



# Attendance Policy

## Review Table

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Review Interval	Annually
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Owner & Attached Governor	Sophie Mcfarlane & Michael Dennison





## What is good attendance and why is it important to everyone at North Oxfordshire Academy?



North Oxfordshire Academy

The best in everyone™

Part of United Learning

# 97%



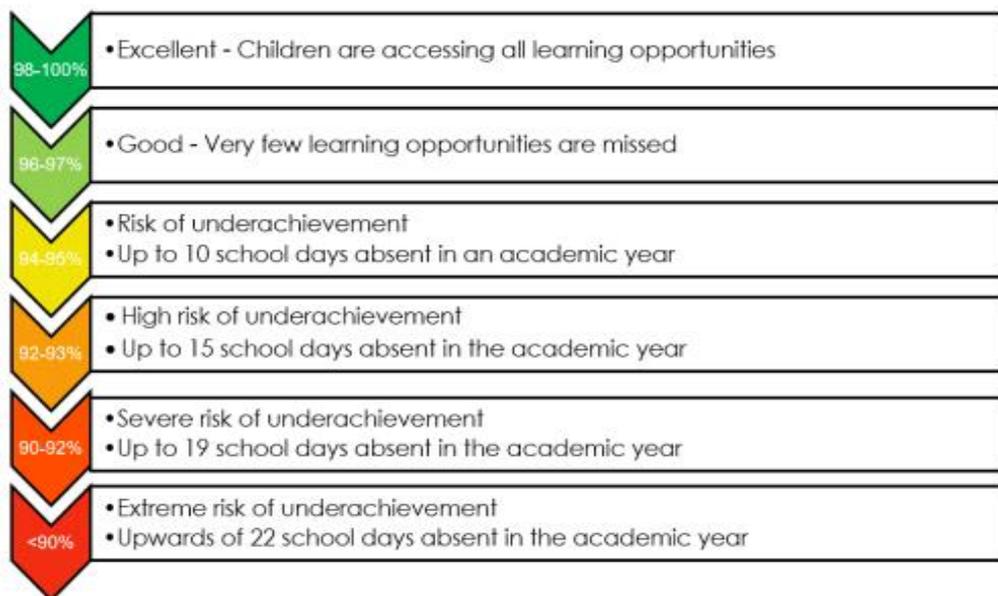
North Oxfordshire Academy  
attendance target

North Oxfordshire Academy is committed to ensuring every young person experiences a broad, ambitious, and stimulating school experience. We exist to provide our students with the best life chances in Oxfordshire. We provide a broad education, which prepares young people to progress in learning and to make a success of their lives.

North Oxfordshire Academy staff strive to listen, understand, empathise, and support, but we do not tolerate poor attendance and punctuality due to the devastating impact on student outcomes and life chances.

Regular attendance is critical for all our students to be successful and benefit from the ambitious opportunities presented by attending school regularly. Educational research widely acknowledges that students with regular attendance are far more likely to secure five GCSE grade 4 passes. North Oxfordshire Academy leaders and governors consider `good` attendance to be 97%+. Punctual attendance means that students are in school for 8:25 am every day. The table below details the percentage attendance thresholds and links percentage attendance to days missed of learning.





North Oxfordshire Academy is committed to ensuring that parents/carers, staff, and students understand the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play, and we are committed to the ongoing development of strong home-academy links. We aim to work in partnership with parents/carers and students to identify and overcome possible barriers to attending school regularly. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at North Oxfordshire Academy is **your legal responsibility** and permitting absence without a good reason creates an **offence in law and may result in prosecution**.

The Governors, Principal and Staff (in partnership with parents) have a duty to secure 97%+ attendance for all North Oxfordshire Academy students. We strive to apply the attendance and punctuality policy consistently and fairly. We recognise that students are individuals with their own needs and that, depending on needs and circumstances, the policy may be reasonably adjusted to best support students and families.

## Legal Requirements

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.





