



# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

## **2024 - 2025**

**Last review:** September 2024 (Nick Rothwell)

**Date for next review:** September 2025

## **PART I: INTRODUCTION**

*Professionals must combine an open-minded attitude with decisive action, when alleged concerns about a child are clearly indicated.*

*The safety and protection of all children is of paramount importance to all those involved in Education (Children Act 1989). There can be no greater issue of importance to parents, or to schools, than the safety of their children; safeguarding, therefore, remains a priority across all aspects of Old Hall's work.*

### **Purpose:**

Attendance at school is underpinned by a range of statutory requirements. Parents and guardians have the primary responsibility for ensuring those children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education, either by compulsory attendance at school or otherwise. (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996)

This school Attendance Policy requires a commitment from all staff within the school, together with governors, parents and pupils to work together and take a shared responsibility for good school attendance for all their pupils.

The school will have regard for the statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) August 2024: Working together to improve school attendance

### **Introduction and Background:**

At Old Hall, we believe that regular attendance is crucial if children are to benefit from their education and achieve their full potential.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

In order for children to have good attendance, the School and parents need to work together to ensure that children attend school regularly. At school, measures are in place to monitor and address attendance and absence.

Parents are notified about the school's policy on attendance through letters sent out at the start and throughout the academic year, and also through meetings held with parents.

Since Summer 2024, attendance is now added on all the children's reports on a termly basis so that parents are aware of the level of attendance that their child is attaining.

**This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:**

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school;
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

This policy details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education: Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2024.

## **Aims**

**Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:**

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued;
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We acknowledge and highlight the level of attendance of our students each term.

It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is only the Headmaster who can authorise the absence.

## **PART 2: THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER AND RECORDING**

### **ABSENCE**

Old Hall is required by law to take attendance registers twice daily: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

**Our official registration times are as follows:**

**AM REGISTRATION:** 8.30am to 9am

**PM REGISTRATION:** 1.20pm to 1.50pm (R-Year 4)/ 1.55-2.25pm (Year 5-6)

**Please Note: Pupils should be in school by 8.25am.**

**Arriving in school after the registration has closed: pupils **MUST SIGN IN** at the School Office.**

### **Attendance Register**

A register is taken at the start of each morning and afternoon session by the teacher responsible for the class for that teaching session. Morning registers open at 8.30am and close at 9.00am. Afternoon registers are taken in the first lesson after lunch at 1:20-1:50pm for Lower School and 1.55-2.25pm for Upper School.

All attendances and codes will be monitored during the day by the Head's PA (Mrs Irene Kinchley), who will publish all absences around the school after every registration period. They will also be responsible for amending any errors in codes or adjustments within 5 working days in consultation with Mr Nick Rothwell (DSL/SAC).

The register is on ISAMS so it is saved directly to the central school data management system, ensuring that we can monitor the attendance of pupils quickly and address any missing marks for pupils.

1. The school records and monitors the attendance of all pupils (Day and Boarding) in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024;

2. The school uses the appropriate national attendance and absence codes system to enable it to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with regulation 10 of the Attendance Regulations. See Appendix I;
3. The school also uses these records to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) and work with pupils and parents to resolve any issues before they become entrenched.
4. On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil is:
  - Physically present in school when the attendance register begins to be taken; or
  - Absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before
  - the taking of the register has ended; or
  - Attending a place other than the school; or
  - Absent.
5. The circumstances in which a pupil may be recorded as attending a place, other than the school, can include:
  - Attending educational provision arranged by a local authority;
  - For an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff;
  - Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity;
  - Attending a place for any other approved educational activity.
6. Lateness is also recorded. We expect all students to be at registration from 8.30am.
  - If a child arrives after 8.40am but before registration closes at 9.00am then they will be noted down as late and by how many minutes from 8.40am.
  - This will be recorded by the Head's PA on arrival at the school reception.
  - The 'L' code will be used and this can then be tracked for any persistent lateness.

Codes are used to record attendance and absence in a consistent way. Please see codes as follows:

**KEY:**    Main Codes Used    Frequently Used    Sometimes Used    Rarely Used

Code	Explanation
<b>TABLE 1 - ATTENDANCE</b>	
/	Present in morning registration when the register begins to be taken.
\	Present in afternoon registration when the register begins to be taken.

<b>L</b>	Late arrival <b>before</b> the register has closed - <b>closes at 9.00am and 1.50pm/2.25pm</b> . <i>If the register has closed, mark absent with code <b>U</b> or another code below if more appropriate.</i> Attendance registers should not be 'open' for more than 30 minutes for each session.
----------	--

## TABLE 2 - ATTENDANCE

<b>K</b>	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for education provision arranged by the local authority under s19(1) of the 1996 Act or s42(2) or 61(1) of the 2014 Act. <b>School must record the nature of the provision</b> e.g. college course.
<b>V</b>	The pupil is attending an educational visit or trip (including residential trips) arranged by the school and supervised by a member of school staff e.g. Geography trip, Art trip.
<b>P</b>	The pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by a member of school staff: e.g. hockey match.
<b>W</b>	Work experience provided under arrangements made by the local authority or the school as part of the pupil's education.
<b>B</b>	The pupil is attending a place for an approved (by the school) educational activity which is not the school or any other school at which the pupil is registered. The activity is educational but not educational provision arranged by the local authority or an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff – our staff are NOT present . (Not to be used if pupil is at home doing school work).
<b>D</b>	Dual registered at another school – pupil is registered at more than one school.

