



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy reviewed and agreed by: Teaching, Learning and Inclusion Committee
Date: September 2026
Next review: September 2028

This policy has been updated to reflect the Department for Education statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (updated 9 July 2026), the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the current national framework for attendance legal intervention.

1. Aims

We believe that regular school attendance is essential for children to achieve their potential, develop positive relationships and benefit fully from school life. Every pupil should attend school regularly and arrive on time unless they have a valid reason for absence.

This policy sets out how the Federation will promote good attendance, identify and address barriers to attendance, work with pupils and families, and use support and legal intervention where appropriate.

- Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality for all pupils.
- Promote the benefits of regular attendance through a positive whole-school culture.
- Monitor attendance carefully and act early when patterns of absence or lateness emerge.
- Reduce persistent and severe absence.
- Ensure pupils receive the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Build strong, respectful relationships with families and listen to the barriers affecting attendance.
- Work with other services where additional support is needed.
- Use legal intervention fairly, proportionately and in line with statutory requirements.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy should be read alongside the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Education Act 1996, including sections 7 and 444.
- Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended.
- Equality Act 2010.
- Children Act 1989 and relevant safeguarding duties.
- Working together to improve school attendance, Department for Education (updated 9 July 2026).
- Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools (updated 8 September 2025).
- Keeping children safe in education and other relevant statutory guidance.

The Federation will have regard to the current DfE statutory guidance when making decisions about attendance. The 2024 Regulations require schools to keep electronic admission and attendance registers and set out requirements concerning registration, information, amendments and deletion from the admission register.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Governing Board

- Promote the importance of attendance through the Federation's ethos and policies.
- Ensure that school leaders fulfil their statutory duties and comply with attendance law.
- Regularly review attendance information, including trends and the attendance of groups and individual pupils who may need additional support.
- Challenge and support school leaders where attendance is not improving.
- Ensure staff receive appropriate attendance training.

3.2 Executive Headteacher / Senior Attendance Champion

The Executive Headteacher is the Federation's Senior Attendance Champion.

- Lead the implementation and review of this policy.
- Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure attendance data is accurate, analysed and used to identify pupils and groups requiring support.
- Ensure appropriate support is put in place before formal or legal intervention wherever appropriate.
- Work with the Local Authority and other agencies where school-led support is not sufficient.
- Forward any penalty notice referrals in accordance with the national framework and Local Authority procedures.
- Ensure attendance is considered alongside safeguarding, SEND, health and wellbeing information.

Senior Attendance Champion contact: Executive Headteacher – Mrs A Wheatcroft. Day-to-day attendance contact: School Office.

3.3 Deputy Headteachers / Senior Leaders

- Support the Senior Attendance Champion with monitoring, communication and intervention.

- Review individual attendance patterns and punctuality.
- Ensure staff follow attendance procedures consistently.
- Coordinate support for pupils whose attendance is causing concern.

3.4 Class Teachers

- Take and submit attendance registers accurately at the required times.
- Be alert to changes in attendance, patterns of lateness and unusual absence patterns.
- Raise concerns promptly with the school office or Senior Attendance Champion.
- Promote the value of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Support agreed attendance actions and maintain communication with families where appropriate.

3.5 School Office / Administration Staff

- Maintain accurate attendance records and process attendance information.
- Record reasons for absence and follow up unexplained absence.
- Contact parents/carers where a pupil is absent without an explanation.
- Record late arrivals and departures accurately.
- Send attendance communications and maintain appropriate records.
- Support the Senior Attendance Champion with attendance monitoring and reporting.

3.6 Parents and carers

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and arrives on time.
- Notify the school on the first day of an unexpected absence and provide the reason.
- Provide information requested by the school where this is reasonable and necessary to understand an attendance concern.
- Make medical and dental appointments outside school hours where reasonably possible.
- Work with the school to address barriers to attendance.
- Inform the school promptly if their child is reluctant or anxious about attending.

3.7 Pupils

- Attend school every day that they are expected to attend and arrive on time.
- Speak to a trusted adult if something is making it difficult to attend.

