



**Osborne**  
Co-operative Academy Trust

Self-help  
Self-responsibility  
Equity  
Equality  
Democracy  
Solidarity

## **Policy/Procedure: Attendance Policy**

**Review Frequency: Annual**

**Date of last review: April 2019**

**Date of next review: 2020**

Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust is a multi-academy trust (MAT) incorporated around the principles and values of the international co-operative movement. These are Equality, Equity, Democracy, Self-help, Self-Responsibility and Solidarity, along with the ethical values of openness, honesty, social responsibility and caring for others. These values and principles underpin all our actions.

## Aims

Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust requires its schools to:

- Instil the expectation that all members of the Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust have excellent attendance to ensure that the central purpose of learning is not disrupted.
- Establish an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- Establish an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents/carers and appropriate agencies to provide information, advice, and support and maintain dialogue and a shared concern for the education and success of the pupil.
- Continually monitor the curriculum and learning environment to ensure the promotion of good attendance developing a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels safe and secure.
- Relate attendance issues directly to the school's co-operative values, ethos and curriculum
- Maintain a high profile for attendance and punctuality, establishing **96% and above** as the benchmark for all pupils.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Attendance is a pupil welfare and safeguarding issue. Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust takes its safeguarding responsibilities in these areas very seriously.

### School Staff

- Attendance Registers are legal documents and must be accurate. Within every Trust school teachers will be expected to take a register at the beginning of every session. No blanks should be left on the register, any pupil not present when the register is taken should be marked absent.
- Each school will hold an appendix to this policy detailing the actions taken if a child is absent or missing from a session.
- Where a pupil has not attended school for one week medical evidence will be required or the absence will be coded as an unauthorised holiday and a Penalty Notice may be issued.
- Absence of 10% will be recorded as persistently absent in line with national expectations.
- Each school will embed systems that raise the awareness of the importance of attendance that will support the pupils in achieving at least national expectation of attendance at 96% or above.
- Attendance will be monitored closely and reported at meetings of the Local Governing Body and Trust Board.

### Parents/Carers

Have a responsibility to:

- Understand that they are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance.
- Ensure their child arrives on time, in school uniform and ready to learn.
- Telephone their child's school on the first day of any absence to explain the reason for absence and give an expected return date. The timing of this phone call will be established in each school's appendix to this policy.

- Provide an up to date contact number and an emergency number that may be used in exceptional circumstances. It is important, that should the need arise, we can contact Parents/Carers without delay.
- Note the dates of public, statutory and internal examination periods. These are usually held in May/June each year. The dates for public examinations cannot be changed for any reason. If the public exams and Statutory Assessment Tests are missed they cannot be retaken during that examination cycle.
- Adhere to government guidance regarding term time holidays (any holiday taken in term time will be unauthorised and may be subject to a penalty notice.)

### **HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME**

Historically a Headteacher/Head of School had authority to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in “special circumstances” for up to 10 school days per year. **This is no longer the case.**

In September 2013 amendments were made to ‘The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006’. As a result of this Headteachers/Heads of School are no longer able to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust understands the various reasons for parents/carers taking children on holiday during term time i.e. financial savings, restricted working holidays etc., however these would not be considered exceptional circumstances. Taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child’s educational progress. A pupil who has 10 days absence will only attain 94.7% attendance in the year;

Holidays are not authorised during term time in response to the Government and Thurrock Authority initiative and has been agreed by Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust Board. Holidays will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Our schools follow the recommended practice for Government and Thurrock Authority initiative.

- Parents/Carers take responsibility for ensuring children’s regular, uninterrupted school attendance.
- Parents/Carers do not have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday.
- In exceptional circumstances (see below) it may be necessary for planned absence. All such cases should be discussed with the Headteacher/Head of School.
- If leave is taken without authorisation it will be recorded as unauthorised absence, and a Penalty Notice may be issued. This is set by regulation at £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- Penalty Notices must be paid in full. Instalment payment is not acceptable.
- If the recipient fails to pay the fine within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence to which the Notice applies, save for in very limited circumstances when the Notice may be withdrawn.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

These are examples of what MIGHT be considered to be exceptional circumstances. In all cases, the Headteacher/Head of School will decide this on a case by case basis using this policy for guidance.

- A close relative is terminally ill and the holiday is likely to be the last such holiday.
- Religious observance.
- An agreed educational activity; prestigious performance/audition.

### **Leave will not be granted if:**

- A holiday has been taken at any point in the pupil’s school career.
- A pupil’s attendance over the previous 20 week period is less than 96%.
- The period of leave coincides with the start of term, particularly the autumn term when pupils are settling in to their new year group.
- It coincides with tests, exams, SATs or other significant events in the school calendar.
- Pupils are in years 6 or 11.

Leave of absence forms should be obtained from the school office and submitted back to the school at least 5 working days before the first day of intended absence.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt learning. Whilst absent they miss the teaching provided and are also less prepared for the subsequent lessons after their return.

