ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance Policy: June 2026
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1. Strategy Alignment Foreword

This Attendance Policy operationalises Oasis Community Learning's National Attendance Strategy (2026–2029). It sets out clear, consistent and ethical expectations for attendance practice across all Oasis academies, grounded in safeguarding, the Oasis ethos of inclusion and relational practice, while maintaining clarity around statutory responsibilities and proportionate escalation.

Our vision is for community – a place where everyone is included, making a contribution and reaching their God-given potential. For this to happen, we must do all we can to ensure every pupil attends school every day.

Persistent absence is treated as a primary safeguarding risk indicator. Academies are expected to act early, responding to patterns of declining attendance and barriers to engagement rather than waiting for statutory thresholds to be crossed. Supportive partnership with families is prioritised, alongside clear accountability where attendance does not improve.

This policy should be read alongside the National Attendance Strategy, Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy and relevant Department for Education guidance. All academies are expected to implement this policy in full and align their attendance practice accordingly.

2. Ethos and Purpose

OCL's attendance policy holds tight to the Oasis vision – for community where everyone is included and empowered to reach their potential.

Our ethos is a statement of who we are and it an expression of our character. Rooted in the story and beliefs of Oasis, we describe our ethos through a particular set of values that inform and provide the lens on everything we do:

- A passion to include.
- A desire to treat people equally respecting differences.
- A commitment to open, healthy relationships.
- A deep sense of hope that things can change and be transformed.
- A sense of perseverance to keep going for the long haul.

These values underpin all we do with attendance – forging powerful and trusting relationships, leaving no stone unturned in ensuring students and families are supported, and having a relentless drive in all we do. OCL expects that attendance of pupils, both in primary and secondary phase, is at least in line with the national average. To reach this goal we:

- Believe all our pupils and families are precious and we prioritise social inclusion and integration in all we do.
- Recognise that barriers to attendance should be met with professional curiosity, love and support.

- Act early to support vulnerable attenders with intervention and action.
- Model and set high aspirations and expectations for every pupil and member of staff.
- Provide opportunities and experiences for all our pupils, as well as their wider families giving advantage to those being systemically disadvantaged.
- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent and severely absent pupils.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Use data smartly to ensure interventions are timely.

This policy exists to ensure that attendance practice across Oasis academies is consistent, ethical, proportionate and relational, enabling all pupils to access the education to which they are entitled.

3. Legal Context and Parental Responsibility

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Academies have a duty to promote attendance, identify risk early, take appropriate safeguarding action, and work with families, local authorities and partner agencies to secure regular attendance.

We will ensure that parents and carers know the importance of effective attendance for their child. We will do all we can to remove the barriers that stop some pupils from attending and work with parents to overcome obstacles. We will support and work with families and the community to promote a positive culture so that pupils want to attend school.

The policy should be read alongside the Department for Education guidance Document Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and the school's Behaviour policy which sets out the protocols for the day-to-day management of behaviour, including attendance and punctuality.

4. Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

All pupils are expected to attend every day when the academy is open unless absence is unavoidable because of illness or other exceptional circumstances. OCL defines good attendance as 97% or above – which equates to no more than 5 days off in the school year.

Every day missed has a cumulative impact on educational outcomes. Persistent lateness and irregular attendance may indicate barriers to engagement and will be addressed through early intervention.

5. Requesting Leave of Absence

Only exceptional circumstances warrant the granting of a leave of absence during term time.

The Principal will consider each request individually, taking account of the specific facts and circumstances of the application, the pupil's attendance history, safeguarding considerations, and any relevant contextual factors.

Where a leave of absence is granted, it is the responsibility of the Principal to determine the length of the authorised absence.

As leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, permission will not be granted for the purpose of a family holiday. Birthdays are not a valid reason for absence.

Where a leave of absence is not authorised, any absence taken will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in further action in line with this policy.

6. Academy Attendance Register and Coding

The school day starts at 8.50am and ends at 3.25pm. Morning registers close at 9.00am – 30 minutes after the start of the academy day.

All academies must maintain an accurate electronic attendance register using Bromcom. Registers must be completed at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendments to the attendance register must include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the change, the date of the amendment and the name of the person making the change.

Attendance codes must be applied accurately and consistently in line with statutory guidance. Misuse or delay in coding may obscure safeguarding concerns and will be challenged.