An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities. To ensure all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand these expectations, and how they apply at North Oxfordshire Academy this policy sets out the practical procedures to be followed at North Oxfordshire Academy in relation to attendance. The measures in place at North Oxfordshire Academy to promote regular attendance by its registered pupils. The responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance and the action to be taken by staff if a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly.

## At North Oxfordshire Academy we will:

- Expect students to attend the academy regularly, on time, properly equipped and ready to learn. Regular attendance is an attendance of **97%+**. On time means a student is in school by registration by **8:25 am**.
- Develop and promote a culture and climate whereby good attendance and punctuality are expected. Our mantra of `attend today, succeed tomorrow` will be promoted throughout the school and by all staff.
- Keep accurate and timely registration documents using Arbor.
- Monitor, track and analyse attendance and punctuality data.
- Monitor the impact of attendance and punctuality support strategies and intervention.
- Report student and family safeguarding concerns using the agreed processes (see NOA safeguarding policy).
- Talk to students at regular and frequent times regarding the value of good attendance and being in school on time. Such activities may look like: tutor sessions focused on attendance, attendance assemblies, attendance discussions as part of our PSHE programme, linking the development of healthy attendance habits to life after school such as University and in the world of work.
- Support students and families with a range of strategies and / or interventions. The exact nature of support will be determined by the needs of the child and family. External agencies may be utilised to deliver the support.
- Hold termly student and parent panels to ask their views around attendance policy and procedure at NOA.
- Provide parents/carers details about student's attendance via Arbor, student reports, attendance letters, attendance celebration awards and at parent information events (throughout the year including parent meetings). Where there are causes for concern North Oxfordshire Academy attendance team may liaise with parents to support a child and their family to achieve good attendance.
- Celebrate good attendance and improving attendance (letters home, certificates, reward events).
- Arrange meetings and promotional events when parents, students and staff can work





together on raising attendance levels across the school.

- Promptly investigate absenteeism and lateness.
- Remove social time (Lunch and/or break) for persistently late students.
- Work in partnership with parents/carers and students to resolve issues which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.
- Include students' attendance in reports to parents/carers on achievement, at least annually.
- Offer a catch-up club where several lessons have been missed in a week. This will be afterschool.
- Enforce the requirement to attend school punctually and reserve the right not to authorise absence for persistent offenders or where there is no reasonable explanation.
- Involve appropriate outside agencies to support students and their families.

North Oxfordshire Academy students will:

- Attend the school regularly (97%+ attendance) and on time (to be in school for registration at 8:25 am).
- Attend all lessons punctually.
- Make every effort to engage with all support offered.

Parents/Carers of North Oxfordshire Academy students should:

- Ensure their child regularly and punctually attends school, fulfilling their legal responsibility.
- Telephone the absence line on **01295 234214** on the **first day and every subsequent day** of absence by 8:20 am informing the school of the reasons for absence and stating an expected day of return.
- Inform the academy if anything changes during the school day. Parents/ carers are asked to contact the reception line and asked not to text/ call children directly. Main reception contact number: 01295 224300
- Work actively with the North Oxfordshire Academy staff and relevant multi-agency staff, to solve any attendance and punctuality concerns as and when they occur.
- Notify North Oxfordshire Academy if they intend to remove their child for a leave of absence i.e., family holiday. It should be made clear that this is not a parental right, and such requests will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances in line with the guidance issued later in this document.
- Not book appointments in school time (unless orthodontic/ hospital/ emergency).

## What are the daily attendance routines at North Oxfordshire Academy?

- Students will be welcomed into the academy from 8:10 am onwards by duty staff. Students are not permitted onto the academy site before 8:10 am unless attending breakfast club.
- Students will assemble in their year group areas and will line up in tutor groups at 8:20 am





(Year 7-10). Form tutors will welcome tutees. Line ups are an opportunity to ensure students are safe and settled before the school day starts.

