

## **Attendance Policy**

Last Reviewed: August 2025 (DHP)  
Approved: August 2025 (Head)

Date of Next Review: Summer Term 2026

### **Oxford High School Attendance Policy**

This policy applies to the whole school, including the EYFS.

#### **Policy statement and aims**

School attendance is critical to academic success and social and emotional development. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school, with a cumulative effect. Regular or persistent absence can also indicate a pupil welfare issue. We ask parents to familiarize themselves with this policy, and to 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.

Our aims are:

- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes good attendance
- To ensure, as far as possible, that every pupil can benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the school
- To build strong relationships with families, encouraging them to take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality
- To respond proactively to non-attendance and/or lateness in a proportionate and targeted way
- To work closely with pupils, their families and, if appropriate, the local authority where attendance becomes a concern.

We expect the highest standards of attendance and punctuality, reflecting our commitment to wellbeing and achievement. Our minimum attendance target is 95% per pupil.

#### **Key contacts**

The senior leader with overall responsibility for attendance across the whole school (Senior Attendance Champion - Whole School) is the Deputy Head Pastoral at the senior school. However, due to the nature of the school site, the monitoring of attendance related issues have been broken down into school sections to ensure attendance matters have the time and resources needed to be managed effectively. The Senior Attendance Champion - Senior School (7 -11) is the Deputy Head Pastoral of the Senior School. The senior leader with overall responsibility for attendance at the prep school (Senior Attendance Champion - Prep School including EYFS) is the Assistant Head Pastoral of the Prep School. The senior leader with overall responsibility for attendance at the Sixth Form (Senior Attendance Champion - Sixth Form) is the Director of Sixth Form.

The Senior Attendance Champions can be contacted using these details:  
Dani Phipps (Deputy Head Pastoral Senior School) [d.phipps@oxf.gdst.net](mailto:d.phipps@oxf.gdst.net)

Olivia Walters (Assistant Head Pastoral Prep School) [o.walters@oxf.gdst.net](mailto:o.walters@oxf.gdst.net)

Rachael Pallas Brown (Director of Sixth form) [r.pallas-brown@oxf.gdst.net](mailto:r.pallas-brown@oxf.gdst.net)

For day-to-day attendance matters, please contact your child's class teacher or form tutor and copy in either [attendance@oxf.gdst.net](mailto:attendance@oxf.gdst.net) (Senior School and Sixth Form) or [prep@oxf.gdst.net](mailto:prep@oxf.gdst.net) (Prep School).

## **Regulatory framework**

This policy meets the school's responsibilities under the Education and Skills Act 2008, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

The school has regard to the following statutory guidance and advice:

- *Working together to improve school attendance* August 2024
- *Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance* August 2024
- *Children missing education* September 2024
- *Keeping children safe in education* September 2025

## **How the school promotes good attendance**

- Good attendance is established as part of the school's culture, reflected in both strategic planning and day-to-day systems and processes.
- We set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly and effectively to pupils and parents.
- The school provides a safe, welcoming and stimulating learning environment.
- Staff are supportive and approachable.
- Data is used proactively to spot and address problems at the earliest possible stage.

## **Partnership with pupils and parents**

What the school expects of pupils:

- That pupils attend regularly, punctually and ready to learn.
- That pupils are prepared for the day with appropriate equipment e.g., P.E. kit.
- That pupils tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may discourage or prevent them from attending school.

What the school expects of parents/carers:

- To fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for absence in advance from the Head.
- To notify the school of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible and to provide an explanation for this.
- To arrange medical and dental appointments out of school times wherever possible.
- To arrange holidays out of school term time.
- To make any application for authorized leave of absence at the earliest opportunity and at least 2 days in advance.
- To speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem which may affect their child's attendance or punctuality.
- To cooperate with the school to improve attendance or punctuality if it has been raised as an issue.

What parents/carers can expect from school:

- A school culture that promotes good attendance.
- Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance.

- Regular communication with parents/carers including reporting of attendance via interim and full school reports.
- First day contact with parents/carers when absence is unexplained.
- Prompt action when a problem has been identified.
- Liaison with the local authority to assist and support families where needed.

## **School Roles and Responsibilities**

### GDST and School Governing Board

- Maintain an overview of attendance through termly reports.
- Regularly monitor, review and challenge attendance data.
- Review and support school interventions.

### Head

- Has overall responsibility for attendance within the school, including implementation of this policy
- Authorises exceptional leave of absence.
- Reports to the GDST and governors on attendance.

### Attendance Champions

- Are the nominated senior leaders with responsibility for attendance across specified sections of the school.
- Ensures everyone works together to create a school culture that promotes good attendance.
- Regularly monitors and analyses attendance data against a range of metrics.
- Establishes and maintains effective systems for tackling absence, evaluating these at regular intervals.
- Alongside the pastoral team, delivers targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Provides advice and support to school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues.
- Liaises with the local authority.