7. First-Day Response and Unexplained Absence

If a pupil is unexpectedly absent, academies must take immediate action to establish the pupil's whereabouts and welfare. Parents are expected to notify the academy on the first day of absence by 8.00am – by phoning the academy, emailing the attendance team or through the MCAS app.

The academy will ensure that there are no unexplained absences and that all codes are updated within 5 working days of the initial absence.

Where no contact has been received, same-day follow-up is required. This should take place as early as possible, and no later than 10.30am. Additional staff should be deployed where possible to make early phone calls. For vulnerable pupils, there will also be a home visit. Principals must not accept anything short of definitive confirmation of a pupil's whereabouts.

Absence due to illness will initially be authorised unless the school has a genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. If the school is not satisfied with the reason provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Medical evidence will be required at two points: a) the fourth day of an illness and b) **any** absences once a pupil has reached a total of 10 days off in the school year (10 days off means attendance for the year can be no higher than 95%). Where concerns persist, academies may require medical evidence to authorise further absence - this can be in the form of a copy or photo of appointment card or letter of attendance from the hospital.

Any pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the L code. Any pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

8. Medical and Dental Appointments

Parents are encouraged to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours wherever possible. If this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time only. Very few appointments should require a full day of absence. Pupils should wear their school uniform and try to be in school before and after the appointment whenever possible.

School must be notified of planned appointments as far as possible in advance.
Evidence of the appointment should be provided.

9. Attendance and Safeguarding

Attendance is a safeguarding issue. Persistent, unexplained or patterned absence may indicate unmet need, neglect or abuse. Attendance practice must be closely aligned with safeguarding procedures and Children Missing Education protocols. There must be a close working relationship between attendance and safeguarding teams.

If a child is unexpectedly absent (or there are patterns of regular absence), all efforts must be made to assure their whereabouts and welfare as quickly as possible. Often this will be achieved via a call home but sometimes this may require a home visit. Where a child is vulnerable, schools will make a first day home visit and follow the safeguarding policy that confirms the child's whereabouts. Principals must not accept anything short

of a definitive confirmation of the child's whereabouts. All other pupils should receive a home visit on the third day of an unexplained absence.

Home visits should continue for as long as the pupil is absent from school. The duration of time between visits will be determined by the risk and vulnerability of each pupil, though there should never be more than ten school days between visits.

Parents do not have the right to veto home visits. However, for long-term absences, planned rather than unannounced visits may be organised.

Academies should hold two or three emergency contact numbers for each pupil to support a timely safeguarding response.

10. Early Intervention and Relational Practice

Attendance concerns must trigger early, human and relational responses. Academies are expected to act on emerging patterns of absence, lateness or disengagement, rather than waiting for statutory thresholds to be crossed. Academies should ensure that pupils at risk of absence have a trusted adult who acts as a consistent point of connection and advocacy.

Early attendance conversations should be supportive, solution-focused and informed by contextual safeguarding, with an emphasis on removing barriers rather than attributing blame, in keeping with the Oasis ethos. Parents may be offered a place on the successful Oasis Encounters programme, a therapeutic parenting intervention, to support them in their responsibilities around attendance.

Previous academic year attendance data must be used as a baseline to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence and to ensure early, proactive intervention from the beginning of the academic year.

When a pupil's absence reaches 5 days, an attendance meeting must be held with parents. This does not prevent earlier meetings where concern is identified. The meeting will be supportive and relational, working as a team to find positive ways forward.

When a pupil has been absent for a total of 10 or more days, an Attendance Support Plan (ASP) will be put in place to build confidence and bridge gaps in learning. A CME referral will be made for any pupil we have not seen for 10 consecutive school days if we are unable to establish the whereabouts of any pupil through home visits.

Where absence is linked to anxiety, mental health or emotionally based school avoidance, support and reintegration will be carefully planned and graduated.

11. Communication with Parents and Carers

Academies will communicate attendance expectations clearly and regularly with parents and carers. Daily attendance information will be shared via MCAS, and attendance will be formally reported throughout the year.

Each pupil's attendance will be sent home by email at the end of each week.

Communication should be timely, respectful and transparent, ensuring families understand when concerns are emerging and what support is available.

12. Promoting Good Attendance

Academies should foster a positive culture of attendance through inclusive curriculum design, relational practice, rewards, assemblies, and engagement with the wider Oasis team, youth and community services.

