



Overdale Community Primary School Attendance Policy

Person Responsible:	Mr Robert Bowman	Frequency of Review:	1 Year
Authorisation By:	Headteacher	Notice Date:	5/9/2023
Authorisation Date:	19/09/2023	Review Due By:	19/09/2024

1 Rationale

The Governors and North Yorkshire Local Authority (LA) believe that attendance at Overdale Community Primary School is important, and that any absence can lead to poor progress and under-achievement, therefore daily attendance at school is expected from all our pupils.

We aim to provide a welcoming, safe and caring environment in which each pupil is valued and supported. We strive to build and maintain effective partnerships between the school and its parents, external support agencies and the wider community to encourage regular attendance at school.

2 School Expectations

The expectation in relation to a pupil's attendance is one that is set out in law and stipulated under section 444 of the education act.

2.1 Students

Overdale Community Primary School expects the following from its students:

- Attend school regularly
- Arrive on time at 08:40, appropriately dressed and prepared for the day, with all necessary equipment

2.2 Parents and Carers

Parents must ensure that their children are in school at 08:40. Our school register closes at 09:10 and your child will be registered as unauthorised absence after this time.

In line with safeguarding, it is a clear expectation that all parents and carers must notify the school on the first day of a child's absence. If a child continues to be unwell then it is a requirement to inform the school office daily of that absence, unless agreed otherwise by mutual consent. Any children that have not been reported as absent may result in the school having to carry out a welfare check at the child's home to assure pupil safety. The school will also require at least three emergency contacts for every child. This is not just in the event of a medical emergency, but in circumstances whereby a pupil is absent and the parent/carer is unobtainable and or has not contacted the school.

Overdale school is explicit in its overall aim that children should feel secure and happy in a well-ordered environment and that they should be enthusiastic about coming to school. Children have a right to experience a broad, balanced and differentiated curriculum; non-attendance deprives them of this opportunity. It is the aim of this policy that unauthorised absences should be 0% on a year-by-year basis and that authorised absences should be kept to a minimum. Whole school and individual monitoring will be in line with targets set by Overdale Community Primary School on an annual basis.

Students, Parents and Carers can expect the following from Overdale Community Primary School:

- It is a legal requirement for our school to take the attendance register twice a day: at the start of each morning and once during the afternoon.
- If a student/pupil has irregular attendance or is absent continuously without authorisation
- Contact from school (as soon as possible during the same day) when a student fails to attend without reason and no contact is made
- Early contact with parents when a student fails to attend without good reason or there is a pattern of absences or an excessive number of absences or lateness.
- An initial warning letter will be sent and 10 day monitoring period started. If there is no improvement in attendance an attendance panel will be held with parents and members of SLT. If attendance fails to improve a referral will be made to the Prevention service and the Local Authority will be informed and legal proceedings may commence.

3. Absence Due to Student Illness or Appointments

Parents are requested to inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence due to illness.

School should be informed by telephone, email or letter as soon as possible if a child is to be absent for attendance at a doctor, dentist or hospital appointment. Evidence of the appointment will be required.

If a child becomes ill during school hours, we will contact parents as soon as possible. Parents must ensure that we have up to date details of home and work contact numbers, as well as an emergency contact person in case they are unavailable.

4. Persistent Absence

Guidance from the Department for Education (2011) advises that if a child's attendance is below 90% he/she will be referred to as a 'Persistent Absence'. Overdale school will work closely with parents and carers, the local authority and other external agencies to improve persistent absenteeism. This may include the use of parenting contracts and Attendance Panels. The school will be monitoring attendance every half term. If a child's attendance drops below the national average, we will notify parents of this and provide support to improve a child's absence. We are committed to working in partnership with parents to overcome any difficulties that could be preventing a child attending school on a regular basis.

5. Leave of Absence During Term Time

There are a series of codes defined by the Department of Education which are used to denote authorised and unauthorised absence. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that the correct codes are recorded and that patterns in children's attendance are analysed.

The Headteacher of the school in certain circumstances is able to authorise absence. Detailed below are the reasons that would warrant an authorised absence.

- a) genuine illness
- b) unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- c) days of religious observance
- d) exceptional family circumstances, such as immediate bereavement

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- a) shopping
- b) birthdays
- c) minding the house
- d) caring for brothers/sisters/relatives
- e) parent/carer illness
- f) sibling illness
- g) arrivals after the close of registration.

The head teacher will only authorise a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be treated on an individual basis. Advice on what constitutes exceptional circumstances suggests situations such as children of service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside the term time, or families who need to spend time together following a crisis. Parents and carers are asked to ensure that they make any medical appointments for their child outside of the school day.

Parents and carers should put in writing all requests for a child's absence from school for any purpose. This should be sent to the school marked well in advance of any request for leave of absence during term time.

Circumstances such as previous attendance, academic achievement, family circumstances and the time of year, will be taken into account. If a child has an older sibling, contact will also be made with local secondary schools so that a joint decision can be made. Should a leave of absence request not be and the child is still taken out of school, a 'Fixed Penalty Notice' could be issued.

6. Enforcement

The school will always try to work supportively where a pupil's absence is becoming a cause for concern. In the first instance the school will communicate through a half termly letter making parents and carers aware of the decline in attendance. Where a school has tried over time to engage a parent/carer to offer intervention to improve a child's attendance, yet the attendance is still declining or the parent/carer is not engaging then a referral to the enforcement department within the local authority will be made. The local authority may instruct legal action for repeated non-attendance. It is always the school's hope to work by mutual consent and agreement. The school is aware that circumstances will prevail that may make absence unavoidable.

