

Attendance Policy for Academies 1 August 2025 – 1 July 2026

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Change History	
Date	Description
November 2023	Current Version
May 2024	Update to statutory guidance – effective 19 August. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirement to keep registers electronically • Requirement to share daily attendance with DfE • Extended requirement to retain information for 6 yrs • New absence codes Updated information about penalty notices in line with new national framework
June 2025	Updated reference to dates Deleted obsolete attendance and absence codes Renumbering of appendices

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1. Aims

The University of Chichester Academy Trust is committed to inspiring all young people with an excellent education that raises their aspirations and enriches their lives. To do this we must all work together to strive towards every child attending as much of their education as possible so they can meet their true potential. This endeavour will be a partnership between the Trust, our Academies, Local Authorities, parents, carers and students.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Board of Trustees and its Local Governing Bodies

The Board of Trustees and its Local Governing Bodies are responsible for

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the Trust's and its academies' policies and ethos
- Making sure leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole academy
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Facilitating the sharing of good practice across academies
- Holding leaders to account for the implementation of this policy through the Standards and Curriculum Committee of the Board and its Local Governing Bodies.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy
- Monitoring academy-level absence data and reporting it to the Trust and governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students

- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Apply for fixed-penalty notices to be issued, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the academy
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers and the relevant Local Authority
- › Work actively with local partners to deliver targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr R Riley and can be contacted via 01420 472132 r.riley@oakmoor.hants.sch.uk.

3.4 Staff responsible for attendance in Trust academies

The Trust has a number of different role-profiles covering responsibility for attendance. Leaders will ensure that the following responsibilities are allocated to the relevant staff and reflected in their job descriptions:

- › Take calls/messages from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the relevant system
- › Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Academic and Pastoral Leader in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to academy staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with external partners to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.5 Class teachers and tutors

Class teachers and tutors are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis
- Using the correct codes
- Submitting this information using the agreed procedure within the first 10 minutes of a lesson

3.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

Make sure their child attends every day as expected, on time

- Call the academy to report their child's absence before 9:00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence. The message should advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day and that where this is not possible, their child attends before and after the appointment
- Inform leaders of any factors that may be affecting their child's attendance
- Discuss any planned absences in advance of making any arrangements
- Supply medical or other evidence when requested to account for their child's absence
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance (see 5.1)
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Take an active role in working with the academy staff to improve attendance where concerns are raised
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered by partners, including any attendance contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

3.7 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time, every time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Admission and Attendance registers

We will keep an admission and attendance register electronically and place all students onto this register.

The admission register must contain specific personal details of every student in the academy along with their starting date, information regarding parents and details of the school last attended. A student's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register in accordance with regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Data must be retained for six years from the data of entry.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. This information will be shared as required with the DfE and other agencies. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive by 8:30 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:35 and will be kept open until 09:00. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 14:05 and will be kept open until 14:35.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the academy of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by **9:00 AM**. This is done by calling the school attendance line [Option 1 on main school number] (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the academy has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where a continuous absence is more than 5 days or the same reason has been stated on more than 5 separate occasions, the school will ask for one piece of evidence in the following order:

1. Appointment card or Hospital appointment letter
2. Prescription
3. GP note
4. Care plans for chronic conditions
5. Letters from mental health professionals

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the academy is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, the parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the academy 24 hours in advance of the appointment.

Requesting leave. Please access the form freely available on our website here [Oakmoor Attendance website](#).

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the academy can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the L code. They will also be given a 10 minute detention.

