Attendance Policy

The Corporation of Oundle School includes both Oundle School, a boarding and day School for pupils aged 11 – 18 and Laxton Junior School, a day School for pupils aged 4 - 11. This policy applies solely to Laxton Junior School.

Aims and Introduction

Laxton Junior School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents and carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when School is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. It is our belief that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is a positive attitude towards school. With this in mind, we strive to ensure Laxton Junior School is a happy, safe and rewarding experience for all children.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements for the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

This document is drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Amendments 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- To age, ability and aptitude, and
- To any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

Absence from school is a safeguarding concern. A student may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body delegates responsibility for the monitoring of attendance to the Head.

Attendance links to safeguarding and, as such, the governor with responsibility for safeguarding is informed of any individual concerns.

The Head

The Head is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data, responding to concerns and reporting it to Governors on a termly basis.

The Head also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.

The Deputy Head

The Deputy Head is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance data at the school and at individual pupil level
- Liaising with Form Teachers and the School Administrators in identifying concerns and building a picture of understanding about individual children's attendance
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the Head
- Working with local authority partners to tackle persistent absence
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents and Form Teachers to discuss attendance issues

Form Teachers

Form Teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance daily, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school offices via iSAMS
- Following up absences in the appropriate way (with the School Office or Deputy Head)
- Discussing lateness and attendance with parents/carers in the first instances
- Reporting any concern about a child's absence or welfare to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Office Staff

Office Staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system
- Recording any late pupils coming through the Front Office and to seek clarification from parents for their reason for being late
- Completing the daily DfE attendance record form

School Procedures

Attendance Register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register and all pupils must be placed on this register. The attendance register will be taken during Form Time in the morning and after lunch. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Attending a medical appointment

- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

An electronic registration system is used through our data management system, iSAMS.

Morning registration takes place during morning Form Time. The afternoon register will be taken during the first 15 minutes of Period 6.

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register is preserved. Attendance data is not deleted or archived.

Lateness and Punctuality

Pupils who arrive after 8.30am must enter via the main entrance. Office staff will register the child and accompany them to their classroom where appropriate. It will be the parent/carer's responsibility to explain the reasons for lateness.

Repeated lateness at the beginning of the school day could be a safeguarding concern and will be monitored by the Deputy Head and Designated Safeguarding Lead.

Pursuing Lateness:

- Office staff will have responsibility for collating lists of pupils arriving late
- Lateness is monitored daily and reviewed weekly
- If a child has regular lateness parents/carers will be contacted via the Form Tutor
- If punctuality does not improve, parents/carers will be contacted by the Deputy Head to explore how the parents will improve the situation and, if necessary, what support the School can provide in facilitating this
- On the rare occasion that punctuality still does not improve, parents will be invited to a meeting with the Head and Deputy Head
- If after extensive support from the school, the parents do not ensure that punctuality is at an acceptable standard, a referral will be made to the Local Authority Educational Inclusion Manager

Unplanned Absence

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of any unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health.

Absences due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate forms of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

Medical or Dental Appointments

Medical and dental appointments are recorded as authorised absences; advance notice is required for these absences, which should be submitted to the Head, either directly or via the School office or Form Teacher.

We advise that medical and dental appointments are taken outside of school hours but understand that this is not always possible. Pupils should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for Other Absences

Applications for other types of absence in term time, including long term absences, must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether we can authorise such absences can be found below. Any request for absence should be made to the Head, either directly or via the School office or Form Teacher. The Head will then decide whether to authorise the absence.

Unexplained Absences

The school will follow up any unexplained absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is authorised or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

Reporting to Parents

Attendance is reported to parents bi-annually through the written reports.

Following Up Absences

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend school, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason by the School Administrator phoning the parent/carer and following up via email if required.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether an absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct code to use

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

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 or carer.

Valid reasons for authorised absences may include, but are not limited to:

- Illness and medical/dentist appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- A parent returning from a tour of duty
- The death of a relative
- Attending the wedding or funeral of a close relative

Only the Head can authorise an absence. 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, it will not be an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent/carer.

Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Requesting Approval for Term-Time 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 where a parent/carer may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, for example, a special event.

Term time absence requests should be made in writing (via email or letter) to the Head.

Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

Any authorised absence is at the Head's discretion. The Head will review any absence request individually, taking into consideration:

- the time of year for the proposed absence
- if the absence is close to any assessment or exam dates
- the child's overall attendance record
- any holidays already taken in the school year
- the age and stage of education of the child
- the ability of the child to catch up the learning that they have missed
- the reason why parents are taking the time off during term-time

While absence may be granted for absence during term-time, it is entirely the Head's decision and is not a parental right.