### Head of Junior School/Prep

- In collaboration with Assistant Head Pastoral (Prep), regularly monitors and analyses attendance data against a range of metrics in the junior school / prep.
- Establishes and maintains effective systems for tackling absence in the junior school / prep.
- Alongside the pastoral team, delivers targeted intervention and support to pupils and families in the junior school / prep.
- Provides advice and support to staff in the junior school / prep regarding attendance and punctuality issues.

### Designated Safeguarding Lead

- The DSL at the Senior and Prep are also the Attendance Champions. The DSL at the Senior school may also become actively involved and lead where attendance is also a safeguarding issue in the Sixth Form. The Attendance Champion in the Sixth Form is DSL trained and a member of the safeguarding team.
- Intervention and support as appropriate.

### Attendance Officer

- Receives, updates and maintains accurate class registers in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Maintains the SIMS attendance database.
- Meets with the Senior Attendance Champion to report on individuals, patterns or trends of concern
- Makes contact by telephone call with parents/carers when a pupil is absent and written notification has not been received.
- Runs a daily report of any missing marks and follows these up with teachers and pupils.
- Runs a weekly report of any unauthorised absences and shares and follows these up with Heads of Year.

- Liaises with the Head of Year and Designated Safeguarding Lead when a vulnerable pupil is absent
- Carries out relevant interventions.
- Provides reports from the attendance database for the Head, Senior Attendance Champion and other school staff, SGB, and/or local authority officers as requested.
- Maintains the database of Sixth Form parental permission to be off-site at lunchtime and to leave site after 2.35pm and Year 13 study leave permissions (January onwards).
- Runs a monthly report at the senior school of students below 92% and shares this report with HoYs so that they can decide which type of attendance letter the parents of these students should be receiving
- Intervention and support as appropriate

#### Heads of Year – Senior School

- Promote good attendance and punctuality within the classroom and the school.
- Analyse attendance data by individual, key group and by form group.
- Completes the attendance letter spreadsheet shared monthly by the attendance officer
- Intervention and support as appropriate

#### Form Tutors and Class Teachers (senior)/Class teachers (junior/prep).

- Promote good attendance and punctuality within the classroom and the school.
- Accurately mark the am (form tutors) and pm (class teachers) register using appropriate codes, in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Look out for trends or patterns and liaise with the Head of Year or School Attendance Champion/Head of Juniors if any concerns arise.
- intervention and support as appropriate.

### **Registration procedures**

Registers are a legal document, and care must be taken to ensure they are marked accurately and in accordance with the regulations. Attendance of all pupils is recorded and monitored following the procedures below:

#### Prep

- Registration is carried out at 8:35am and 1:00pm.
- Registers will be open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after registration but before the register is closed will be marked late. Punctuality is monitored and frequent or regular lateness will be considered a cause for concern.
- Any pupil arriving after the register is closed will be marked absent. Parents should provide a note of explanation for any pupil arriving after the register has closed. Lateness without reasonable cause will be recorded as unauthorized absence.
- The attendance officer checks for missing marks or unaccounted absences and contacts parents where required.
- Concerns are passed to the Head of Prep for intervention where necessary
- Specialist subject teachers take a register at the start of their lesson and if they are concerned that a pupil hasn't arrived at their lesson, then they should inform the attendance officer immediately.
- If any pupil has to leave school before the end of the day, she must sign out at reception.

#### Senior school

- Registration is carried out at 8:40 am and 1pm.
- Registers will be open for 20 minutes. Any pupil arriving after registration but before the register is closed will be marked late. Punctuality is monitored and frequent or regular lateness will be considered a cause for concern.
- Any pupil arriving after the register is closed will be marked absent. Parents should provide a note of explanation for any pupil arriving after the register has closed. Lateness without reasonable cause will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

- Any pupil arriving after 8:40 should sign in at reception.
- The attendance officer checks for missing marks or unaccounted absences and contacts parents where required.
- Concerns are passed to the Heads of Year for intervention if necessary.
- Subject teachers take a register at the start of their lesson and if they are concerned that a pupil hasn't arrived at their lesson, then they should inform the attendance officer immediately.
- If any pupil has to leave school before the end of the day, she must sign out at reception.

### **Sixth Form – flexible day**

All schools are able to allow pupils of non-compulsory school age to be absent for sessions they are not timetabled to attend.

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. Sixth Form students must attend all timetabled lessons and must be on site during study periods.

Sixth Form students will be able to leave the school during lunchtimes and after 2.35pm if they have no timetabled lessons or other commitments at these times, signing in and out at Reception, and provided that permission from parents/guardians has been received. All regular appointments, driving lessons etc. must be scheduled for these times. Permission to miss taught lessons will not be given unless there are exceptional circumstances.

From January onwards students in Year 13 may have permission to take 2 double periods weekly as study leave, arriving in school later in the morning, timetable permitting, and with prior consent from parents/guardians.

Any student who does not attend lessons or whose progress is not good will have the privilege of a flexible day removed. Should a student be unable to attend school, parents/careers should notify the school as set out below.