- After the register has closed (9:00 AM) will be marked as unauthorised absence, using the U code. See Appendix 1
- Lateness to lessons
Students have five minutes to move between lessons
Five-minute transitions are identified by two bells.
If a student arrives to a lesson after the second bell, they are late.
To reinforce this expectation, we follow a tiered response system for lateness:
 - 1st time: 1 lesson in reflection
 - 2nd time: 2 lessons in reflection
 - 3rd time: 3 lessons in reflection
 - 4th time and beyond: 5 lessons in reflection

This system resets at the end of each half term.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the academy will:

- Follow up each day until a reason is provided via our automated text system or phone call.
- Unexplained absences over 3 consecutive days lead the school to initiate “child missing in education” procedures.
- 10 days of unexplained absence causes the student to be flagged as “at risk of missing”. Authorities will then visit the last known address.
- Students are deemed “persistently absent” if they miss over 10% of possible sessions of school per year for any reason. This negatively impacts academic attainment.
- If a student’s attendance declines below 90%, they will be put on stage 3 of our attendance intervention plan. Further declines could lead to non-authorisation of future absences or involvement of legal authorities.
- The School monitors attendance thoroughly and shares data with local authorities and the national Department for Education.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The academy informs parents/carers about their child’s attendance and absence levels on student termly written reports. Attendance can be monitored via our online MIS (Management Information System) Arbor.

In our academy we define attendance using the following scale:

Category	Percentage attendance
Excellent	100%
High	≥ 98%
Good	≥ 95% < 98%
Low	≥ 90% < 95%
Persistently absent	≥ 50% < 90%
Severely absent	< 50%

This can also be expressed in terms of days and lessons missed:

Category	Percentage attendance	Days missed	Lessons missed in 1 year	Lessons missed in 5 years
Excellent	100%	0	0	0
High	≥ 98%	4	20	100
Good	≥ 95% < 98%	10	50	250
Low	≥ 90% < 95%	19	95	475
Persistently absent	≥ 50% < 90%	29	145	725
Severely absent	< 50%	38	190	950

As a Trust, we consider attendance at school to be a parents' responsibility and we do not routinely reward attendance, as it is rarely within a student's control.

Where attendance falls below 95% we will:

Send a stage 2 letter home

Consider using a support plan for the student

Monitor attendance very carefully and challenge each unauthorised absence

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an event which cannot take place at any other time and is in the child's best interest to attend. Such absences are likely to be extremely rare, unavoidable and of the shortest possible duration. A family holiday is highly unlikely to fall within this definition.

The academy considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be discussed with the academy as soon as it is anticipated, before any arrangements are made and the leave of absence form submitted, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, accessible via the website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the academy will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the academy, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

- Any other absence which meets our definition of ‘exceptional circumstances’ above
- Any arrangements agreed with the academy for flexi-schooling, study leave or similar.
- Precise arrangements for part time timetables agreed between the academy, parents and the Local Authority appropriate.

5.2 Part time timetables

- In agreeing a part time timetable, leaders are agreeing to a student being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must be recorded as an absence in line with agreed coding.
- Part time timetables should
 - Have the agreement of the school and the parent the student normally lives with
 - Only be used in exceptional circumstances
 - Have a clear ambition to reintegrate to full time education including an end date and review dates
 - Be communicated to Children’s Social Care if the student has a social worker and in all cases to the relevant Local Authority.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The academy will ask the local authority to issue a fixed penalty notice to parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Penalty notices are issued per parent, per child.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £80 per child within 21 days or £160 per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days following the National Framework for issuing penalty notices.

If unpaid after 21 days this will result in a prosecution.

Two penalty notices may be issued for the same child for repeat offences within a three-year period.

If a third offence occurs within three years of the first offence, the third case will be presented straight to the Magistrate’s Court for prosecution, which can result in criminal records and fines up to £2,500.

Cases found guilty can show on parents’ future DBS certificate.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, who process the payment. ***This money does not come to the Trust or the academy.***

The Trust expects Headteachers to apply to their local authority, where appropriate, to issue a fixed penalty notice where a child has unauthorised absence of 10 sessions or more (five days) over a rolling ten-week period, which can span different terms or school years.