Attendance Monitoring

The Deputy Head and School Administrator monitor pupil absence on a daily, weekly, termly and annual basis. Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent unexpectedly (see section 3.3).

If a pupil's attendance drops below 95% the Deputy Head may contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this and support an increase in attendance.

If after contacting and working closely with parents/carers a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team. Attendance can be a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be followed in accordance to our Safeguarding Policy.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level attendance data is used for internal purposes for example:

- To track the attendance of individual pupils
- To identify cause for concerns
- To monitor and evaluate pupils being identified as being in need of intervention and support
- To ensure the welfare of the child is paramount

Repeated Unauthorised and/or Unexplained Absences

The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised/unexplained absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised and/or unexplained absences, the parents or carers will be asked to meet with the Head and/or Deputy and discuss the problem.

If after extensive support from the school, the parents do not ensure that attendance improves to an acceptable standard, the school may seek the support of the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team. Attendance can be a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be followed in accordance to our Safeguarding Policy.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Laxton Junior School will work alongside parents/carers and pupils to improve individual attendance. To promote attendance across the school we:

- Have high expectations and a clear vision for attendance underpinned by our Values and Mission
- Ensure staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe
- Convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes
- Ensure Governors have an accurate view of school attendance
- Build relationships with staff, pupils and families in order to secure trust and engagement and make sure that the School is a welcoming and positive setting
- Communicate openly and honestly with staff, pupils and families about their expectations of school life
- Liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance
- Model respectful relationships and appropriate communication
- Use clear and consistently applied systems and processes to review attendance
- Make sure escalation procedures to address absences are initiated proactively
- Ensure every member of staff knows and understands their responsibilities linked to attendance
- Have robust school systems to provide useful data at cohort, group and individual pupil level to give an accurate view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns amongst groups
- Deliver intervention in a targeted way
- Monitor and analyse attendance data regularly
- Use Pastoral and Educational Support staff who are skilled in supporting pupils and their families to identify and overcome barriers to attendance
- Create wellbeing action plans in partnership with families and other agencies that may be supporting families
- Monitor the impact of any intervention, making adjustments where necessary

Linked Policies

Linked policies include:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Missing from Education Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

Reviewer	SMC
Post of Reviewer	Deputy Head
Review Date	Michaelmas 2021
Reviewed and filed with both Schools	Lent 2021
Next Review (max 3 years)	Michaelmas 2023

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meanings

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Educated Off Site	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual Registration	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Authorised Absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Family holiday (Agreed)	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
!	Covid self-isolating	Pupil is self-isolating due to being a close contact, awaiting PCR test, travel requirement etc
>	Covid related illness	Pupil has tested positive for Covid-19

T	Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised Absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Music Activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised music activity approved by the school
F	On Site Activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised activity approved by the school on site
Other		
X	Non-Compulsory School Age Absence	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Enforced Closure	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
£	Pupil Not Yet On Roll	A pupil is not yet on roll at the school
A	Late Return/Early Departure	Not Relevant for LJS
K	CA Activity	Not Relevant for LJS
Z	CCF Activity	Not Relevant for LJS
L	Leave Out	Not Relevant for LJS
Q	Pupil Withdrawn from Normal Lesson	Pupil has been withdrawn from lessons for another purpose eg: additional English lesson

Appendix 2: Recording attendance in relation to Covid-19 during the 2021-2022 academic year

Attendance expectations
Attendance is mandatory. The usual rules on attendance continue to apply, including:
- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
- the duty on local authorities to put in place arrangements for identifying, and to follow up with, children missing education

Not attending in circumstances relating to Covid-19
This category must be used to record sessions that take place in the 2021 to 2022 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:
- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from Public Health England (PHE), or its successor UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19

This category must only be used to record where a pupil is not attending for the reasons set out above. It should not be used to record any other type of non-attendance or absence - for example, where a parent or pupil is anxious about attending school because of COVID-19.

Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances relating to Covid-19' could apply
Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they have symptoms or confirmed Covid-19
Pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test, should self-isolate and get a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.

If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well, they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I (illness). Code ! should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.

If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with public health guidance. Code ! should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19
Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to self-isolate. They should instead get a PCR test, and should only self-isolate if they test positive. If they do test positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine
As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, the school should use code ! in the register.

Pupils who are self-isolating but who have not had a PCR test

In line with public health advice, pupils with symptoms must self-isolate and schools should strongly encourage pupils to take a PCR test. Where the pupil is unable to take a PCR test, the school should record the pupil as code ! in the register.

Schools should follow up with families if they are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. Schools can request supporting evidence from the family. Where the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence, they may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes.

Remote Education

If a pupil is not attending school because their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19, Laxton Junior School will offer them access to remote education via Teams. We will keep a record of, and monitor engagement with, this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.