



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:

- Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence and severe absence;
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Acting early to address patterns of absence;
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.

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 pupils 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 pupils.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing Body delegates responsibility for the monitoring of attendance to the Head and Laxton Junior School Governing Body Committee.

Attendance links to safeguarding and, as such, the Governor with responsibility for safeguarding is informed of any individual concerns. The Governor with responsibility for safeguarding is Suzanna D'Oyly.

The Laxton Junior School Committee of The Governing Body are responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Head to account for the implementation of this policy

The Head

The Head is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The Deputy Head

The Deputy Head is the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance (Senior Attendance Champion) and the Attendance Officer.

The Deputy Head is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Writing, reviewing and implementing this policy
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Head
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Form Teachers, Tutors and Teaching Staff

Form Teachers, Tutors and Teaching Staff are responsible for:

- Recording attendance for both morning and afternoon session 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 pupil's absence or welfare to the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Office Staff

Office Staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Following up any unknown absence

- Providing daily attendance updates to the Deputy Head
- Providing termly attendance reports to the Deputy Head
- Recording any late pupils coming through the Front Office and to seek clarification from parents for their reason for being late

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, from Form Teachers, Tutors or Deputy Head, who can be contacted via My School Portal.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

School Procedures

Attendance Register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.30am and ends at 3.45pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.00am

The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

Lateness and Punctuality

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day.

- Those arriving before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- Those arriving after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Pupils who arrive after 8.30am must enter via the main entrance. Office staff will register the pupil, using the appropriate code, 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 Teacher or 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

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school Front Office staff, who can be contacted via 01832 277275 or info@laxtonjunior.org.uk

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. You should notify the Front Office on info@laxtonjunior.org.uk.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Following Up Unexplained Absences

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will follow their Child Missing Education Policy.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Calling and/or emailing the pupil's parents on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session for which the pupil was absent
- Calling and/or emailing the pupil's emergency contacts
- Initiating a home visit
- Referring to external agencies, including police
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an external agencies.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention, as appropriate

Reporting to Parents

Attendance is reported to parents at least annually through the written reports.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for Term Time Absence

The Head will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the Head's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

'Exceptional circumstances' 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

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be authorised for the purposes of a family holiday.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and be made in writing to the Deputy Head (smc@laxtonjunior.org.uk). The Head may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons **for authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, barges (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)
- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

The Head considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Including:

- The time of year for the proposed absence
- If the absence is close to any assessment or exam dates
- The pupil's overall attendance record
- Any holidays already taken in the school year
- The age and stage of education of the pupil
- The ability of the pupil 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 during term-time, it is entirely at the Head's decision and is not a parental right.

Unauthorised Absence

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

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

Monitoring Attendance

Attendance Data

The school will:

- Monitor pupil attendance on a daily, half-termly, termly and annual basis, at an individual and pupil level.
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absence may be a cause for concern

Analysing Attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide attendance reports to Form Teachers/ Tutors / Educational Support to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

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 needing intervention and support
- To ensure the welfare of the pupils paramount

Repeated Unauthorised and/or Unexplained Absences

The school will contact the parent or carer of any pupil who has an unauthorised/unexplained absence, including if attendance drops below 95%. If a pupil 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.

Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Consider potential safeguarding issues, and where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- To track the attendance of individual pupils
- Hold regular meetings with parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any actions or interventions

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

The 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 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

Supporting Pupils Who Are Absent or Returning to School

We understand that many pupils will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance, for example pupils:

- With multiple reasons and complex barriers to attendance
- With mental or physical ill health or SEND
- Returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as it is for any other pupil, but additional support may need to be provided. We will use our strategies for promoting attendance, with a particular focus on:

- Understanding the individual needs of the pupil and family
- Working in partnership with the pupil and family to put in-school support in place and working with the local authority and other agencies where external support is needed (and available)
- Regularly reviewing and updating the support approach to make sure it continues to meet individual needs.

Pupils with long term physical or mental ill health

In cases of both long term physical or mental ill health, school staff are not expected to diagnose or treat physical or mental health conditions. The school will work together with families and other agencies with the aim of ensuring regular attendance for every pupil. We will:

- Facilitate any relevant pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance as much as possible whilst supporting the underlying health issue.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
- Consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxious feelings about school attendance.
- Make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities

For pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, the school will:

- Work in partnership with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including, where applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.

- Work in partnership with families to help support routines and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and their parents.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate

Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every year by the Deputy Head. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Laxton Junior School Governing Body Committee.

Linked Policies

Linked policies include:

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

Reviewer	SMC
Post of Reviewer	Deputy Head
Review Date	Michaelmas 2024
Reviewed by Governors	Awaiting Review
Reviewed and filed with both Schools	Michaelmas 2024
Next Review (max 3 years)	Michaelmas 2025

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

Code	Definition
/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
L1	Late arrival (before register has closed at 9.30 or 13.30)
U1	Late arrival (after registration closed (after 9.30 or 13.30)
M	Medical/Dental Appointment
I	Illness @ Home
I1	Illness @ School
Y7	Late Return/Early Departure
V	Education Visit or Trip
P	Sporting Activity
F	On Site Activity
B1	Co-Curricular Event Non Sporting (School organised)
C	Other Authorised Circumstance
C1	Leave Out
O	Unauthorised Absence
J	Interview - offsite
J1	Interview - onsite
C2	Study Leave (internal exams, pupil still in School)
C3	Study Leave (internal exams, pupil at home)
S	Study Leave (external exams, pupil still in School)
S1	Study Leave (external exams, pupil at home)
E	Excluded
R	Religious Observance
Y	Exceptional Circumstances
#	School Closed to Pupils

D	Dual Registration
T	Traveller Absence
G	Family Holiday (NOT Agreed)
X	Non-Compulsory School Age Absence
Z	Pupil Not Yet on roll