The decision on whether or not to request a penalty notice may take into account:

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Other powers available for local authorities and academies can include

- A Parenting Order which can mean parents or carers must attend a parenting class, counselling or guidance sessions and undertake any other actions directed by the court

- An Education Supervision Order which means a council will appoint a supervisor to help a parent or carer get their child into education
- Taking forward a prosecution as a last resort where all other routes have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate

6. Attendance monitoring

The Trust expects all its academies to use a management information system which provides information on absence and attendance patterns for individuals, groups and whole cohorts. This information is used to report to the Trust Board and Local Governing Bodies with an analysis of any trends, concerns or evidence of successful approaches to improving attendance.

6.1 Monitoring attendance

Academy leaders will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The academy will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Local Governing Body. The Trust will aggregate this data and report it to the Trust Board.

6.2 Analysing attendance

Academy leaders will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families. This will take into account any temporary part time timetables agreed with parents in order to meet their child's needs.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Aggregate academy-level data across the Trust to identify any common concerns or outstanding practice.

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The academy will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Academic and Pastoral Leaders and Tutors, and other academy leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The academy will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of students who the academy (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Use appropriate strategies set out in paragraph 4.6 of this policy.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the DfE is updated, and as a minimum **annually** by The Director of Standards and Effectiveness. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Board of Trustees through its Curriculum and Standards Committee.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes from August 19th 2024

Code	Full name	Description
The student is counted as present.		
/ or \	Present am or pm	Present in school during registration.
L	Late	Late arrival before the register has closed
The student is counted as present, at an Approved Educational Activity.		
B	Educated off Site	The student is at an off-site supervised educational activity approved by the school.
J	Interview	At a job interview, or interviewing with another educational establishment.
P	Sporting Activity (Approved)	Student is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.
V	Educational trip	A residential trip organised by the school or a supervised strictly educational trip arranged by an approved organisation.
W	Work Experience	A student in the final two years of compulsory education is attending work experience.
The student is counted as absent, authorised.		
C	Other Authorised Absence	Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence.

C1		Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2		Leave of absence for a student of compulsory school age subject to a part-time timetable
E	Excluded	If a student is excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked E, for up to the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period (referred to as 'suspensions' by the DfE from Autumn 2021) or permanent exclusion.
H	Family Holiday (Agreed)	A leave of absence for a family holiday is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	The student is absent due to a medical or dental appointment that could not be made outside of school hours.
R	Religious Observance	The student is absent for religious observance on a day designated by the religious body.
S	Study Leave	Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 students for public exams. Students should still be able to come into school to revise.
T	Traveller Absence	Used when Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) or New Travellers are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school.
I	Illness	This Illness code can be used for any form of illness, if you don't want to distinguish Covid-19 illness.
I01	Illness	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for students absent due to non-coronavirus related illness (unless the truthfulness of the claim is in question). This code should not be used for medical or dental appointments.
I02	Confirmed case of Covid-19	This code maps to the statutory mark of I. This is for students who have a confirmed case of coronavirus.
The student is counted as absent, unauthorised.		
G	Family Holiday (Not Agreed)	The Holiday was not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the headteacher.
N	No Reason	The reason for the absence has not been provided. If no reason for an absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be changed to O.
O	Unauthorised Absence	If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

U	Late (After Register Closes)	Schools should keep registers open for a reasonable amount of time, after which the student should be marked with a U.
These codes are not counted so will not affect attendance figures.		
D	Dual Registration	The student is registered at another school and attends it during this lesson e.g. students at a student referral unit. Schools should only record attendance and absences for sessions the student is scheduled to attend at their school.
X	Non-statutory school age absence	Sessions non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend. This code should only be used for early years students who have not yet passed the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The school is closed due to an unavoidable cause or the student is unable to travel to the school. It can also be used where the student is in custody (for less than four months). This code is collected for statistical purposes but does not contribute to your attendance figures.
Z	Student Not On Roll	This code can be used when setting up registers in advance of students joining. Schools must take attendance for students from the first day the student should be attending the school.
#	School Closed To Students	This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as if the school is used as a polling station.