## TABLE 3 – ABSENT: LEAVE OF ABSENCE

**For statistical purposes the following codes are classed as AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

<b>CI</b>	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
<b>M</b>	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending medical or dental appointments.
<b>JI</b>	Interview with prospective employer or another educational establishment.
<b>S</b>	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of studying for a public examination.
<b>X</b>	The pupil is not of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because their timetable does not require them to attend.
<b>C2</b>	The pupil is of compulsory school age and is absent with leave, as agreed with the parent they normally live with and the school that the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis, their timetable does not require them to attend. Used very rarely – exceptional circumstances.
<b>D</b>	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending another school at which they are a registered pupil – i.e. dual registered at more than one school
<b>C</b>	The pupil is absent with leave for any other purpose e.g. pupil to attend a snowboarding competition – exceptional circumstances. <i>Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.</i>
<b>T</b>	The pupil is a mobile child, their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with that parent.
<b>R</b>	The day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a parent of a pupil belongs.
<b>I</b>	The pupil is unable to attend owing to illness (not medical or dental appointments).
<b>E</b>	The pupil is excluded from the school for any other reason.

## TABLE 4 – ABSENT: unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

**For statistical purposes the following codes are classed as  
NOT A POSSIBLE ATTENDANCE**

<b>Q</b>	The pupil is unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements for them: if the local authority has a duty to make travel arrangements and the school is not within walking distance, the local authority has not made arrangements for the pupil to board, the local authority has not made arrangements for the pupil to attend a qualifying school nearer their home.
<b>Y1</b>	The pupil is not able to attend because the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from school that is normally provided by the school (or local authority) is not available.
<b>Y2</b>	The pupil is unable to attend owing to widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency. E.g. disruption caused by snow.
<b>Y3</b>	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those who the school thinks cannot practicably be accommodated in those parts of the school that remain in use.
<b>Y4</b>	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed.
<b>Y5</b>	The pupil is unable to attend because they are in criminal justice detention.
<b>Y6</b>	The pupil's travel to school would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contrary to any guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease published by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care;</li> <li>• Prohibited by any enactment relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease or any instrument made under such an enactment.</li> </ul>
<b>Y7</b>	The pupil is unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. This code should only be used where the nature of the emergency prevented the pupil from attending – the unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent. The school must record the unavoidable cause.

**TABLE 5 – ABSENT: UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

**For statistical purposes the following codes are classed as UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

**Unauthorised Absence Codes – to be used where school is not satisfied with reasons given for the absence**

The school must ensure that reasonable steps are taken to establish the circumstances of a pupil's absence and that the register is amended within 5 school days.

<b>G</b>	The pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday: i.e. a holiday NOT granted by the school. (The school cannot grant leave of absence retrospectively).
<b>N</b>	<b>Reason for absence not yet provided. This code should not be left on the pupil's record indefinitely.</b> If a pupil arrives in school after the registration is closed but attends before the end of a session and the circumstances of a pupil's absence have been established, the code <b>N</b> is to be replaced with the appropriate code but not if codes <b>C</b> or <b>T</b> are applicable - otherwise code <b>U</b> replaces code <b>N</b> . <b>Absence must be followed up – see code O below.</b>
<b>O</b>	If circumstances have not been established, the code <b>N</b> is to be replaced with code <b>O</b> (add a note to the register). None of the other rows of this table (Table 3) applies. <b>A call needs to be made (unauthorised absence).</b>
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after the registration is closed (9.30am or 2.30pm) but attended before the end of a session, other codes, other than <b>C</b> or <b>T</b> do not apply.

**Administration Codes**

<b>Z</b>	Used when registers are set up in advance – prospective pupil not on the admission register. This code is not collected for statistical purposes.
----------	---

#	Planned whole school closures: e.g. half terms , days between terms etc. This code is not collected for statistical purposes.
---	---

## **PART 3: UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE**

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

### **Authorised Absences**

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away (granted an authorised leave of absence) or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Authorised absences are for morning and/or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. Parents are advised to book regular medical appointments outside of school hours where possible.

### **Granting Leave of Absence**

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission.

All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purposes of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.



## **Applications for an authorised leave of absence**

1. Applications for authorised leaves of absence during the school day will only be granted in exceptional circumstances\* and will only be permitted if made in writing to the Head at [absence@oldhall.co.uk](mailto:absence@oldhall.co.uk) or completing the 'Absence Request Permission Form' which is available on the [school website](#).
2. The school will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, the pupil's past attendance record and the relevant background context behind the request;
3. Where requests are received from only one parent the school reserves the right to contact the other parent to ensure that both parents are fully aware of the intended absence and the possible consequences of taking unauthorised leave during term time.
4. Apart from illness, no pupil should be away from school without prior permission from the Head;
5. Dental or medical appointments should be made during school holidays except in cases of emergency;
6. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Head to determine the length of the time the pupil is permitted to be away from school. It will be recorded as an authorised absence;

\*Funerals, Religious observance, Interviews, Out of School Sporting Activities eg county matches, etc and any other exceptional circumstance

## **Absences for Illness or Medical Appointments**

If this is not possible, parents are asked to notify school before the appointment so that the attendance register can be amended to show why the child is not in school.

