



Attendance Policy

Vision Statement

Our Ospringe School family's Christian Ethos of Nurture-Grow-Succeed is underpinned by Jesus' Parable of the Mustard Seed. We nurture a joyful, family-centred community where all feel rooted, valued and inspired. Through play and exploration, we foster curiosity, confidence and a lifelong love of learning. Our strong, effective curriculum embraces the richness of Faversham and the wider world. We empower our children to become stewards of creation and be vocal advocates for themselves and others. We create a safe, warm, inclusive nest in our nurturing branches, where children grow in kindness, resilience and wonder ready to flourish as compassionate individuals.



Our Christian Values

Compassion
Forgiveness
Equality
Honesty
Perseverance
Courage

Policy Review

Last Review
September 2026

Approved by GB
September 2026

Next Review Due
September 2027

Purpose of the policy

1. A clear and uniform attendance policy will be beneficial to both users and providers to create an environment in which children can grow and flourish.
2. It is important to acknowledge that schools that achieve high levels of attendance will be more able to ensure that their pupils will reach their true academic and developmental potential.
3. To improve overall attendance, and reduce unauthorised absences.
4. To work within a framework, with defined roles and responsibilities, and aim to improve attendance.
5. To support, advise and give guidance to parents and pupils, with positive and consistent communication between home and school.
6. To work effectively with other agencies, in particular the Kent Pru and Attendance Service (KPAS) attendance officer to promote good attendance.

Whole School Attendance policy

1. Ospringe School recognises that maximum attendance is a vital component in our vision to provide a nurturing environment that enables all members of our community to grow and succeed.
2. We will work to ensure maximum attendance by all of our pupils.
3. We will work to identify any problems that may impede full attendance, and assist in addressing these issues.
4. We will work in close collaboration with parents to achieve our aim of 100% attendance.
5. We will ensure that all parents are aware of and understand this policy.
6. We will ensure that parents are aware that it is ultimately their responsibility to ensure their children attend, as laid down by statutory guidelines.
7. We recognise that pupils are individuals and we will support them to achieve good attendance.
8. We will address attendance issues with the aim of achieving both county and national targets.

Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

- Implementation of this policy at school level
- Undertaking the monitoring of school attendance data
- Communicates attendance concerns with parents or carers regarding low level or regular attendance issues.
- Meet with parents when there are serious concerns in regards to attendance.

- Oversee the coding to make sure accurate codes are being used
- Work with the KPAS Attendance Officer to tackle persistent absence
- Sends appropriate letters to parents or carers in regards to their child's attendance.
- Regularly communicates class attendance with parents.
- If required, refers parents onto the local authority for either a penalty charge notice or referral to the KPAS Attendance Officer for persistent attendance issues.
- Undertake home visits with a second member of SLT if required.

Class Teacher

- Submits attendance registers on a daily basis in a timely manner
- Communicates any concerns in regards to a child's attendance to Headteacher

Admin Staff

- Monitors registers every day and contacts families that have not informed the school of a child's absence.
- Undertake morning calling responsibilities if the school have not been made aware of a child's absence
- Inform Headteacher if they cannot contact the family of the child who is absent
- Amending coding and sub-coding when a child is not present.

Board of Governors

- Request attendance information (whole school, not individual pupils)
- Oversee the school's attendance policy and make sure this is being implemented
- Support the school in improving school attendance where applicable.

Parents/Carer

- Provide the school with an appropriate reason as to why a child or children are not at school. This needs to be by 8.50am. This needs to be daily if the child or children are off multiple days.
- Provide medical evidence to the school if this has been requested
- Make sure children are at school by 8:50am.

Implementation

Registration

1. The class teacher will accurately register pupils, twice a day. This will occur before the start of the morning session at 8.50am and afternoon sessions (1.00pm for Year R, 1 and 2. 1.15pm for Years 3-6)

2. Late attendance – For pupils who arrive after the register has been taken but before the register has been closed, the register will be marked 'L'. If a pupil arrives after the register has been closed at 9.00am, the absence becomes unauthorised and will be marked as 'U'. Parents will be made aware of the time the register closes. Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents. This may lead to a referral to; Early Help and Preventative Services, Attendance and Inclusion Services or could provide grounds for prosecution/penalty notice request.
3. Where a child is not present for registration, the parent/carer should inform the school why the child is not attending school by 8.50am on each morning that the child is absent. It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school. Please note, where no contact has been made the absence will automatically be marked as an 'N' code (No reason provided) and will be changed to an O code if no reason has been provided by the end of the day.
4. If a child is absent and no reason has been provided the school will attempt to contact parent/carers by text before 9:30am. If the parent/carer has still not made contact by 10am the school will attempt to contact parent/carers by phone or via home visit. If the person being home visited is not in, a slip will be put through the door informing the family of the school's visit and asking for contact to be made.
5. Should the school have any concerns with regard to children's safety, then the Local Authority, Social Services or the Police may be informed at any stage of the absence.
6. Parents/carers should be aware that 10 unauthorised sessions of absence may lead to a referral for a penalty notice, a referral to the Local Authority for further action and possible prosecution or a referral to Early Help and Preventative Services for additional support.
7. Where reasons are provided for absence it is important to note that it is the school that continues to have the right to authorise the absence and not the parent/carer. In some circumstances the school may request medical evidence (medication boxes, prescriptions, Dr notes, appointment cards etc) from parents in order to authorise absence due to illness.
8. Explanations for absence from school are to be provided by parents/carers on the day of absence. Where this does not occur, or the reason provided is considered to be unsatisfactory, then the absence will be marked as unauthorised, using the 'O' code.