- Year 11 and KS5 students will arrive in their tutor room by 8:25 am
- All registers should be completed on Arbor by 8:40 am. If a student is not in registration, they will be marked using the N code. If a student arrives after the register has been taken, they will be marked with an L code and the number of late minutes recorded.
- If a student is late for registration a same day detention will be issued and sat after school on the same day. Parents will be notified via Arbor.
- Three late marks per week (to am registration) will result in a 90-minute Friday detention (sat after school with the principal).
- At 9.30a.m. the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents/ carers could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. If your child has two N marks for P1 and 2 NOA will make every effort to contact parents by 10.30am. Where a child is deemed vulnerable NOA will aim to alert parents of their child's absence by 9.30am.
- Alert police and external agencies if we judge an absent student to be at risk of harm.
- Make a home visit by the third day of absence (if appropriate) and involve external agencies working with the family/ student.
- Invite parents/ carers in to discuss the situation with our attendance officer and/or Pastoral Leaders, Welfare Team, Senior Leaders, or Principal if absences persist and offer a range of bespoke support packages.
- Refer the matter to the County Attendance Team if attendance moves below 90%.

## Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either authorised or unauthorised. Therefore, information about the cause of any absence is always required. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a valid reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable cause. If this occurs, school may require evidence of the appointment to be able to authorise the absence.



Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority (County Attendance Team) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA):**

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and by the North Oxfordshire attendance team. We also try to combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment (by both pastoral leaders and form tutors).

PA students and their parents may be subject to an action plan and the plan may include allocation of additional support through a mentor, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. PA cases may be made known to the County Attendance team. If a child becomes a PA student, we may seek parents/ carers consent to complete an Early Help Assessment (EHA) and we may consider convening a Team Around the Family (TAF).

### **How do we track attendance at NOA?**

#### **Daily tracking**

The attendance team monitor registration and lesson registers to ensure we know the students who are in school, reasons for any absence and then ensuring students remain in school (ensuring no internal truancy occurs). The attendance team will endeavour to call/ text/ email parents (or priority one contacts) to ensure we have accurate information regarding student absence and to better understand student needs. Conversations are supportive and encourage students to return to school so that they (and parents) can access support. Attendance and pastoral staff at NOA are receiving on going Family Links training to better promote resilient parenting strategies.

If a student is alerted as `missing` from a lesson/ tutor time, attendance and pastoral staff will carry out reasonable checks to locate the student and will inform parents/carers in the event the student cannot be located. Reasonable checks will include a walkthrough of the school building and perimeter edge plus emailing an `all staff` alert asking all staff to check their immediate location. Time scales for alerting parents/ carers will depend on the student and circumstances.

Absent vulnerable students, depending on needs and history, may be visited at home so they are sighted on the first day of absence. It is typical practice that two NOA staff visit students at home. Information from these visits maybe shared with external agencies.

The attendance team, family links worker and pastoral leaders endeavour to speak to returning absent students on their return to school to better understand their needs and eliminate barriers to success. The attendance officer sends a daily email to all tutors and pastoral staff with overall daily attendance headlines with a common focus and top tips when talking about attendance with students.

### Weekly Tracking

The attendance officer meets with identified students and their families on a weekly basis. These meetings may take the form of parent contract meetings or may be a Team Around the Child meeting involving the SENCo, school nurse and other welfare professionals. Meetings are always focused on putting the child at the heart of all we do and finding solutions that support the child to be in school learning every day.

The attendance officer (Catherine Tyler) meets weekly with the SLT attendance lead (Sophie Mcfarlane) to look at student attendance data. Overall attendance headlines are analysed including persistence absence % per year group with a specific focus on how best to support students who have a special education need and those in receipt of pupil premium. Weekly tracking allows us to identify students who need additional support, those who deserve special recognition and then those who need to be monitored by tutors and pastoral leaders. Parent contract meetings are also reviewed.

Pastoral Leaders and tutors receive weekly attendance data along with support strategies with the expectation that tutors talk to all their tutees regarding the importance of good attendance. Weekly assemblies and tutor notices all reiterate the importance of 97% attendance.

The pastoral team meet weekly for a briefing session. Attendance is always discussed with headlines shared; successes celebrated plus areas of focus for the coming week. A weekly staff newsletter has a section dedicated to communicating attendance news and sharing support strategies with staff.