3.8 Specific accountability

School	Attendance / accountability lead
Goring	Mrs A Wheatcroft, Executive Headteacher; Miss H Grey, Deputy Headteacher; Mrs K Mitchell, Deputy Headteacher; Mrs A Clegg, Safeguarding and Attendance Governor
Stoke Row	Mrs A Wheatcroft, Executive Headteacher; Mrs C Raaff, Senior Teacher; Mrs A Clegg, Safeguarding and Attendance Governor

4. Our approach to attendance

The Federation uses a graduated approach. Attendance concerns will not normally be treated as a purely punitive issue. We will first seek to understand the barriers to attendance and work with the pupil and family to remove them.

- Expect – communicate clearly that regular attendance is important and expected.
- Monitor – identify patterns and emerging concerns using accurate attendance and punctuality data.
- Listen and understand – speak with the pupil and family to understand the reasons for absence or lateness.
- Facilitate support – agree practical actions and involve appropriate internal or external support.
- Formalise support – where appropriate, use an attendance support plan or attendance contract and set clear review points.
- Enforce – where support has not worked, has not been engaged with, or is not appropriate, consider legal intervention in line with the National Framework and Local Authority procedures.

Attendance support will be proportionate and individualised. The Federation will consider the pupil's age, needs, circumstances, barriers to attendance and any relevant safeguarding, SEND, health or family information.

5. Promoting good attendance

We will promote attendance through a positive culture rather than presenting attendance as a competition between pupils. Recognition will focus on improvement, effort and attending as regularly as the pupil is able to, rather than rewarding perfect attendance in a way that could disadvantage pupils with health or other legitimate barriers.

- Clear communication of attendance expectations to pupils and families.
- Regular discussion of the benefits of attendance.
- Positive recognition of improved attendance and punctuality.
- Celebration of individual progress where appropriate.
- Early contact with families when attendance begins to decline.

6. Understanding and supporting barriers to attendance

Poor attendance can have many causes. The Federation will seek to understand the individual circumstances rather than assuming that absence is simply a choice by the pupil or family.

- physical or mental health needs
- SEND or disability
- anxiety, school avoidance or other emotional needs
- family circumstances, caring responsibilities or housing difficulties
- bullying, friendship difficulties or difficulties in school
- transport or practical barriers
- bereavement or other significant events
- safeguarding concerns or vulnerability to harm.

Where appropriate, we may work with the Local Authority, health services, social care, SEND services, early help and other relevant partners. Reasonable adjustments and adaptations will be considered where required by the Equality Act 2010 or to support a pupil's individual needs.

Where a pupil has a medical condition or disability affecting attendance, the Federation will work with the pupil, parents/carers and relevant professionals in accordance with the school's medical conditions and SEND arrangements.

7. Attendance and safeguarding

Attendance is a safeguarding matter. Unexplained, prolonged or deteriorating attendance may be a sign that a child is experiencing difficulty or is at risk of harm. Attendance concerns will therefore be considered alongside wider safeguarding information.

- Unexplained absence will be followed up promptly.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed and safeguarding procedures will be followed.
- The school will follow its Children Missing Education procedures where a pupil's whereabouts or educational provision cannot be established.
- Where a pupil has a social worker or is otherwise known to children's social care, relevant attendance information will be shared in accordance with safeguarding arrangements.

8. Attendance register

The Federation will keep an electronic attendance register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The register will be taken at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session.

School	Expected arrival	Register taken	Register closes
Goring	8.50am	9.00am	9.20am
Stoke Row	8.45am	8.55am	9.15am

A pupil arriving after the start of the session but before the register closes will be recorded as late using the appropriate national attendance code. A pupil arriving after the register closes will normally be recorded as absent for that session using the appropriate national code.

The Federation will use the national attendance and absence codes and will ensure staff responsible for registration understand their correct use.

9. Unplanned absence

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of an unexpected absence and give the reason for the absence.

School	Parent/carer notification requested by
Goring	9.00am
Stoke Row	8.55am

If no explanation has been received, the school will contact the parent/carer on the first day of absence. If contact cannot be established, the school will follow its safeguarding and Children Missing Education procedures as appropriate.

Parents/carers should continue to provide updates where an absence lasts more than one day.

10. Illness and medical evidence

Illness will normally be recorded as authorised absence where the school has been informed that the pupil is unable to attend because of illness. The Federation will not routinely require medical evidence for individual days of illness.

