

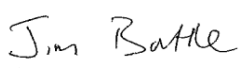


POLICY DOCUMENT

Attendance Policy

Approved by Trustees
28th September 2023

Date for review:
September 2024

Document Control	
Title	Attendance Policy
Date	31 July 2023
Purpose	To ensure stakeholders understand the expectations and approaches taken at the Wise Owl Trust with regards to attendance.
Supersedes	Attendance Policy version 1
Amendments	Minor changes to reflect non-statutory attendance guidance issued by the Department for Education, ' <i>Working together to improve school attendance (2022)</i> '
Related Policies/Guidance	Supporting pupils unable to attend school policy. Safeguarding Policy.
Author	John Tomlinson
Approved Level	Trust – Statutory Policy
Date adopted	28 th September 2023
Expires	Summer 2024
Signature of Chair	

Wise Owl Trust

is a Multi Academy Trust

Registered in England and Wales number 8053288

Registered Office: Trust House, c/o Seymour Road Academy, Seymour Road South, Clayton,
Manchester, M11 4PR

The Wise Owl trust has a number of Trust-wide policies which are adopted by all the academies in the Trust to ensure an equitable and consistent delivery of provision. The Trust Board has responsibility for the operation of all academies and the outcomes of all students; however, responsibility is delegated to the Local Governing Body of each school via the Scheme of Delegation.

Within our policies reference to:

- Governing Body/Governors relate to the members of the Local Governing Body representing the Trust Board, known at Wise Owl Trust as Local School Committee Boards.
- School includes a reference to school or academy unless otherwise stated.
- Headteacher includes a reference to Headteacher, Principal or Head of School of a school or academy.

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1 Aim of this policy

To support excellent levels of attendance for all pupils to enable fulfilment of their potential at all Wise Owl Trust schools.

2 Key Principles

- High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are promoted and rewarded.
- It is the responsibility of everybody in the school to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this and sanctions may be applied in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. Wise Owl Trust schools will work with pupils, parents and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues that parents or pupils have should be discussed with the class teacher. Where more detailed support around attendance is required, parents and pupils should contact the relevant school's designated **attendance leader**;

Nicola Burke - Briscoe Lane Academy (0161 681 1783)

Denise Hughes - Old Hall Drive Academy (0161 223 2805)

Siobhan Burke - Seymour Road Academy (0161 370 2616)

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Wise Owl Trust

Wise Owl Trust will:

- develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance
- work with pupils and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance
- investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions where appropriate
- take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the school's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- share information and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance
- regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data including to identify pupils or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future
- ensure that all pupils can access full-time education, putting strategies in place where this is evidence to suggest that this is not the case
- ensure that the trust board and school's leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy
- ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the non-statutory attendance guidance issued by the Department for Education, '*Working together to improve school attendance (2022)*'

- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education. (Please click on the link to refer to our [Child Protection policy](#)).
- provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education
- regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels
- support pupils who are returning to education following long term absence
- ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system
- assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the school to a designated senior leader
- observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

3.2 Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- ensure that their child arrives at school on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment
- promote the importance of regular attendance at home
- follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the Wise Owl Trust (see section 6.1 below)
- avoid unnecessary absences
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- not take their child out of education for holidays during term time (see section 6.3 below)
- inform the school in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live
- observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).

3.3 Pupils

We expect pupils to:

- attend the school regularly and on time
- be punctual to all lessons
- follow the correct procedure if they arrive to the school late (see sections 4 and 5 below).

3.4 Designated attendance lead

The designated attendance leaders ("DAL") at Wise Owl Trust are;

- Nicola Burke - Briscoe Lane Academy
- Denise Hughes - Old Hall Drive Academy

- Siobhan Burke - Seymour Road Academy

The DAL, overseen by the Director of Education, will be responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at each school and will:

- offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- oversee attendance and absence data analysis
- ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to staff, parents and pupils
- provide data and reports to support the work of the board of trustees (see below).

3.5 The board of trustees

The board of trustees will:

- take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the Wise Owl Trust's ethos and policies
- ensure that school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support pupils or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance
- share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across its academies
- delegate the duty to hold regular attendance meetings with school leaders to the Executive Team
- require the schools to report to the governors on the school's attendance at regular intervals
- receive reports relating to the attendance of Wise Owl Trust schools
- have a dedicated attendance lead who will drive improvement across the trust and act as a central point for academies with attendance queries.