## Termly

Every Pastoral leader meets with the attendance officer for an `attendance summit` meeting. These meetings:

- Review overall attendance data for the year group with specific focus on students with SEND needs and PPG students.
- Review all students below 90%, agree strategies and review impact of strategies
- Reward and incentive ideas for the year group
- Celebration and student successes

Pastoral Leaders meet with their tutor teams termly and share attendance headlines, strategies and will allocate every tutor Focus Student for the term ahead. The SLT link for attendance reports to the Governing body regarding attendance as calendared points through the year. The attendance officer liaises with Oxfordshire County Council attendance and engagement team throughout the term regarding families that may need further support. Celebration events run every term for students with 97%+ attendance and those who are working hard to improve their attendance. The nature of the events will vary depending on the needs of the students. The attendance officer meets with other secondary school attendance officers in the area to share best practice. Ideas and refinements are actioned because of the partnership meetings.

## How can parents track attendance and punctuality?

All parents and carers have access to a web-based MIS system called Arbor. Arbor is free to use and gives live attendance information. All parents/ carers are encouraged to use this platform to track their child's attendance. Arbor user guides are found on the NOA website. It is the parents/ carers responsibility to seek support if they need help accessing Arbor.

Parents/ carers can request attendance information at any time by calling 01295 234214 or emailing [enquiries@northoxfordshire-academy.org](mailto:enquiries@northoxfordshire-academy.org). Attendance and punctuality information is included in a printed academic report three times a year. Parents information events are held throughout the year and attendance may be discussed. Again, attendance information can be requested at these events. Attendance and punctuality may be discussed with parents/ carers throughout the year during meetings with another focus. Tutors, pastoral leaders, and pastoral staff may request to speak with parents/ carers through the year to discuss attendance and punctuality concerns. It is expected parents/carers fully engage with the support offered.

## How do we ensure our work is effective?

At NOA we use a stage model of working. We aim to include parents/ carers in the support strategies we deploy. Effective attendance interventions ideally result in a child attending school more often and accelerating their academic progress. However, we acknowledge that we need to be realistic and

set smaller, obtainable goals while supporting a child. Experience and research tell us that including the voice of the child and parents is key to forming an open and honest relationship. A typical model of support might look like:

- Stage 1 – Students below 95% - Parent letter sent home explaining a 4-week monitoring period will now commence where no more absence is expected. Any further absence after the letter is sent means that the child will move to stage 2 immediately.
- Stage 2 - Meeting with the child and parent to openly discuss the current situation. What is going well? What are the barriers? What will success look and feel like? Developing a SMART action plan from the meeting. This plan is shared with the child, parent, tutor, and key staff. The child is placed on a formal 4-week attendance plan. An attendance target is set and agreed. If the pupil does not achieve in line with the plan and the targets set they move immediately on to stage 3.
- Stage 3 – Team around the child meeting. Pupil and parent meeting with welfare/attendance office and other relevant colleagues where a fresh attendance target is set and a new attendance plan is agreed. Failure to meet the terms of this plan will lead to a case conference with outside agencies, which will include discussion or legal/financial penalties.

Full attendance to school during stage 2 or stage 3 leads to pupils coming off any kind of attendance support. Their attendance is monitored, and intervention is immediate if absence starts again.

## Safeguarding

North Oxfordshire Academy is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all its students. Each student's welfare is of paramount importance. We recognise that some children may be especially vulnerable. Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of the Academy, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses attendance, behaviour management, health and safety and access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

## Support

Attendance and punctuality data will be used to provide individual support for students and families. We aim to offer individual plans utilising the experience and expertise of our staff to best support all students. We firmly believe that with the right people, relationships, expertise all students can be supported to achieve their full potential. Every effort is made to support all students and their families to attend school regularly. The exact offer of support will depend on the exact needs of individual students and their families.



