



# Ox Close Federation

## Attendance Policy

<b>Approved</b>	<b>October 2023</b>
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>October 2024</b>

## Document History Log:

<b>Author of document:</b>	Daniel Harrison	<b>Job role:</b>	Executive Headteacher
<b>Date document created:</b>	September 2023	<b>Approval by Governing Body:</b>	October 2023

## Attendance Key Contact List

Name	Role	Contact details
Daniel Harrison	Executive Headteacher (Designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance)	<a href="mailto:d.harrison200@oxclosespennymoor.uk">d.harrison200@oxclosespennymoor.uk</a>
Rebekah Bewick	Parent Support Advisor	<a href="mailto:r.bewick300@oxclosespennymoor.uk">r.bewick300@oxclosespennymoor.uk</a>
Laura Simpson	Parent Support Advisor	<a href="mailto:l.simpson300@oxclosespennymoor.uk">l.simpson300@oxclosespennymoor.uk</a>
Anna Bowden	Deputy Executive Headteacher	<a href="mailto:a.bowden102@oxclosespennymoor.uk">a.bowden102@oxclosespennymoor.uk</a>
Jayne Phillips	Assistant Executive Headteacher	<a href="mailto:j.phillips103@oxclosespennymoor.uk">j.phillips103@oxclosespennymoor.uk</a>
Hannah Shepherd	Assistant Executive Headteacher	<a href="mailto:h.drew201@oxclosespennymoor.uk">h.drew201@oxclosespennymoor.uk</a>
Michelle Bowman	Assistant Executive Headteacher	<a href="mailto:m.bowman101@oxclosespennymoor.uk">m.bowman101@oxclosespennymoor.uk</a>
Tracey Jackson	Federation Business Manager	<a href="mailto:t.jackson420@oxclosespennymoor.uk">t.jackson420@oxclosespennymoor.uk</a>
Hayley Ozturk	Office Administrator	<a href="mailto:h.ozturk300@oxclosespennymoor.uk">h.ozturk300@oxclosespennymoor.uk</a>
Natalie Hunter	Office Administrator	<a href="mailto:n.hunter433@oxclosespennymoor.uk">n.hunter433@oxclosespennymoor.uk</a>
David Stone	Attendance Governor	<a href="mailto:oxcloseprimary@durhamlearning.net">oxcloseprimary@durhamlearning.net</a>

## Who in Nursery or School can help if you are experiencing difficulty / require help and support:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Rebekah Bewick	Parent Support Advisor	<a href="mailto:r.bewick300@oxclosespennymoor.uk">r.bewick300@oxclosespennymoor.uk</a>
Laura Simpson	Parent Support Advisor	<a href="mailto:l.simpson300@oxclosespennymoor.uk">l.simpson300@oxclosespennymoor.uk</a>

## Key Information for Parents

### Why is attendance so important?

Good attendance at school makes a big difference to learning and develops the wellbeing of the children. It is essential that parents inform Nursery and Primary as soon as they know that their child will be absent.

Please see our attendance leaflets for:

- Nursery and Reception - [Attendance-Leaflet-Nursery-and-Reception.pdf \(ox-close.durham.sch.uk\)](#)
- Years 1 to 6 - [Attendance-Leaflet-Year-1-to-6.pdf \(ox-close.durham.sch.uk\)](#)

We are committed to working with you to support you so please do get in touch if we can help you in any way.

### Attendance Matters

Percentage	Days Absent	Comment	Achievement	Attendance Stage
Above 97%	Less than 6 days absence per year	Excellent attendance	Will almost certainly achieve full potential	CELEBRATE
95-96%	10 days absence per year	Missing 2 weeks of every school	Likely to achieve but could still improve	ENQUIRY
90-94%	19 days absence per year	Missing one month of school every year	Will be harder for the children to achieve their best	ENQUIRY
85-89%	29 days absence per year	Missing 6 weeks every school year	High risk of under achievement	ENQUIRY AND SUPPORT
80-84%	38 days absence per year	Missing a year of school over the time spent in Primary education	Almost impossible for the children to keep up	SUPPORT AND ENFORCE
BELOW 80%	More than 38 days absence per year	Missing over a year of school over the time spent in Primary education	Extreme impact on learning and development	SUPPORT AND ENFORCE

### Persistent Absence

A child is persistent absent if they miss 10% or more of all possible school sessions regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Children persistently absent play catch-up with work, miss time and opportunity with friends, and miss out on clubs and extra-curricular activities (areas to apply learning).