In certain circumstances parents can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice where they take a holiday in term time which is not authorised by the Headteacher. A Fixed Penalty Notice can require a parent to pay a sum of either £60 or £120. Each parent can be issued with a notice for each child so two parents with two children can potentially be issued with four notices.

7. The work of the attendance team

Miss Rhianne Cammish (Attendance officer) and Mrs Kerry McWilliams, our Health and Wellbeing Officer/ SEMH lead, works closely with Overdale's Senior Leadership team to drive improved attendance across school. Our school works to positively encourage excellent attendance through a number of rewards, certificates, conversations with children and families, assemblies etc. Children receive rewards half termly for 100% attendance and we have class competitions for attendance every week. We have 'improved attendance' certificates to praise those children who have improved their attendance significantly from the beginning of term. Mrs McWilliams and Miss Cammish work closely to accurately check the attendance register and complete 'First call' if reasons behind a child's absence have not been reported in the method reported earlier in the document. The first call procedure is as follows



Overdale School First Call procedure

1. Class teachers complete Registers using SIMS at the start of the day and record children who are present during registration.
2. If a child is not present in class during Registration, no mark will be next to the child's name, which is referred to as a 'missing mark'. Our register officially closes at 09:10. If your child is not here, they will be registered as absent for the morning session.
3. Pupils arriving late (after the school gates have closed) will enter school through the Main Entrance and record their presence using the InVentry system, which is linked to SIMS. A late mark (L) will be entered in the register. A reason must be given on our sign-in system as to why a pupil is late.
4. Missing marks are checked by the school office and amended if the school has been informed of a child's absence either by phone, voicemail or email.
5. Those children for whom we have no notification of absence by 9.30am, will receive a phone call from school to establish the reason for absence.
6. If there is no answer, a voicemail will be left.
7. If we receive no response, a text message may be sent and other contact numbers recorded in SIMs may be called on the first day of absence.
8. If no contact can be established, the school attendance team will complete a dynamic risk assessment and decide whether a home visit is required.
9. If a home visit is required, 2 members of the school leadership and attendance team will visit the house.
10. If there is no answer, an attendance letter will be posted by hand requesting the parents make contact with school.
11. If no contact can be established, the school will report the child's absence to the Police and request a welfare visit. School will inform any Early Help workers or Children and Families workers involved with the family before contacting Police.

3 Children Missing Education (CME)

All children of compulsory school age, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, aptitude and any Special Educational Needs they may have. The Local Authority has a duty to meet the requirements and responsibilities from within the Children missing education – Statutory Guidance for local authorities (DfE Sept 2016) and comply with it's duties under Section 436A of the Education Act 1996 by having in place arrangements to identify Children Missing Education.

To assist in it's duties, North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) has developed a Children Missing Education Protocol, which is shared with all partners and stakeholders. To ensure the Authority's appropriate response to CME referrals, there are two separate pathways identified in the Protocol as follows:

1. **Children Missing Education - whereabouts or destination school not known.** These are children who may have ceased attending the school or alternative provision where they are a registered student and/or whose families are likely to have left the county or have moved abroad.
2. **Children Missing Education - not in receipt of a suitable education.** These are children who are found to be living in the locality but are not registered at a school or have not taken up their offered educational placement. This also includes children who are not regularly attending the school or alternative provision where they are a registered student or are not in receipt of a suitable education otherwise (i.e. Elective Home Education).

All the above children can be at significant risk of underachieving, and in later life becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training). Children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can also act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and can also be a sign of child criminal exploitation including involvement in county lines. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation, 'honour'-based abuse or risk of forced marriage

Tracking and Monitoring

Information sharing between parents, schools, the community and the Local Authority is crucial to ensure that those children who are missing education are kept safe and receive the education they are entitled to. The Local Authority has effective tracking and enquiry systems in place and an appointed named person (**CME Co-ordinator**) to whom schools, other agencies and the public can make referrals if concerned about a child missing education.

Information relating to children who may be missing education or have been or are about to be taken off a school roll at a non -standard transition point is captured from schools on a daily basis utilising Group call, or by a manual referral from schools to the CME Co-ordinator. Joint reasonable enquiries can be made as quickly as possible by schools and the LA to identify where the family is and what support is needed. Services such as the Admissions Team, Children & Families Services (referrals through MAST), and Locality SEND Hubs can support children & young people to re-engage with their education. Joint working arrangements are also in place with agencies and services such as, Housing, Council Tax, HMRC, Health, the Police, and other Local Authorities to locate and support children and their families. Information is also shared within NYCC safeguarding processes such as the (M)ulti (A)gency (C)hild (E)xploitation, Runaway and Missing from Home or Care and Private Fostering groups.

Other LA Responsibilities

The Local Authority also has other duties and powers to support their work on CME which include:

- safeguarding children's welfare and the duty to protect them from harm and neglect
- making arrangements to establish (wherever possible) the identities of children in the area who are not registered students at a school and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise (e.g. Elective Home Education - EHE)
- serving Notices (1st Notice and Imminent Order) and issuing a School Attendance Order to parents who fail to evidence that their child is receiving a suitable education by registering at a school or otherwise.
- pursuing a prosecution and/or an Education Supervision Order for those who do not comply with the School Attendance Order
- issuing a Penalty Notice, pursuing an Education Supervision Order or prosecution of parent/s who fail to ensure that their child attends regularly at the school, or alternative educational provision, where they are a registered student
- arranging education for permanently excluded students from the sixth day

Who should be notified of a child missing in education ? CME Co-ordinator - Tel: 01609 532477 or email:CME.Coordinator@northyorks.gov.uk or julie.hodges@northyorks.gov.uk