4 Registration

- Wise Owl Trust schools maintain an attendance register and use this to record each pupil's attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

Morning Registration session	Start time	End time
Briscoe Lane Academy	8:50 a.m.	9:20 a.m.
Old Hall Drive Academy	8:45 a.m.	9:15 a.m.
Seymour Road Academy	8:45 a.m.	9:15 a.m.

Afternoon Registration session– Lunchtimes are staggered due to large numbers of pupils. Therefore, timings for registration vary dependent on year group.

- Pupils who arrive after the start of a registration session but before the end of the registration session will be marked as late. Where pupils arrive after the end of a registration session, the process set out at section 5 applies.
- The register is marked using the national attendance and absence codes which can be found in the Department for Education's guidance on attendance - [Working together to improve school attendance](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk) ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk))
- Where a pupil's attends a registration session but does not attend subsequent lessons, we will treat this as a truancy and non-attendance matter in accordance with the behaviour policy and engage parents where necessary.

5 Late arrival

- If a pupil arrives at school after the relevant registration period has ended, he/she must immediately go to the school office to sign in and provide a reason for the lateness. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.
- Persistent lateness will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be dealt with in line with behaviour policy.

6 Reasons for absence & how to report or request authorisation

6.1 Authorised absence

Absence will only be authorised where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence. Only the school can authorise absence.

6.2 Unauthorised absence

Absence will be marked as unauthorised where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

6.3 Reporting absence from the School

- Where a pupil is to be absent from the school without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform the school by telephone on the morning of the day of the first absence and let the office staff know when they expect the pupil to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact the school on each day of absence.
- On the day of return to the school, parents must also provide written confirmation of the reason(s) for the full period of absence.

- In cases of prolonged absence due to illness, the parents/carers may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor. If this evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

6.4 Appointments

- Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a pupil should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.
- Where an appointment must take place during school time, the pupil should attend the school for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given to the designated attendance lead / class teacher / member of the administration team.
- For the time absent from the school to be marked as an authorised, confirmation of the appointment by way of an appointment card or letter must be provided.

6.5 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)

- Parents and carers should make every effort to avoid taking pupils out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time. The school will only authorise a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances.
- To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the Principal and, wherever possible, at least 4 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.
- Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Principal will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:
 - will be confirmed in writing
 - is solely at the Principal's discretion and is final
 - Where permission is granted, the Principal will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.
- If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of the school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority (see section 7 below).

6.6 Religious observance

We recognise that pupils of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:

- falls during school time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs,

the absence from the school will be authorised.

We ask that parents/carers notify the school by writing to the pupil's class teacher / Principal in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

6.7 Coronavirus (Covid-19)

- There may be circumstances in which pupils cannot attend school due to Covid-19. The school will adhere to any current guidance issued by the Department for Education relating to the recording of attendance in relation to Covid-19.
- If a pupil tests positive for coronavirus, their absence will be recorded as illness.

7 Addressing poor attendance and punctuality

7.1 The school will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or groups of pupils who need it most. In doing so, the school, led by the DAL, will:

- monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
- provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and relevant leaders
- identify pupils who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and fully year data to identify patterns and trends
- benchmark school attendance data at each level against local, regional and national level
- monitor the impact of school strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular pupils and particular groups
- work with the local authority and other local partners to identify groups
- hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of pupils who the school and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable
- Make use of Penalty Notice periods as detailed in the 'Attendance Distributed Leadership Model'

7.2 Our procedures for managing unexplained absences are as follows;

- In the first instance, the attendance leader will phone the child's parent/carer(s). If there is no response, they will leave a message asking the parents/carers to contact the school as soon as possible.
- Children not identified as vulnerable will receive a home visit the next day if there has still been no contact.
- For children/families deemed as vulnerable, if there is no contact established with parents/carers there will be a home visit straight away. This may also involve attendance leaders contacting the family's social worker where applicable.

7.3 Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:

- a pattern of unauthorised absence
- a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival
- persistent truancy or lateness

we will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.