## Severe Absence

Some pupils are absent more often than they attend. DfE class this as severe absence i.e. being absent for at least 50% of registration sessions. Severe absence remains rare: it affects less than 1% of pupils in primary schools.

## The School Day

Registration time are as follows:

<b>Establishment</b>	<b>Registration Time</b>
Nursery	Morning Session – 08:45 – 09:00am Afternoon Session – 12:30 – 12:45pm
School	08:40-08:45am

## Punctuality

After the above times the registers will close. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

<b>Amount late each morning</b>	<b>Every week</b>	<b>Every term</b>
5 minutes	25 minutes lost learning	Over 1 day of lost learning
10 minutes	10 minutes	Over 2 days of lost learning

## Parent Support Advisors

Please get in touch if with Miss Bewick or Miss Simpson, who are our PSAs, on 01388 814860 if you would like any support or information.

## **Introduction to our Federation Attendance Vision and Ethos**

Ox Close Federation seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. We will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend Nursery or School and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the Federation and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

### **Why is regular attendance so important?**

Being in Nursery or School every day that it is open, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. There is a renewed national focus on maximising pupils' time in the classroom, as evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.

### **Here's what the data shows:**

Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.

Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and Maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.

Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and Maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and Maths.

Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and Maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent.

At Ox Close Federation, all staff are committed to engaging all children and families as we recognise the importance of good attendance alongside good attitudes to learning and developing positive relationships with others. We aim to nurture the children, encourage them to aspire so that they can prosper. Attendance and engagement are a key part of this.

At Ox Close Federation, we recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts and the correlation between positive attendance and learning engagement is clear from the very earliest

stages of learning. Consequently, positive attendance forms a pivotal part of the Federation Improvement Plan. This means that attendance is built into strategies on attainment, safeguarding, wellbeing, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support and supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities. In addition, Ox Close Federation is committed to equality and seeks to close the gaps between the vulnerable groups and others. This includes support for disadvantaged pupils and families in attendance through the use of Pupil Premium funding, in particular for time with the PSAs.

**This policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding, behaviour, anti -bullying and inclusion.**

**The Federation and all partners will work together to:**

**EXPECT**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



**MONITOR**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



**LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



**FACILITATE SUPPORT**

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



**FORMALISE SUPPORT**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



**ENFORCE**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

## **Expectations**

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our pupils are inextricably linked.

Regular attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the Federation is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

### **We will ensure that:**

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Attendance is a priority across the Federation.
- Aspire to high standards on attendance.
- Pupils will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of pupil.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

At Ox Close Federation, we aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in Nursery or School and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the organisation. From the moment that children join the Federation, induction information explains the link between attendance and achievement. Parent engagement workshops are held when children start in Nursery and Reception and staff are all aware of the importance of good attendance and shared responsibility is encouraged throughout the organisation.

### **1. Attendance Data**

At Ox Close Federation, attendance data is analysed on a continual basis and this information is shared with class teachers via our data management system, Arbor. Data, is analysed on a whole school, cohort and individual basis regularly, enabling us to target attendance efforts to the pupils and cohorts who need it most.

Ox Close Federation then rigorously analyses attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched. In the first instance, the PSAs will work with the parents, while other agencies are engaged via Early Help referrals if appropriate, before more formal steps are taken if necessary.

### **2. Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance**

When a pattern is spotted, the PSAs will discuss this with parents and children to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and make a plan/otherwise agree how all partners can work together to resolve them, through an Attendance TAF. This is facilitated by the PSAs in the first instance.

### **3. Facilitate support**

Ox Close Federation will work hard with families to remove barriers to attendance and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school and that this might include an early help or whole family plan where there are wider issues affecting attendance. Close support will be offered by the PSA at an initial Attendance TAF and all other possible services will be engaged in order to try and remove the barriers. When appropriate, Early Help processes will be put in place.