Leave of Absence

1. Any child who has 5 days leave of absence (10 sessions) within 100 school sessions, without the Headteacher's permission, may be referred to the Local Authority for a fixed penalty notice request. It is important to acknowledge that

parents/carers have no legal right to remove children from school for family holidays. Parents must seek permission from the Headteacher to remove their child for a leave of absence, in writing, giving a reason for their application.

2. Where possible, application for a leave of absence should be made at least 1 month prior to the date of departure.
3. Application for leave of absence will only be granted for very specific exceptional circumstances that the Governors and Headteacher deem relevant. Examples of exceptional circumstances could include:
 - Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
 - Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
 - The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
4. Where requests for a leave of absence are declined parents will be notified within 5 school days of the request being received.
5. A leave of absence will not be authorised retrospectively.
6. Absence is not authorised as a principle. Holiday/leave of absence which has been taken without authorisation, will be marked as an unauthorised absence. Parents should be aware that this might lead to the issuing of a Penalty Notice. This information would be communicated direct to parents in the form of a letter. The following are examples of absence that will not be authorised:
 - Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
 - Absence of siblings if one child is ill
 - Oversleeping
 - Inadequate clothing/uniform
 - Confusion over school dates
 - Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
 - Child's/family birthday
 - Shopping trip
 - Family Holidays
 - Parental illness

Unplanned medical absence

1. All illnesses will be marked as authorised unless the school has a concern about the authenticity of the illness

2. If in doubt about the child's illness (for example if there have been sporadic illnesses throughout the year and a child's attendance percentage is at risk of dropping to below 90%) we will ask to see medical evidence; for example, a doctor's note, prescription or an appointment card. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
3. If we are not satisfied about the illness, it will be marked as unauthorised and the parent or carer will be made aware.
4. We understand that children do get sick and you cannot always provide medical evidence and this is taken into consideration.
5. Some children may need to have medical appointments in school time that cannot be avoided and this is understandable. However, we encourage all parents to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours if possible. If this is not possible the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount necessary.

Sanctions available to school where attendance does not improve

In the first instance, where it is found that attendance is falling below, a letter will be sent out or an informal conversation with the parent/s or carers will be had. If attendance continues to not improve parent/s or carers will be invited in for an attendance improvement meeting, which is a more formal meeting with the Headteacher.

If attendance does not improve after the attendance improvement meeting a Notice to Improve letter will be sent. This letter will give the family a period of 20 days to improve attendance. If attendance is still not improved after this a request for a penalty notice or involvement from the SLO will be requested.

1. Any parent who takes a child out of school for term-time leave of 10 or more sessions during any 100 possible school sessions, not authorised by the school, may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice. The unauthorised term-time leave does not have to be consecutive for a parent to receive a Penalty Notice.
2. Previously where Penalty Notices were imposed, the regulations stated that the penalty would be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. However, from August 2024 penalty notices will be changing and this is detailed below. These rates remain the same in September 2026.
 - The first penalty notice issued to the parent for a child will be charged at £80 per parent if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between days 22 and 28.
 - Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first offence, the second notice is

charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days. There is no reduced sum available in this instance.

- When a third or subsequent period of unauthorised absence occurs during a 3 rolling year period and the school wish legal action to be considered, a penalty notice request should be made as usual including supporting documentation. Information regarding previous penalty notices should be provided if known.
 - Kent County Council will not issue a penalty notice but will contact the Headteacher to request additional evidence. The matter will be considered for prosecution via the Single Justice Procedure. This process is only to be used for absence due to term-time holidays or unauthorised leave of absence. For instances where 2 penalty notices have been issued within a 3- year period for parentally condoned absence or persistent lateness after the register has closed, the school must consult with their Kent County Council School Liaison Officer.
3. Where absences continue to be unauthorised, referral can be made to the Local Authority which may include:
- Attendance improvement meetings
 - Home visits
 - Liaison with other agencies
 - Fast track to prosecution

Role of the Local Authority

1. Should the school have ongoing concerns about a pupil's attendance, parents will be asked to attend a meeting in school to discuss the school's concerns and to set targets together to improve attendance. Should these school's concerns continue – that is if these targets are not reached the school will look to enlist the help of the Local Authority to provide extra support in improving attendance through the involvement of Early Help and Preventative Services or Attendance and Inclusion services.
2. Where it is appropriate the school can request that the Local Authority issue a penalty notice following consultation.
3. As part of the Local Authority, Early Help and Preventative services can provide additional support to families of pupils with poor attendance and, where necessary, will work in a multi-agency environment, which may include the SLO, Social Services, Early Help, School Nursing Team, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and other agencies where appropriate.

Children Missing in Education (CME)

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head Teacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, school will follow Local Authority guidance, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.