As a minimum expectation, academies should ensure weekly Bromcom rewards points for 100% attendance and half-termly rewards assemblies celebrating good and improved attendance, certificates and positive communication with parents and carers.

In secondary academies one form group session weekly should have attendance as a focus, making use of attendance data, attendance bandings and/or attendance streaks. Primary schools should ensure attendance is covered regularly with pupils – no less than fortnightly.

Poor attendance should be understood as a symptom requiring support rather than simply a behaviour to be sanctioned. We know how days missed impacts on pupils' learning outcomes so will do all we can to work with families on overcoming all obstacles and barriers.

Attendance Percentage	Learning days lost per academic year
98	4
95	10
90	19
85	29
80	38
75	48

Some OCL academies are trialling a pilot programme of 'attendance streaks' in 2026-27 encouraging pupils to focus on unbroken chains of days attended. Pupils and parents can view this data through an app – All In School.

13. Use of Data to Improve Attendance

Attendance data must be reviewed regularly to identify patterns and emerging risks. Data should prompt curiosity, professional judgement and timely intervention rather than retrospective accountability alone. Leaders will also review academic progress and feedback from TEP surveys to uncover issues that may be affecting attendance.

Data should be analysed by pupil, cohort, characteristic and, where appropriate, lesson attendance in secondary schools. Full use will also be made of the DfE similar school reports. Leaders are expected to act on this analysis promptly.

Attendance should be a main agenda item in leadership team meetings on a regular basis – at least half-termly, but more often if the academy's attendance is below national average.

14. Persistent and Severe Absence

A pupil is persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of sessions. Persistent absence requires structured, planned and relational intervention.

Severe absence (50% or more sessions missed) represents significant safeguarding risk and requires coordinated multi-agency involvement.

15. Support to Escalation Pathways

Oasis follows a staged approach to attendance support. Additional layers of support may be added by individual academies, but these four stages are the minimum that all academies will offer. Each stage will involve letters, phone calls and/or meetings with academy staff. Progression through stages should be guided by impact and safeguarding need, rather than time spent at a particular stage.

- **Stage 1 – Early concern and attendance conversations**

Triggered by emerging patterns of attendance concern, including analysis of previous academic year attendance data. Intervention at this stage is led by trusted adults and focuses on understanding barriers to attendance, strengthening relationships and restoring engagement. More informal approaches such as a text or phone call should be employed before letters are sent home.

- **Stage 2 – Attendance Support Plan**

A structured Attendance Support Plan is agreed with the family, setting out clear actions, responsibilities and review points. This stage may include adjustments to school-based provision, referrals to external services and targeted pastoral or academic support. It is likely senior leaders will become involved at some point in Stage 2.

- **Stage 3 – Formal escalation with Local Authority involvement**

Where attendance does not improve despite planned support, formal escalation takes place. This includes structured meetings with Local Authority involvement, closer monitoring, and the use of formal attendance processes alongside continued safeguarding oversight.

- **Stage 4 – Legal routes where all other support has failed**

Where voluntary engagement has not been effective, academies may pursue legal routes in partnership with the Local Authority. Legal action is always proportionate, used as a last resort, and should never come as a surprise to families. Safeguarding responsibilities continue throughout this stage.

16. Part-Time Timetables

Part-time timetables may only be used in exceptional circumstances, must be time-limited, authorised by the Principal, and never used as a behaviour consequence. They must be reviewed at least fortnightly.

A clear indication of who will supervise the pupil when not in school should be recorded. A pupil being left to supervise themselves must be viewed as a safeguarding concern.

17. Legal Intervention and Prosecution

Where voluntary support has not been effective or engaged with, academies may work with the Local Authority to issue penalty notices or pursue prosecution. Legal routes are always a last resort and should never come as a surprise to families.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year and not engaging in the academy's attendance support systems.
- Holidays in term time.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance and not engaging in the academy's support systems.
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

Local authorities have the power to prosecute:

- Parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order issued by the local authority to require a parent to get their child registered at a named school (under section 443 of the Education Act 1996). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).
- Parents who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at a school, for which there are 2 separate offences: section 444(1) where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly and fails to ensure the child does so. The section 444(1) offence may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000) and the section 444(1A) offence may result in a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
- Parents who fail to secure the regular attendance of their child at a place where the local authority or governing body has arranged alternative provision (under sections 444 and 444ZA). This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000), or if the parent is found to have known the child was not attending regularly and failed to ensure that they did so, a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
- Parents who persistently fail to comply with directions under an Education Supervision Order (under Schedule 3 to the Children Act 1989) or breach a Parenting Order or directions under the order (under section 375 of the Sentencing Act 2020). These may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000).

Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence. The penalty is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. The payment must be paid direct to the local authority. There is no right of appeal by parents against a fixed penalty notice.

18. Pupils Leaving the Academy and Removal from Roll

Parents and Carers should ideally inform the academy in writing if they wish to remove their child from the academy roll – this may be when changing schools, moving away, or electing to home educate. Leaders will seek to meet parents whenever a request to home educate is received.

Academy leaders must ensure that detailed records are kept for pupils who stop attending the academy and are removed from the roll/admissions register. Details must include (but not exclusive to):

- The pupil's reason for leaving.
- Their destination and the destination's educational provision (e.g. name of school, home-schooling arrangements).
- Group (disadvantaged, SEND, EAL, gender, ethnicity).

Where a pupil moves abroad, leaders must take all reasonable steps to assure themselves that the pupil is moving to another school. This may include support from the local authority. This is to ensure that all pupils are safe and in full time education as necessary. Unlawful off-rolling is a safeguarding issue. Pupils may only be removed from roll in line with statutory guidance and where their educational destination is known and appropriate.

The Principal must meet with the pupil and family, if off rolling is likely to take place, for example a parental request to home-educate. This is to ensure that an effective level of support has been offered to the pupil and family as well as ensuring that the destination of the pupil is known.

Leaders must ensure that pupils are only removed from the academy's roll/admissions register if one or more of the criteria (defined by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006; paragraph 8) are met and as described in the Department for Education's guidance: Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)

Regional Directors must authorise any removal from roll and the academy will notify the Local Authority accordingly. See Appendix B for the OCL Off Rolling form to be used to record and monitor off rolling.

19. Transition

Transition from Y6 to Y7 as well as any in-year admission is a vulnerable time when attendance can fall. Leaders will ensure:

- Close liaison with Y6 feeder schools and analysis of Y6 attendance data to identify pupils and families needing intervention and support in HT6 and over the summer holidays.

- A named adult allocated to vulnerable Y6 pupils to act as a main point of contact with families before pupils start in September.
- Support for disadvantaged families struggling with uniform and equipment purchases.
- A comprehensive induction programme for in-year admission pupils focused on belonging – working hard to get to know the pupil and their families, identifying support they may need, and their academic needs met.

20. Monitoring, Training and Review

This policy will be monitored by the National Lead for Behaviour and Attendance, Regional Directors and reviewed regularly by the National Education Team. Attendance practice is supported through training, CPD and trust-wide learning opportunities. ALT attendance leads will receive regular training opportunities and support when needed.

Document Control

Changes History

Version	Date	Owned and amended by	Recipients	Purpose
1.0	18.07.18	Chris Chamberlain	All OCL Principals	Updated legislation
1.1	23.07.19	Chris Chamberlain	All OCL Principals	Updated legislation
1.2	01.09.23	Emma Merva	All OCL Principals	Updated legislation and practice
1.3	30.08.24	Emma Merva	All OCL Principals	Updated legislation and practice
1.4	11.06.26	Mark Pelling	All OCL Principals	Updated legislation and practice

Policy Tier

☒ Tier 1

☐ Tier 2

☐ Tier 3

☐ Tier 4

Owner

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Approvals

Name	Position	Date Approved	Version
Directors' Group			1.4

Position with the Unions

Does the policy or changes to the policy require consultation with the National Unions under our recognition agreement?

☐ Yes

☒ No

If yes, the policy status is:

☐ Consulted with Unions and Approved

☐ Fully consulted (completed) but not agreed with Unions but Approved by OCL

☐ Currently under Consultation with Unions

☐ Awaiting Consultation with Unions

Location

Tick all that apply:

☐ OCL website

☒ Academy website

☒ Policy portal

☐ Other:

Customisation

☒ OCL policy

☐ OCL with an attachment for each academy to complete regarding local arrangements

☐ Academy policy

☐ Policy is included in principals' annual compliance declaration

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

Name	Position	Date	Version
All principals	Principal	September 2023	1.2
All principals	Principal	August 2024	1.3
All principals	Principal	June 2026	1.4