% Attendance	Staff involved	Days off	Possible support strategies & actions
100-97	Tutor/ Pastoral Leader/ welfare team	0-7	Warm welcome/ whole school focus on attendance culture/ praise texts/ praise postcards/ commendation letters/ rewards via attendance league/ attendance matters assemblies and tutor sessions/ Invite to be part of attendance voice panel
97-95%	Stage 1 - Tutor/ Pastoral Leader/ welfare team	4.5-17	Stage 1 – Letter home. 4 week monitoring Tutor conversations / Monitoring from attendance team/ phone calls to parents/ individual incentives/ whole year and tutor reward via tutor league format/ whole school focus on attendance culture Inc. assemblies and attendance matters tutor time.
94%-90%	Stage 2 – SED/ Pastoral Leader	19-25	No improvement stage 2. 1:1 meeting with student and families/ individual plans with incentives/ refer to student support panel/ Weekly PL check in. 4 Week formal attendance plan.
Under 89%	Stage 3 Attendance Officer / SLT link/ External services	27 +	Stage 3 – Letter to parents / Parent Contract Meetings/ Student Support Panels/ Family Links work/ Family Links parenting sessions/ Home visits/ minibuss pickups/ No further authorisation without medical evidence/ referral to OCC attendance team/ Formal PACE meetings/ Fine referral process.

### Who can I contact for support?

Form Tutor or Head of Year - please email form tutors directly, a full list of form tutors can be found on our website . Additional support can also be sought by contacting;

Mrs C Tyler, Attendance Officer [catherine.tyler@northoxfordshire-academy.org](mailto:catherine.tyler@northoxfordshire-academy.org)

Mrs D Duffy and the Welfare Team [donna.duffy@northoxfordshire-academy.org](mailto:donna.duffy@northoxfordshire-academy.org)

Mrs S Mcfarlane, Interim Vice Principal [sophie.mcfarlane@northoxfordshire-academy.org](mailto:sophie.mcfarlane@northoxfordshire-academy.org)

### Telephone numbers and email addresses

If you need to update contact numbers or email address, then please log onto the Arbor system and make the changes or call reception on 01295 224300. Alternatively, please email [Enquiries@northoxfordshire-academy.org](mailto:Enquiries@northoxfordshire-academy.org)





## Oxfordshire County Attendance Team

The school may refer the family to the County Attendance Team at the Local Authority. At the school's request, they may issue a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child (currently £60 rising to £120 if unpaid after 21 days. If unpaid after 28 days a summons to Court will be issued for each unpaid Penalty Notice for prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. This can result in a criminal record and a fine of up to £2,500, a Community Order, Parenting Order or ultimately a custodial sentence). The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 444(1) and 444(1A).

Parents that have previously been issued with Penalty Notices for their children's unauthorised absences, in the event of further unauthorised absences may receive summonses to Court. Parents or children may wish to contact the County Attendance Team themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01865 323513 [attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

## Exceptional Leave

Parents/carers do not have the legal right to authorise absence, as this is the responsibility of North Oxfordshire Academy Principal. A Student Leave of Absence will be granted only in exceptional circumstances. If a parent/ carer does need to request exceptional absence, then they need to email the principal stating their reasons why exceptional leave is needed. Please note that evidence may be required to support the request. Email address to request exceptional leave:

[Enquiries@northoxfordshire-academy.org](mailto:Enquiries@northoxfordshire-academy.org)

**The County Attendance Team can issue Penalty Notices for any unauthorised 'Exceptional Leave'. Penalty Notices can be issued to each parent/carer concerned. Please note that it will be per parent per child. Payment within 21 days of receipt of notice is £60 and £120 if paid after this period but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days you will each receive a summons to Oxford Magistrates Court. If unauthorised leave is repeated the County Attendance Team may summons each parent to Court without a Penalty Notice being issued.**

## Elective Home Education

We strongly believe that students learn best in a school environment. We do recognise that some parents may choose, after careful consideration and conversation, to withdraw their child from school roll and assume full responsibility for their learning. Withdrawing a child for home education comes with considerable implications and we ask that if you are thinking of this route you speak to Ms Tyler or a member of the welfare team. The process for elective home education is guided by Oxford County Council and details can be found on their web page:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/education-and-learning/being-educated-home>

