

Overstone Primary School



Attendance Policy

At Overstone Primary School we have a clear understanding of how children learn and continually strive to provide the best possible conditions to facilitate this. We acknowledge that we live in a changing world and that we need to prepare our children for tomorrow's needs. Consequently we not only place value on the traditional 3R's, but also on developing skills for life in modern Britain. We aim to deliver a world class curriculum that will challenge and inspire all our pupils and prepare them for the future.

We have three overall aims:

Pupils will become:

- Successful learners who achieve and enjoy learning
- Confident individuals who can live safe and healthy lives
- Responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well being

Good school attendance is one of the most important factors in achievement at school and at Overstone Primary School we are committed to helping every child achieve their full potential. Any absence from school disrupts a child's learning and missing lessons can damage a pupil's self-confidence and understanding. In addition, teachers who then have to adapt lessons to accommodate those who have missed previous sessions are not doing justice to the rest of the class who have had full attendance.

The school will do all it can to encourage high attendance including first day contact with parents, monitoring of attendance by the Head teacher and referral to the School Attendance Support Officer at WNC. If you have any concerns about your child's attendance please come into school and talk to one of the senior staff members or our pastoral support lead Mrs May.

School Times

The school will be open to pupils for 190 days per year. The term dates for West Northamptonshire Schools in the Daventry / South West area will be followed. Parents will be supplied with a list of term dates at least once during the preceding school year.

School sessions times are as follows:

Morning	8.45-12noon
Afternoon	1-3.15pm (1-3.20pm KS2)

Pupils should not arrive before 8.30am. The doors will open for pupils at 8.35am.

Parents are responsible for their children until the doors are opened at 8.35am and the children have safely entered the school building. Children in Years R-6* should be brought on to site with parents remaining until the child has entered the school building. Children will then return to their parents care upon release at the end of the day.

Whilst on the playground, children should remain close to their supervising adults. Children are not permitted to ride bikes, trikes, scooters or other wheeled vehicles on the playground at drop off or pick up times due to safety reasons.

*Children in Year's 5 and 6 have the option for parents to sign a 'Walking Permission Form' agreement which allows them to responsibly walk to and from school to an arranged parent pick up point or to their home. This is subject to ongoing responsible and safe behaviour.

Registration

The register will be taken at 8.50am and 1pm by the class teacher for that day and total numbers for the day completed. Children arriving between 8.50am and 9.15am will receive a late mark. Pupils arriving after 9.15am will be classed as absent for that session.

Absences

All absence must be categorised as authorised or unauthorised. **Authorised absence** is where the reason offered by the parents is accepted by the school as valid, for example:

- Illness
- Visits to the doctor, hospital or dentist. Parents should avoid, if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours. If unavoidable, appointments may be authorised where confirmation has been submitted by parents via the Absence Notification Form with supporting evidence.
- Bereavement
- Where the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs

Unauthorised absence is where no reasons are offered or the reason is not accepted by the school as valid, for example:

- Truancy
- Minding the house
- Looking after brothers or sisters. NB the school has discretion to authorise this if the circumstances are genuine and exceptional for example in cases of serious illness of a single parent where no relatives are nearby to help
- Shopping trips, visits to the hairdresser
- Birthday treats

All absences will be recorded in the register. A telephone message left on the absence line or the Absence Notification Form via the school website is required from the parent on the first day of absence. This will ensure that the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered if the above criteria have been met. A member of the office staff will try to contact parents by 9.30am if no reason for absence has been received. The school will record the detail of all absences and continued absences and attendance below 90% will be followed up and parents will receive a notice to improve or be requested to attend a meeting at the school. Attendance below 80% will be reported to the Attendance Support Officer at the Local Authority.

Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents who wish to claim exceptional circumstances as a reason for taking leave in term time should apply to the Head teacher, in writing, outlining the individual circumstances of the case. This must be received by the school in advance. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively - in such cases it will be regarded as unauthorised absence.

The Head teacher will then make a decision based on the following criteria:-

- Does the period requested (including any previous leave in the current year) total more than 5 days?
- Is the pupil's attendance over the past 12 months less than 95%? (apart from exceptional circumstances i.e. a life threatening illness)
- Does the requested period coincide with any assessment or examinations?

If the answer to ANY of these questions is "Yes" then the request will be denied.

If the answer is "No" then the following criteria will be applied:-

- Is the absence requested because the pupil wants to attend a specialist educational experience? (e.g. a music school, sporting activity)
- Is the request made because of compelling reasons connected with family relationships?
- Is the request made for religious or cultural requirements?

If the answer to any of these questions is "Yes" the Head teacher will exercise their judgement and may permit the request. If leave goes on for longer than agreed, the extra day's absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

All requests will be considered on an individual basis and any request authorised for another pupil or granted on a previous occasion cannot be treated as a precedent.

Absences, both authorised and unauthorised will be recorded on the child's Annual Report to Parents.

