

Old Vicarage School
ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy, which applies to the whole school, is available on the school website.

Information Sharing Category	Public Domain
Version	V3
Date Published	September 2024
Authorised by (if required)	Proprietor and Advisory Board
Review/Update Date	September 2025
Responsible Area	Head of School and Senior Leadership Team

Legal Status:

- Complies with Part 3, paragraph 17 of The Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England) (Amendment) Regulations.

Applies to:

- the whole school inclusive of activities outside of the normal school hours;
- all staff (teaching and support staff), the Head of School, Proprietor and volunteers working in the school.

Other relevant documents:

- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA)
- Admissions Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

Availability:

- This policy is made available to parents/guardians, carers, staff and pupils from the school office.

Monitoring and Review:

- This policy will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Head of School.
- The Head of School and Proprietor undertake an annual review of this policy and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than one year from the date of this document, or earlier if changes in legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

Signed:

Last reviewed: 10/2024

Next review: 10/2025

Mathew Adshead
Proprietor

Mrs Kerry Wise
Head of School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

- We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.
- We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.
- The Head of School is responsible for making sure the school keeps Admission and Attendance registers in accordance with the regulatory requirements. For all day pupils of compulsory school age our online attendance register records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day.
- This online register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised and follow the updated register codes outlined in WTTISA.
- The Head of School also ensures that a compliant admissions register is also kept.
- The school calendar and dates when the school is open can be accessed from the home page of our website, www.oldvicarageschool.co.uk. Alternatively, our term dates and Calendar of Events can be obtained from the school office. School emergency closures for such things as extreme weather will also be published on the home page of our website.

The Role of the Parents/Guardians/ Carers

Parents/guardians/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (5 to 18) receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

The Role of the School

The school is required to:

- Maintain two registers:
 - An Admission Register (known as the School Roll)
 - An online Attendance Register.
- Provide parents and pupils with clear expectations about attendance, as stated in this policy
- Appoint an Attendance Champion, who will oversee the management and promotion of good attendance
 - The Attendance Champion is ...Kerry Wise
- Provide staff with an awareness of how to remove barriers to attendance and an understanding of the avenues for support, both within and beyond the school.
- Focus on early intervention when there are issues relating to attendance and work proactively with parents and pupils to remove barriers to attendance
- Gather, analyse and share data in a timely manner, including, as appropriate with the Local Authority, to enable concerns, patterns and trends to be identified in absence and lateness so that appropriate measures can be taken

The Admission Register

This gives particular information about pupils who are currently registered as attending our school. For the purposes of day to day management, the school admission register will be stored in the school office. The register will comprise information that is compliant with regulations set out in the education (pupil registration) (England) regulations 2006, which have superseded the regulations of 1995 and the amendments of www.opsi.gov.uk. For each pupil, the admission register will contain:

- Name in full
- Sex
- Name and address of every person known to the Head of School to be a parent of the pupil (and an indication of the parent with whom the pupil normally resides)
- At least two telephone numbers at which a parent relative, neighbour or friend can be contacted in an emergency
- The address of any new or additional place of residence of the child (as an addition to, not an overwrite in, the register)
- The date from which a child starts living at the new address
- Day, month and year of birth
- Day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the school
- Name and address of the school last attended, if any
- Name of destination school when a child leaves The Old Vicarage
- Date of first attendance at the new school

Attendance Register

The School is required to ensure that the attendance register for all pupils on the school roll is taken twice a day – once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

Each pupil must be marked on the register in one of the following categories:

- Present
- Engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site (approved by the Head of School and supervised by a person approved by the Head of School, including sporting activities, educational visits or residential trips)
- Absent
- Unable to attend through exceptional circumstances (unavoidable closure of the school site or part of it)
- Taking authorised absence (granted leave of absence by the Head of School or a person acting on their behalf, unable to attend by reason of sickness or unavoidable cause, observing a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs)
- Taking unauthorised absence (if no reason is established when the register is taken, the entry may be corrected later when the reason is established).