The intention of Ox Close Federation is to support parents/carers in order to reduce persistent and severe absence. This includes how to access wider support services, remove the barriers to attendance and explore when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority.



#### **4. Formalise support**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure that all possible support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending upon the circumstances, this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

#### **5. Enforce**

When all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **When can children be absent from Federation?**

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school. In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such absences.

These are the only circumstances where schools can permit your child to be absent.

#### **What do I need to do if my child needs to be absent from school for one of those reasons?**

You should contact their school as early as possible to explain why. If not, your child's school will contact you on the first morning of their absence to find out why.

All parents can request a 'leave of absence' for their child which gives them permission to be absent from school. Leaves of absence must be applied for before your child will be absent and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

The Executive Headteacher has the final say over whether to approve the request and how long your child can be absent. Their decision will be made after considering the specific facts and circumstances behind your request.

### **Can I take my child on holiday during term time?**

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leaves of absence for holidays unless it is unavoidable.

As leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that your child's headteacher will agree a leave of absence for a family holiday.

If permission is refused and you keep your child off school on the days requested, you are likely to be committing an offence and be issued a fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted by your local authority.

### **Nursery**

Although attendance in Nursery is not compulsory, it is very important that good patterns of attendance are established at the earliest possible age. All at Oxclose Nursery value the importance of attendance. It is also expected that Nursery parents follow the same protocols as schools with regard to reporting absence.

## **Attendance Procedures and Absence Processes**

### **Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

Ox Close Federation promotes good attendance and punctuality through:

- Induction information and support
- Parent Workshops
- Letters home
- Appropriate rewards and incentives
- Attendance Assemblies

### **Communication**

The school requests that all parents please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date. Please ensure that there is more than one emergency contact listed.

It is vital, that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to, for example medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance then we may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.

### **On the first day of absence**

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence.

#### School and Nursery

If a child is absent from School or Nursery and there is no phone call from home then an in-app Arbor message is sent to the parent of the absent child to enquire the reason why they have not attended.

In both Nursery and School, the absence reason is recorded on Arbor. If no reasons are given following the message a note of the time of the message sent is recorded. If there is no response to the in-app Arbor message then a phone call will be made by the PSAs or school office and a note is made of the time of the phone call.

Doctors and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

## Periods of extended absence

If a child's absence continues beyond 2 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received, the school office will phone to verify the absence and take any relevant action in relation to assuring itself of the child's welfare, including possible home visits by the PSAs and school leaders.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action. However, formal action will only be taken following intervention, support and parental meetings carried out by the PSAs.

## Absence Authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

## Punctuality:

Registration time are as follows:

Establishment	Registration Time
Nursery	Morning Session – 08:45 – 09:00am Afternoon Session – 12:30 – 12:45pm
School	08:40-08:45am

After the above times the registers will close. All pupils must enter by the main entrance and report to the school office. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

## If your child is late for school:

Attendance and punctuality are monitored by leaders and the Parent Support Advisors. When necessary, the Parent Support Advisors will contact the parents to discuss reasons for the continual lateness and to offer support if needed to improve punctuality.

**If lateness becomes persistent** with no identifiable reason then the Parent Support Advisor will approach the family and arrange any necessary support through an Attendance Team Around the Family.

**If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality a referral made be made via Early Help. Finally, a referral would be made to the Local Authority in this situation.**

## **Help and Support**

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people. The PSAs are committed to supporting families across the Federation and to refer to appropriate services when required.

## **Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Head teachers are only able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

Parents and carers will receive a letter with the outcome of the leave request.

**Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.**

## **Pupils with specific needs**

The Attendance Policy accounts for the specific needs of pupils/pupil cohorts, be applied fairly and consistently and consider the individual needs of pupils/ families who have specific barriers to attendance.

## **Children Missing from Education**

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

At Ox Close Federation, attendance is seen as being the responsibility of all and it forms a key part of the Federation Improvement Plan and safeguarding of pupils. Office staff take calls and record reasons for absence. Teachers and Teaching Assistants also address attendance through informal discussions with parents at the beginning and end of the school day. Leaders analyse the data and work with PSAs to identify families who require further intervention and support.

In addition, parents and carers are expected to work in partnership in order to help bring about good attendance and to inform the School and Nursery immediately if their child is absent.