Where there are genuine and reasonable concerns about the reason for absence, or where illness-related absence is prolonged or forms a repeated pattern, the school may request reasonable evidence and will discuss the situation with the family. The aim will be to understand the barrier and support the pupil's return to regular attendance.

Medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside school hours where reasonably possible. Where an appointment must take place during school time, parents/carers should notify the school in advance and the pupil should attend school before and/or after the appointment where this is reasonably possible.

11. Planned absence and leave of absence

If parents/carers believe that there may be exceptional circumstances which necessitate leave of absence, they must inform the school in advance. The request should explain the reason for the absence and, where relevant, provide supporting information.

Schools cannot authorise term-time holidays simply because a family wishes to take a holiday. Holidays for the purpose of leisure or recreation do not meet the criteria for exceptional circumstances.

Where a request is made for exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher will consider the individual circumstances and relevant facts of the request.

Where leave is not granted but the pupil does not attend, the absence will normally be recorded as unauthorised and may contribute to legal intervention where the relevant threshold is met.

Requests for leave connected with religious observance, illness, medical appointments, family emergencies or other circumstances will be considered and coded in accordance with the national attendance guidance and regulations.

12. Persistent absence

A pupil is persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of their possible sessions. Persistent absence is a serious concern because repeated absence can significantly affect a pupil's education and wellbeing.

The Federation will identify pupils who are persistently absent, or at risk of becoming persistently absent, and will seek to understand the reasons for the absence. We will provide targeted support and review its effectiveness.

- Review attendance regularly and identify pupils approaching or within the persistent absence category.
- Discuss attendance with the pupil and family and identify barriers.
- Agree actions, responsibilities and review dates.
- Involve other services where school-led support is insufficient.
- Use formal attendance support or legal intervention where appropriate.

13. Severe absence

A pupil is severely absent when they miss 50% or more of their possible sessions. Severe absence requires an intensive and individualised response.

Where a pupil is severely absent, the Federation will:

- make prompt contact with the pupil and family;
- identify and address the barriers to attendance;
- consider safeguarding, SEND, health and wider family circumstances;
- develop an individual attendance plan with clear actions and review dates;
- seek multi-agency support where appropriate;
- work with the Local Authority where additional statutory or specialist intervention is required.

Attendance targets will be realistic and individualised. There is no automatic requirement for every pupil to reach a fixed percentage such as 96%; the focus is on sustained improvement and ensuring the pupil attends as regularly as they are able to.

14. Attendance data, monitoring and review

Attendance is monitored throughout the year. The Federation will use attendance data to identify individual pupils, groups and patterns that require attention and to evaluate whether attendance strategies are effective.

- Review attendance and punctuality regularly at whole-school and individual-pupil level.
- Analyse persistent and severe absence and pupils at risk of reaching these categories.

- Consider patterns by relevant pupil groups and characteristics, while protecting confidentiality.
- Identify recurring absence reasons and attendance codes.
- Use local, regional and national information where appropriate to understand performance.
- Report attendance information to governors and use it to inform school improvement priorities.
- Review the impact of interventions and adjust them where they are not improving attendance.

15. Part-time and reduced timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. A part-time or reduced timetable will only be used in exceptional circumstances, where it is in the pupil's best interests and where it is lawful and appropriate.

Any reduced timetable will be:

- temporary and time-limited;
- agreed with the parent/carer and relevant professionals where appropriate;
- supported by a clear plan and review date;
- designed to increase attendance towards full-time education as soon as reasonably possible;
- recorded using the appropriate national attendance code and notified to the Local Authority in accordance with current requirements.

16. Legal intervention and penalty notices

The Federation will seek to work with families and remove barriers before legal intervention wherever appropriate. However, regular attendance is a legal responsibility and the Federation may work with Oxfordshire County Council's attendance service where legal intervention is necessary.

A penalty notice may be considered where the national threshold is met and the Local Authority considers that a penalty notice is an appropriate intervention. The national threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The threshold can be met through a combination of unauthorised absence and/or unauthorised term-time holiday, subject to the national framework.

Before a penalty notice is requested, the school and Local Authority will consider the individual circumstances, the effectiveness of support already offered, whether a Notice to Improve is appropriate and whether another form of legal intervention would be more suitable.

Penalty notice amounts under the national framework are:

Circumstance	Amount and payment period
First penalty notice	£80 if paid within 21 days; £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second penalty notice for the same parent in respect of the same pupil within 3 years	£160, payable within 28 days.