- 7.4 Failure to attend or arrive at lessons on time may also be dealt with as a disciplinary matter in accordance with the behaviour policy.
- 7.5 Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental co-operation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place a parenting contract.
- 7.6 Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, the school will signpost and support access to any additional services.
- 7.7 Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending the school and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, we may consider issuing a penalty notice. A penalty notice is a fine (£60 if paid within 21 days, £120 if paid within 28 days) imposed on parents.
- 7.8 When considering whether to issue a penalty notice, we will have regard to: section 6 of the Department for Education's guidance, Working together to improve school attendance: [Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/424242/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf) the local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.
- 7.9 In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.

Annex 1 – Attendance Distributed Leadership Model

AMBER - GREEN

Pupils with attendance between 96% and 94%

Class teacher and / or the Attendance Officer will speak to the parents / carers to:

- Confirm the reason for absence and offer any support that may be required.
- Update the pupil on other work they have missed and support any catch up required.
- Set an individual attendance target for the pupil to support improving their attendance
- Agree a review date
- In addition, where unauthorised absence has occurred or attendance has not improved following the review with the pupil, a letter will be sent from the Attendance Officer, to parents, advising of concern and outlining the parents' responsibilities

Where improvement has not occurred following this intervention, parents will be invited to a meeting with the Attendance Officer where the possible outcomes will be:

- All parties confident that issues have been resolved and the attendance will improve.
- Does the family need support through an Early Help Assessment?
- Is a referral needed or additional therapeutic intervention to support the pupil?

RED - AMBER

Pupils with attendance between 91% and 93%

The Attendance Officer and / or a Family Support Worker will speak to the parents / carers to:

- Identify underlying in school barriers that may be causing the pupil's absence
- Identify underlying any out of school barriers that may be causing the pupil's absence and consider appropriate support such as early help, Manchester Thrive Hubs etc.
- Review the pupil's academic progress and make links to the pupil's attendance
- Liaise with the class teacher and SLT regarding the pupil catching up on any missed work
- Review any existing pupil plans to include support and improve attendance. If other agencies are involved is a multi-agency meeting or review required to address concerns
- Set an individual attendance target for the pupil before the next review dates and agree a review date

In addition, where unauthorised absence has occurred or attendance has not improved following the review with the pupil, a letter will be sent to parent/carer advising of concern and possible future statutory action.

If improvement has not occurred following this intervention, parents will be invited to a meeting where the possible outcomes will be:

- All parties confident that issues have been resolved and the attendance will improve.
- Parenting contract agreed
- Penalty Notice 15 school day monitoring period commences

- Agree a review date
- Where parents fail to attend the meeting without a satisfactory reason and unauthorised absence has occurred, the penalty notice monitoring period will automatically commence.

Where these interventions have already been implemented and have had unsatisfactory impact, the parent will be invited to an Attendance Panel involving the Attendance Officer and / or member of SLT / Family Support Worker / Trust Inclusion Lead where the possible outcomes will be:

- Offer support through an Early Help Assessment (EHA) with the school acting as lead professional
- Where a parent fails to attend the meeting without providing a satisfactory reason, a minimum of two home visits with the purpose to engage with the parent will be carried out prior to referral to the Local Authority
- Consider who will be responsible for all action and outcomes and monitoring of attendance post meeting/panel etc.

RED Pupils with attendance below 90%

Pupils who have attendance below 90% are persistently absent and pupils below 50% are considered severely absent from school.

For each pupil within this category, we will ensure that:

- The pupil and parents / carers have already spoken to a member of staff at the stages preceding RED intervention (RED - AMBER intervention will occur in cases where the pupil has immediately fallen from GREEN into RED)
- Records of previous contact have been collated and referred to, and interventions as set out in RED - AMBER and escalate accordingly
- Weekly contact occurs with the pupil either individually or within a small group to address themed issues.
- Weekly contact with the parents to discuss any arising issues and to provide feedback on their child's attendance, behaviour and academic progress.
- Existing plans and co-ordinate school resources to support the pupil's attendance and any additional needs have been reviewed
- There is a key contact person for any external agency working with the pupil
- We utilise whole school strategies to address the needs of pupils
- Each identified member of staff will be responsible for all action at this level and will record all intervention and outcomes.
- Multi-agency meetings are held to address concerns
- Where appropriate statutory action is taken

Attendance will be a standing item on the agenda of the Senior Leadership Team meetings where the progress of these groups will be reported and the effectiveness of interventions measured. This will be used to review and inform intervention.

The Principal and Trust Inclusion Lead will report to the Chair of Governors/Governor for Attendance each half term and will report termly to the Governing Body on the percentage PA and SA.