Parents can be fined by the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

School procedures:

Absences

If a pupil fails to attend or turn up on day one these are the procedures we will follow:

- Within the first day of non attendance, a telephone call to the home address will be made. If there is no telephone number available, an email/letter will be sent to the home address
- On day two; a subsequent telephone call will be made.
- On day three, if there has been no contact by telephone, a letter will be sent (second one in some cases) to the home address, asking for contact to be made with the school immediately. We will then give the parents/carers 3 working days to make contact. If English is not the parent's first language, we will endeavour to copy the letter into a language that may be more accessible.
- Week two; if the child has not been seen and the parents/carers have not made contact either, the school will contact the School Attendance Support Service.

The school will keep a record of the attempts made to contact the family and child for safeguarding purposes.

Frequent absence

It is the responsibility of the Head teacher to be aware of any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents. If this is unsuccessful the school will seek advice from the School Attendance Support Officer.

When a child's attendance rate falls below 90% (over a period of a term - 6/7 weeks) a letter will be sent to the parents (Appendix 1) requesting the parents contact school to discuss the pupil's attendance rate.

If your child is frequently absent the school will follow the National Framework

A new National Framework for Penalty Notices is being introduced. The regulations will come into effect from the 19th of August 2024. The aim is to improve consistency in the use of penalty notices across England.

The national framework includes:

- A single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) for any unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 week period may span different terms or school years. For example, 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the summer term and a further 8 within the autumn term.
- An increase to the rate of a penalty notice from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.
- A national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another tool must be considered (such as prosecution or another attendance legal intervention).

West Northamptonshire Council will advise any changes to this framework.

If a child has unacceptable levels of absence due to medical appointments or illness a letter will be sent to the parents (Appendix 2). If the pupil's attendance rate continues below 90% targets will be set with the pupil and the parents (appendix 3). If a child's amount of time off for illness reaches an unacceptable level, a letter will be sent requesting a doctor's note or appointment card for future absences (appendix 4).

Absence notes

Absence line voice messages and Absence Notifications received through the website will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period. If no notification is received about a child's absence a letter will be sent (appendix 5).

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.50am and at 1pm. Parents are required to complete the Absence Notification Forms via the school website if they know that their child will be late for school due to a medical appointment or other good reason.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before the registers close.

The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence. In cases for example, where the absence was for attending an early morning medical appointment and an Absence Notification Form has been submitted with supporting evidence, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

If a child arrives at school regularly late (3 times or more) after the register closes, the school will notify the parents of this via email (Appendix 6). If there is no improvement the school will make contact in person.

Foundation Stage children

At the start of the academic year Foundation Stage children attend part time for a short set period.

Collection from school other than at the end of a session

If a child is collected by a parent or other approved adult, between the hours of 9am and 3.15pm then the adult should report to the school office so that the child can be collected and signed out. We ask that parents notify the school if they are likely to be late at the end of the school day.

If a child is regularly collected late (3 times or more) a notification will be sent to parents and children will be taken to the after-school care facility. (appendix 7).

Appendix 1

ATTENDANCE DROPS BELOW AN ACCEPTABLE LEVEL

Dear **<name of parent / carer>**

Our records show that as of DATE, **<name of pupil>**'s attendance was **<attendance percentage>**%. This is below what we expect and to put this into perspective 90% attendance is equivalent to missing half a school year in five years of primary education.

It is our school aim to improve attendance of all pupils and we would like to help **<name of pupil>** improve their attendance back towards our school target of 96%. If you feel that we can help you with this, please contact the school on 01604 493861 to discuss **<name of pupil>**'s attendance and any support we may be able to provide.

Ongoing low attendance is a factor often linked to low levels of academic success. Regular attendance also means that pupils are able to make and maintain secure friendships and feel happier at school.

It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure their child is in school. Ongoing unauthorised absence could lead to a Penalty Notice which has updated during August 2024 with the following outcomes:

- An increase to the rate of a penalty notice from £120 to £160 if paid within 28 days and £60 to £80 if paid within 21 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period, the notice will be charged at the higher rate of £160 with no option for this second offence to be discharged at the lower rate of £80.
- A national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent for the same child within a rolling 3 year period, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) another tool must be considered (such as prosecution or another attendance legal intervention).

These will be issued by West Northamptonshire Council.

I would really appreciate your support to make sure **<name of child>**'s attendance increases. The school will continue to monitor the situation over the next half term and I will contact you again if it does not improve so that we can discuss it further.

Thank you for your cooperation
Yours sincerely

Mr S Casey
Head teacher

Appendix 2

UNACCEPTABLE AMOUNT OF TIME IS TAKEN OFF FOR A MEDICAL APPOINTMENT

Dear **<name of parent>**

Our school attendance records show that on the following dates:

<date of absence>, <name of pupil>

missed -- day(s) of school for a medical appointment.

We understand it is difficult to make appointments outside school time and that some appointments take all day. However, we expect, where possible appointments to be made out of school hours or for pupils to attend either morning or afternoon registration.

Every school day counts and any time missed will result in lost learning. Please do your utmost to ensure any future appointments are booked outside school hours.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance please do not hesitate to contact me on 01604 493861.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Casey
Head teacher

Appendix 3

TO INFORM PARENTS/CARERS OF ATTENDANCE

Dear **<Name of Parent>**

Overstone Primary School closely monitors the attendance of all pupils. Our records show that **<name of child>** has had a low level of attendance for the past two terms.