After two penalty notices in the relevant 3-year period	A further penalty notice cannot be issued within that period; another legal intervention may be considered.
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Where appropriate, a Notice to Improve may be used to give a parent/carer a final opportunity to engage with support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued. A Notice to Improve will normally set out the reasons for concern, the support available, the improvement expected and the period over which improvement will be assessed.

Failure to pay a penalty notice within the prescribed period may result in further legal action, including prosecution, in accordance with Local Authority procedures.

17. Other legal interventions

Depending on the circumstances, the Local Authority may consider other legal interventions, including prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or an Education Supervision Order. The Federation will provide appropriate information and evidence to the Local Authority when requested.

Legal intervention will be proportionate and will take account of the circumstances of the pupil and family, previous support, safeguarding concerns and the reasons for absence.

18. Children missing education and admission register

The Federation will maintain an accurate admission register and follow the statutory requirements governing the addition and deletion of pupil names.

- Pupil names will be added to the admission register in accordance with the 2024 Regulations.
- The Federation will make required returns to the Local Authority when pupils join or leave the admission register outside standard transition arrangements.
- Names will only be deleted where a lawful ground for deletion is met and all required enquiries and notifications have been completed.
- Where a pupil's whereabouts or educational provision cannot be established, the Federation will follow its Children Missing Education procedures and safeguarding arrangements.
- The Federation will not remove pupils from the register simply because their attendance is poor.

Admission and attendance registers are legal records. The Federation will retain them for the statutory period and preserve information about amendments in accordance with the 2024 Regulations and data protection requirements.

19. Communication with families

The Federation will communicate clearly and respectfully with parents/carers about attendance. Information will explain why regular attendance matters, the support available and the possible consequences of continued unauthorised absence.

Where attendance is a concern, the school will aim to discuss the issue with the family before moving to formal action, unless immediate safeguarding or legal action is appropriate.

20. Equality, SEND and reasonable adjustments

The Federation will apply this policy fairly and consistently while recognising that equal treatment does not always mean identical treatment. We will consider the needs and circumstances of individual pupils and make reasonable adjustments where required.

Attendance concerns involving pupils with SEND, disabilities, physical or mental health needs, or other protected characteristics will be considered carefully. Support and intervention will not penalise a pupil for a disability-related barrier to attendance.

21. Related policies and documents

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- SEND Policy / SEND Information Report
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Exclusion / Suspension Policy
- Alternative Provision Policy
- Elective Home Education information and procedures
- Data Protection / Privacy Notice.

22. Monitoring and review

The Governing Board will review this policy regularly and at least in line with the Federation's policy review cycle. The policy will be updated when statutory guidance, regulations or Local Authority procedures change.

Attendance information will be reviewed regularly by school leaders and governors to ensure that the Federation's approach is effective and that pupils and families receive appropriate support.

Appendix 1 – Key attendance principles for staff

Situation	Principle
Illness	Usually authorised when the school has been informed; medical evidence is not routinely required.
Medical/dental appointment	Authorised where appropriate; arrange outside school hours where reasonably possible and minimise time away from school.
Late before register closes	Record as late using the appropriate national code.
Arrival after register closes	Normally record as an absence for that session using the appropriate national code.
Term-time holiday	Not normally authorised; consider legal intervention where the national threshold is met.
Exceptional circumstances	Consider individually; do not apply an automatic blanket refusal.
Persistent absence	10% or more of possible sessions missed; targeted support required.
Severe absence	50% or more of possible sessions missed; intensive, individualised and often multi-agency support required.
Safeguarding concern	Consider attendance alongside safeguarding information and follow safeguarding procedures.
Reduced timetable	Exceptional, temporary, planned, time-limited and aimed at returning to full-time education.

Appendix 2 – Attendance contacts

Role	Name / contact
Senior Attendance Champion	Mrs A Wheatcroft, Executive Headteacher
Day-to-day attendance contact	School Office
Safeguarding and Attendance Governor	Mrs A Clegg
Oxfordshire County Council Attendance Team	01865 323513 / attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Policy note

This policy has been drafted against the DfE statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance, updated 9 July 2026, and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Local Authority procedures should be followed where they provide the operational process for referrals, penalty notices and other legal interventions.