### **Planned absence**

Apart from illness, no pupil should be away from school without prior permission from the Head. All schools are expected to restrict leave of absence to the specific circumstances set out in the regulations. These are summarized below:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (where it is not possible to make an appointment out of school hours)
- Attending an interview
- Religious observance
- Studying for a public examination
- Exceptional circumstances

If a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. As stated in the regulatory guidance, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

Parents should submit a request for absence to the Head no later than 2 school days prior to the date of absence. If an absence is authorised in advance parents will be notified and an absence note will not be required on return.

Absence for reasons other than those sanctioned by the regulations, for no reason given, or exceeding the terms of exceptional leave, will be recorded as unauthorized absence.

## **Unplanned absence**

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to inform the school of their child's absence as soon as reasonably possible on the first day of absence.

### To report an absence (Senior):

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 8:40 am and ends with dismissal at 3:55pm. If students arrive at school after 8:45am they are required to sign it 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](mailto:attendance@oxf.gdst.net) or by phoning the school office before 8:40am. If no contact is made by 9am when the AM register closes, 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 authorized 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.

The school will also inform the LA of pupils who are likely to miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

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.

### To report an absence (Prep):

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](mailto:prep@oxf.gdst.net) by 9:00am at the latest. The office will telephone parents after 9:00am if not contact has been made by this time. 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 absence. 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.

The school will also inform the LA of pupils who are likely to miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

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

In both the Prep and Senior, if contact can't be made, the school will seek to assure itself that the pupil is safe and well, through confirmed contact with external professionals or a home visit by local authority personnel or school staff. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered missing and the school will pursue the matter in accordance with local procedures. A pupil on a Child Student/Student visa going missing will also be reported to the police and UKVI. Children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

### Monitoring and analysing attendance data and addressing issues

The school has systems to track absence and reasons for absence at an individual level and by cohorts or groups. Analysis includes lesson as well as school attendance, and punctuality both for am and pm attendance and for lesson attendance. The data is monitored and analysed regularly and over a range of time periods (short term/half termly/termly/annually) to trigger early intervention to address issues, trends or patterns.

Attendance thresholds and typical interventions:

Level 1: Below school target	95%	Class teacher or form tutor discussion with pupil (Senior School) or parents (Prep School).
Level 2: At risk of persistent absence	91-92%	Flagged at HoY meetings; discussion between teacher/form tutor and parents. Letter sent home as part of monthly report at the senior school to inform parents that attendance has dropped into the 'at risk of persistent absenteeism' category.
Level 3: Persistent absence	90% or less	Letter home to parents/meeting with HoY (senior) and Head/Deputy Head Academic (Prep) to discuss targeted support.
Level 4: Severe absence	50% or less	More intensive support including referral to external services.

The attendance letters sent for students below 92% are recorded on a spreadsheet held by the attendance officer and shared with HoYs/the DSL. All other measures should be logged on CPOMS using the relevant sub category under attendance (eg. Level 1, Level 2, etc).

All measures will be regularly reviewed and stepped up if there is no improvement to the situation. Where a whole family response is appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment. Ultimately if voluntary support is not effective the school will work with the local authority to put more formal measures in place. Persistent or severe absence is always treated as a potential safeguarding risk.

### **Pupils with individual needs**

Whilst punctuality and good attendance is an expectation for all pupils at the school, we recognise that this may be more of a challenge for some pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, or those suffering from long term medical conditions or mental health issues. The school will allow for these circumstances when working with such pupils and their parents and will make reasonable adjustments / develop individualized support approaches as appropriate to meet their specific needs. If a pupil has an EHCP, the school will communicate with the local authority if attendance falls or becomes problematic.

The school is committed to supporting pupils who may be absent because of Emotionally Based School Avoidance. Where a pupil is missing school because of EBSA, the school will work closely with professionals supporting the child and the family as it takes a team effort to help the child find a way back into full time education.

### **Reporting to the local authority**

The school has a statutory obligation to inform the local authority of the full name and address of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent unauthorized for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

The school must also inform the local authority of the full name and address of any pupil of compulsory school age who has been recorded as ill and the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

### **Returning to school**

It is the responsibility of the pupil to make up any work missed through absence. Sometimes a pupil who has been absent for some time finds it difficult to return. In such circumstances the school will work with the pupil and parents to support reintegration.

### **Remote education**

The school may, in very limited circumstances, provide remote education to enable pupils who are well enough to learn but not well enough to attend in person, to keep pace with their education. Such arrangements must be mutually agreed by the school, parents or carers, and if appropriate a relevant medical professional or social worker, and will normally be time limited.

Pupils who are absent from school but receiving remote education still need to be formally recorded as absent on the register using the most appropriate code. The school will keep a separate record of and monitor the pupil's engagement with remote education.

### **Missing Children at the Senior School - Appendix 1**

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 1.00pm 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 2.35pm (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 Head, 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 areas 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.