Term one: xx%

Term two: xx%

Please find below **<name of child>**'s current attendance and attendance target.

Attendance	<current attendance> %
Authorised Absence	<current AA> %
Unauthorised Absence	<current UA> %
Target	<target> %

The information below shows how attendance can affect your child's future progression.

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year

Excellent attendance! These young people will almost certainly get the best grades they can leading to better prospects for college, university or work.

95%: 10 days absence a year

These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and have opportunities for college, university or work, but could still improve their attendance!

90%: 19 days absence a year

Young people in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.

85%: 29 days absence a year

Young people in this group are missing six weeks of school per year; it will be very difficult for them to keep up with work and they are unlikely to do their best.

80%: 38 days absence a year

Young People in this group are missing a year of school over the five years of primary education, it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of young people in this group could be issued with a penalty notice.

We want to support **<name of pupil>** and make certain that **<he/she>** does not get behind with work or miss out on any opportunities school offers. Please ring me on 01604 393861 to arrange a meeting to discuss this issue.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Casey
Head teacher

Appendix 4

ILLNESS REACHES AN UNACCEPTABLE LEVEL

Dear **<Name of parent>**

Since the start of the school year **<name of pupil>** has been absent from school for **<number of days>** days due to illness. This is concerning as it means **<name of pupil>**'s attendance overall is **<percentage absence>**, which is significantly below what the school expects. We understand that some absence due to illness is unavoidable. However it is important the school are aware of any on-going health problems so we can put the correct support in place.

To put this absence into perspective, 90% attendance is equivalent to missing half a school year in the five years of primary school education. We are sure that you are aware that every school day counts and missing any time from school results in lost learning. We want to support **<name of pupil>** and make certain that **<he/she>** does not get behind with work or miss out on any opportunities school offers.

Due to the large amount of illness absence **<name of pupil>** has had, we will require a doctor's note or appointment card for any future periods of absence lasting over three consecutive days or for school terms with numerous days off due to illness.

We will continue to monitor **<name of pupils>** attendance. If you wish to discuss **<name of pupil>** attendance please contact me on 01604 493861. I will be happy to talk with you or arrange a meeting if required.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Yours sincerely

Mr S Casey
Head teacher

Appendix 5

NO NOTE FOR ABSENCE

Dear

Our records show **<name of pupil>** was not at school on the date/s listed below. Currently, we do not have any explanation for this absence so it is marked as 'unauthorised'. If you have already sent a note please make sure **<name of pupil>** has given it to their teacher or the office. If no note is received, this absence will remain unauthorised and this will be marked on **<name of pupil>** attendance record and may lead to further action being taken.

Beside the dates below please enter the reason **<name of pupil>** was absent.

<date>:

<date>:

<date>:

<date>:

Signed Parent/Carer_____

To help us keep our information up to date please provide your current phone number

Please return this letter to the school office.

We would like to remind you about our absence procedures. Please call (01604 493861) or email school on the first day of absence. If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance please do not hesitate to contact me on 01604 493861.

Thank you for your cooperation
Yours sincerely

Mr S Casey
Head teacher

Appendix 6
To be sent as an email.

LATES

Dear **<Name of Parent>**

Our attendance records show that **<name of child>** has been late on **<number of lates>** occasions since the start of term on the **<date of start of term>**.

We are sure you will understand lateness can be very disruptive to the school day. Missing the start of lessons means instructions and other essential information will have to be repeated, which will delay the start of lessons and young people's learning. It may mean that your child's progress is hindered as they may miss the initial explanation of a task and lose self-confidence, feeling unsure of what is required.

The school register closes at 8.50am; arrival between 8.50am and 9.15am will result in a late mark; arrival after 9.15am will be marked as unauthorised absence. A significant amount of unauthorised absence could result in further action being taken for example the issuing of a penalty notice.

I would appreciate your support to ensure **<name of child>**'s prompt arrival in the future. If **<he/she>** continues to be late, I will contact you so that we can discuss ways in which we can work together to rectify the situation.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to anyone about attendance or punctuality please do not hesitate to contact me on 01604 493861.

Thank you for your cooperation
Yours sincerely

Mr S Casey
Head teacher

Email
Appendix 7

Late collection of child/ren

Dear Parent/Carer,

It has been noted that you have collected a child later than 10 minutes after the end of the school day on at least two separate occasions without notifying the office of a legitimate reason.

We do not provide supervision for children after 3.20pm and therefore from this point onwards, if not collected at the end of the school day, your child will be taken to RD After School Care located in the Owls Nest and you will be subject to their childcare costs.

School ends at 3.15pm for Reception and Years 1 and 2 and 3.20pm for Years 3-6. We have no facility for looking after children after 3.20pm and would appreciate your cooperation in ensuring all children are collected at the correct time.

Please complete the attached forms and return to the school office to ensure that RD After School Care has the most up to date details.

Kind Regards

Overstone Primary School