### **Punctuality**

Any pupil arriving later than registration should enter school via the main entrance reporting to the school office. If accompanied, a parent/carer should give a reason for the lateness, which will be added to the register. The pupil will then be sent to their classroom. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. Arriving late can be embarrassing for the pupil which may then encourage further absence. Good timekeeping is an important life skill which will help our pupils as they move through their school life and out into the wider world.

### **Children Missing in Education**

A registered pupil is deemed to be missing when:

- a) They fail to attend school without any explanation;
- b) The school has been unable to establish the reason, or locate the pupil with any of the contact names at the last known address, or from intelligence from the wider school community; or
- c) The pupil's parents/carers have not provided any information to indicate a change of education provision, unavoidable cause for the pupil's absence or that the pupil is travelling with them whilst in pursuit of their business.

Osborne Co-operative Academy Trust schools will adhere to the guidance set out in 'Thurrock Council Protocol and Procedures' and 'Essex County Council Children Missing from Education Policy' for:

- Children missing education
- Children not in receipt of full time education
- Children missing from a school role

Electronic copies are available at: [www.thurrock.gov.uk/information-for-schools](http://www.thurrock.gov.uk/information-for-schools). Essex schools will have access to Essex County Council policies via Infolink.

Within each school's appendix actions will be identified for pupils at high risk (if a child is subject to Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan or is a Child Looked After. Alternative actions will be identified for pupils who are not deemed to be at high risk in line with the above guidance. However, if at any time the schools have concerns about a pupil's welfare they should refer to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

### **Pupils missing from school - high risk**

The following actions will be taken by professionals if a child goes missing from a school roll and is considered to be at high risk.

This applies to any child that is:

- subject to a child protection plan
- subject to a child in need plan
- a looked after child

The child's key worker is to be notified within the first 24 hours of the unauthorised absence if no home contact can be made. An immediate Child Missing Education (CME) referral should also be made to the Pupil Tracking and Child Employment Officer, who will arrange for the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to contact the key worker and agree a plan of action.

The child will be reported to the Missing Children's Panel immediately.

Where it is suspected or known that a pupil is at potential risk or harm, or where there is information or reason to suspect the pupil has been a victim of criminal activity:

- the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub should be notified immediately
- the Education Welfare Service (EWS) will be notified as soon as possible afterwards

### **Pupils missing from school - not high risk**

The following actions will be taken by professionals if a child goes missing from a school roll but the child is not considered to be at high risk.

#### **Days 1 to 5**

Follow first day calling and contact procedures as defined by the school policy. Continuous efforts should be made by the school to make contact with the family, including calling all emergency contacts and home visits.

#### **Days 6 to 10**

Where a pupil has been absent for more than 5 school days, and all efforts to contact the family have been unsuccessful, the school should complete the 'Missing Pupil Checklist - Action for Schools'. This is available from the LA Education Welfare Service (EWS).

If the child remains missing the Pupil Tracking and Child Employment Officer for Thurrock should be contacted no later than the tenth day of absence to arrange for a referral to be made.

The referral should include all the attempts made by the school to make contact and any other information that the school hold. Schools should continue checks on a daily basis and update us if any further information is obtained.

The Pupil Tracking and Child Employment Officer will link with relevant officers, agencies and local authorities to continue efforts to track and trace the pupil.

#### **Days 11 to 19**

Once a referral has been sent to the Pupil Tracking and Child Employment Officer, schools should continue to make efforts to contact the family and assist the Pupil Tracking and Child Employment Officer and other agencies in the search. If, during this time, the child is located and confirmed to be living outside of a reasonable distance to the school, the LA investigation officer and schools will agree a date from which the pupil may be removed from roll.

#### **Day 20**

After 20 days of unauthorised absence, if the pupil remains a child missing education (CME) and efforts to trace them have been unsuccessful, the EWS will:

- review the situation with the school
- notify the school and other relevant agencies in writing

If the decision is made to remove the child from the school roll, the pupil's records must be uploaded to the 'Lost Pupils' database using the statutory electronic Common Transfer File (CTF).

As CME status may raise child protection issues, if schools believe a child or family has gone missing, the child should remain on the school roll until all enquiries have been completed by the school and EWS. The EWS team, together with the school, must record that they have completed these procedures before deleting them from the register.