If a pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school and must categorise the absence according to the codes provided in the August 2024 version of Working Together to Improve School Attendance. Parents/guardians/carers cannot authorise absence – it is the school that decides how to classify absences). Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification of absence (e.g. illness). All other absences are treated as

unauthorised. Authorised absences include: medical or dental appointments, days of religious observance, visits to future schools, exclusion, family bereavement and special occasions. All requests for absence must be made in writing to the Head of School, giving the school plenty of time to consider the request.

If a pupil is absent without explanation when the register is called, school staff will normally contact the parents/guardians/carers the same day whenever possible. The absence will be treated as unauthorised unless an explanation is offered and judged according to the 2024 DfE guidance to be satisfactory justification for absence. Under education law, parents/guardians/carers may request absence for their children from school for family holiday. It is the responsibility of schools to determine whether or not they agree to a family holiday during term time in accordance with the 2024 DfE requirements.. Family holidays should be taken when the school is not in session, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Failure to Attend School

If a child fails to regularly attend school then the parent/carer/guardian is guilty of an offence (Educational Act 1966). Initially, the school will try to resolve any problems, but in the case of continued absence the school will contact the Local Authority (LA) and it is likely that the Behaviour and Attendance Officer will work closely with the parents, pupil and school to resolve issues and develop strategies to improve attendance. The school is required to inform the LA if a pupil fails to attend regularly. Independent schools have a legal duty to report certain attendance issues to their local authority: ten days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence), failure to attend regularly, and deletion from the school register when the next school is not known. In this last case, independent schools are required to report the circumstances as soon as possible to the local authority (LA) in which the pupil lives.

Responsibilities

- It is a parent/guardian's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first day of absence.
- A parent/guardian should phone school before 0915 giving the pupil's name and reason for absence.
- Pupils are expected to be in school at 0835 for registration / assembly. It is the responsibility of parents / guardians to ensure that their child is punctual.
- Lateness is recorded at registration and recorded on a pupil's attendance record.
- If your child appears reluctant to attend school please discuss the matter promptly with your child's Class Teacher to ensure that both you and your child receive maximum support.
- Class Teacher's are responsible for completion of the online register. They must also be aware of repeated patterns in absence/ lateness and report to the DSL.
- The DSL and the Attendance Coordinator will meet weekly to review latenesses and absences. This will be followed up by the SLT

Family Holidays during Term Time

- Family holidays should not take place during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning.
- In exceptional circumstances, if a family holiday is deemed necessary, permission should be sought in writing from the Head of School.

- Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent/carer/guardian writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority.
- Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from our school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

If a child is absent

- When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register and will inform the school office.
- When the child returns to school, a note, email or telephone call to the school office from a parent or guardian should explain the absence. Notes are kept in the school office.
- A note, email or telephone call may be sent/made to the school office prior to the day of absence e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. Old Vicarage School will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

Requests for leave of absence

- We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend a specific event.

Long-term Absence

- When children have an illness that means they will be away from our school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home so that they can keep up with their school work.

Repeated Unauthorised Absences

- The school will contact the parent of any child who has an unauthorised absence.
- If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.

Monitoring and Review

- It is the responsibility of the Head of School to monitor overall attendance and seek to ensure that the attendance figures are as they should be.
- The school keeps accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of five years.
- Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way.
- Any ongoing absences, 'lates' or unauthorised absences for holidays are followed up as quickly as possible.
- If there is concern about a child's absence, the teacher will contact the School Office and this will immediately be followed up by the Head of School.

Appendix 1: Grounds for notification to Local Authority for Additions/Deletions from the Attendance Register (Annex A: taken from Children Missing Education 2016)

- a. They have ceased to attend the School and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the student is receiving education otherwise than at school.
- b. In the case of a student granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that — (i) the student has failed to attend the School within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend the School by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the student is.
- c. That the student is certified by the School medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither they nor their parent has indicated to the School the intention to continue to attend the School after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- d. That the student has been continuously absent from the School for a period of not less than twenty school days and (i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2); (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend the School by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor of the School and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the student is
- e. That the student is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student will return to the School at the end of that period.
- f. That the student has died.
- g. That he has been permanently excluded from the School.
- h. Where the student has been admitted to the School to receive nursery education, that they have not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the School.