Absence in the autumn term is monitored closely for any emerging patterns.
2. If a student's attendance falls below 95% by the start of the spring term the Form Tutor will contact home, copying in the Head of Year. If attendance continues to fall after initial contact a meeting with the Form Tutor and Head of Year will be arranged.
3. If a student's attendance falls below 90% the Head of Year will contact home, copying in the Deputy Head Pastoral/DSL. If attendance continues to fall a further meeting with the Head of Year and Deputy Head Pastoral/DSL will be arranged.
4. If a student's attendance falls below 85% the case will be assessed by the safeguarding team to see if a referral to social services to support the family is required.

The school understanding that some absences, such as ongoing medical illness, are outside of the family's control. The school will always take a supportive approach and will assess each case individually to ensure the right level of support.

Lates

If students are late to school without a reasonable excuse (i.e unavoidable train delays/poor weather) the student receives a verbal warning from their form tutor. For a second offence during the same week the student should be logged on the praise/concern log and attend a 20 minute disrespectful behavior detention. If lateness persists, the schools usual sanction structure for disrespectful behaviour will apply.

Tutors will always be sensitive to circumstances which are out of a student's control. A verbal warning will only be given if there is no reasonable excuse for lateness.

Missing Children at the Senior School - Appendix 2

This policy covers the Senior School. Please refer to the Prep School Policy for Missing Children (including EYFS).

Procedures

Formal registration is taken in the morning at 8.40am and then again at 1.30pm in the afternoon. Pupils that leave during school hours need permission from a parent or guardian if they are in Year 7 – Year 11. They are required to sign out at reception.

Sixth Form students need permission from parents/guardians to be able to leave school at lunchtime and at 2.50pm (this is given at the start of each academic year via the permission slip in the Sixth Form Handbook). They must sign out and in again at Reception. Sixth Form students needing to leave school at any other time need permission from a parent/guardian and must sign out and in at Reception.

Students are registered at the start of single, double or triple lessons.

Students are able to stay in school between 3:50pm and 6pm. They are required to sign in at reception if they are staying on site during these times.

School's Responsibilities

In the unlikely event that a child goes missing the following basic measures will be taken to try to locate the child, prior to reporting the child as missing:

- If a member of staff notices that a child is absent whom they believe should be in school they should notify reception immediately
- Reception team to check Child's attendance and whether they have signed in/signed out
- Reception team to inform the Head of Year, Deputy Head Pastoral, DDSL or Headmistress
- Head of Year or DSL/DDSL to speak to friends who might know where the child has gone or currently is located
- Ensure that the child is not on the school premises by searching relevant area's where they may be located. A member of the Senior Management Team or Safeguarding Team and at least one other member of staff will search the immediate vicinity
- If the child is not found during the search then the parents of the child will be contacted and informed about the missing episode.
- If a child is found during these enquiries then an investigation will take place at school. Parents will be informed immediately. In some cases a Risk Assessment will be carried out and any recommendations made by the investigation team will then be implemented into school policy.

If the child cannot be found and the parents are unable to locate their child then the school will contact the police, providing as much information as possible. Any reporting to the police will be made by a member of the senior management team - typically this will be the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

If a child goes missing during after school care, the same procedure will apply. There is a member of SLT on duty between 3:50pm and 6pm each evening and they should be contacted if a child goes missing in school.