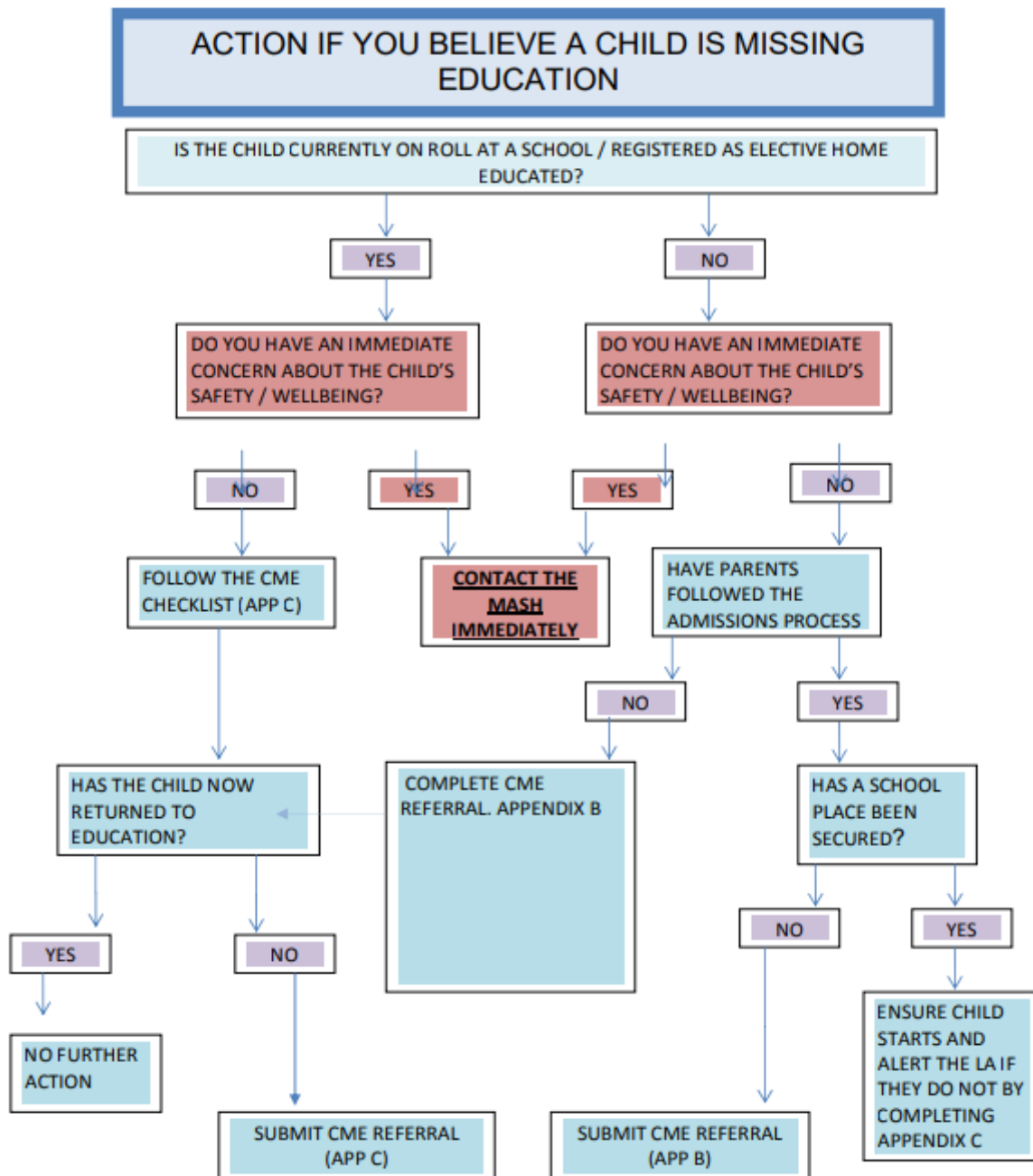
Schools cannot remove a pupil from the school roll until reasonable enquiries have been made over a period of at least 4 weeks. If this process has not been followed, schools will be required [by law](#) to reinstate pupils back on their school roll.

Following receipt of a CME referral, if the EWS is able to contact the family via phone and confirm their whereabouts - within a reasonable distance from the school - the case will be referred back to the school as a non-attendance issue and a home visit by EWS will not be necessary.

### **Essex**

The Missing Pupil Checklist is the document used by a school to refer a pupil who is missing from education. If MECES are able to make contact with the family via phone and confirm their whereabouts (which is within a reasonable distance from the school) the case will be referred back to the school as a non-attendance issue and the school may wish to consider referring to MECES for irregular school attendance. If the school have concerns about a pupil's welfare, they should refer for a police welfare check. The role of MECES is not to request police welfare checks where the school has concerns, but to make all necessary checks to attempt to locate the child.

Schools also have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their pupils, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. Academies and independent schools have a similar safeguarding duty for their pupils.



### Deletions from a School Roll

The 2006 Pupil Registration Regulations came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2007. These revoke the 1995 regulations and subsequent amendments of 1997 and 2001, but only in England. Two of the significant changes are regulation 5 and regulation 12.

#### Regulation 5

*Schools must now put pupils on the admissions register on the first day that the school expects them to attend, not, as previously, when they first attend.*

#### Regulation 12

*Schools must provide their local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or have ten days of continuous unauthorised absence. It also requires schools to inform their local authority of deletions of compulsory school age pupils as soon as they become aware of the circumstances and **before the deletion is made**, and the grounds for deletion;*

- The parent/carer has advised in writing that they are withdrawing their child to electively home educate; the school must inform the EWS via their referral processes.
- A pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer lives or boards within travelling distance of the school;
- The school medical officer has certified that the pupils' health means they will not return to the school before reaching the end of their compulsory school age.
- A pupil has been detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court for a period of not less than 4 months and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to school at the end of that periods (please refer to the guidance on young offenders in section 10); or
- Permanent exclusion (current practices of informing the Senior Access & Inclusion Officer (SAIO) should be continued)