In the case of an on the day illness or medical appointments, parents should contact school on the first day of absence due to illness and then also need to contact school every day following this.

All absences from school should be emailed to the school office and the class teacher so that the correct codes can be marked into the register. Messages that are taken via the school office relating to pupil absence are put onto the system so that teachers can see why a pupil is absent.

## **Unknown Absence**

If a child is absent and no reason has been given for absence then this will be marked as 'No reason provided yet' (N) . Before 10am, the school office will call all parents of absent

children to determine why they are not in school. The office will then update the registers and share these updates with the whole staff. Any concerns about absences will be shared with the DSL (Nick Rothwell) so that this can be followed up in line with our Safeguarding Policy.

If there is not a legitimate reason provided for absence, then the absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' (O). If there are significant concerns about a child's attendance (over a half term or their attendance falls below 90%) through persistent illness then the school will speak to parents and discuss the challenges being faced and what is being done to help and support the child.

### **Monitoring of Attendance**

The following systems are in place for addressing attendance:

- Each week an attendance report is produced which indicates every child's percentage attendance for the academic year.
- The Safeguarding and Pastoral Team will monitor children's attendance with a particular focus on those under 90% (the figure classed as persistent absence).
- The school will also follow up with all cases where attendance is below 50% (classed as severe absence).
- The local authority will be involved following a referral if parents are unable to show an increase in attendance following severe absences from school.
- Parents may be contacted informing them that their child's attendance is lower than expected and a meeting may be requested.

(See Flowcharts in Appendix I)

The purpose of these meetings are to:

- Make parents aware of their child's attendance and/or punctuality.
- Discuss reasons for absence.
- Look at additional support that may be available, eg. Early Help, Matron support.
- Raise awareness of the impact of good attendance on pupil outcomes.
- Ensure that parents understand the impact and possible consequences of further absence.
- If a child has not been at school and no contact has been made with parents, then a home visit by the DSL and/or Headteacher may be requested by the school, particularly if there are any additional safeguarding concerns.

- If a child is absent from school and cannot be located then the child may be reported to the local authority as CME – a Child Missing in Education.

## **Unauthorised Absences**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school liaising with the Local Authority and a referral being made.

Referrals can also be made to the Local Authority Safeguarding Teams if there are significant concerns regarding attendance and unauthorised absence. Referrals will be made by the school if a child is persistently missing school, this will only take place if the interventions and early help put in place by the school have no effect on the attendance of that child.

### **Unauthorised absence includes, (however this list is not exhaustive):**

- Parents/guardians keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for noninfectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- A child who arrives at school after the close of registration without valid reason is marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session;
- Shopping trips;
- Children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments or sporting fixtures;
- Their own or family birthdays;
- Holidays taken during term time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the Head , including any arranged by other family members or friends;
- Day trips;
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

## **PART 4: ABSENCE AND PUNCTUALITY PROCEDURES**

### **Absence and Punctuality Concerns**

*Procedure followed for absence and/or punctuality – early concerns*

#### **Stage 1**

1. The second step will be made by the pupil's Housemaster/Housemistress who will have a discussion with the parents to see if there are any reasons for the absences or not. This should be recorded on CPOMS.

*The procedure followed for absence and/or poor punctuality – persistent concerns*

#### **Stage 2**

1. The Deputy Head /DDSL will write to the parent if their child's attendance is nearing 90% (causing concern) commencing after the first half term;
2. The Deputy Head /DDSL will write to the parent if their child's punctuality continues to be a concern;

#### **Stage 3**

1. A meeting will be arranged with the parent(s) to discuss the situation with the Deputy Head/Head.
2. A personalised action/support plan will be drawn up, to address any barriers to attendance and make clear each person's role in improving the attendance patterns of the child concerned;
3. Support will be offered including signposting support to other agencies or services, if appropriate;

The school may need to liaise with the Local Authority if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

### **Understanding Barriers to Attendance**

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then the school will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. The school can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the relevant Local Authority team(s).

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who live with long-term medical conditions, who have special educational needs and disabilities, or have other vulnerabilities. We also recognise that some of our children may be young carers (registered/unregistered) and the school would put in early help to support and lateness. High expectations of attendance remain in place for these pupils, however the school will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. The school will discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support advice from external partners, where appropriate.

## **Legal Responsibilities**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. Failure to do so may result in legal action, including penalty notices or prosecution by the Local Authority.

## **Reception Age Children**

Children must get an education in the school term when they have their 5th birthday.

Please see the following websites for more information:

[Government School attendance and absence website](#)

[Telford and Wrekin Attendance Support](#)

## APPENDIX I

### PROCEDURES FOR ABSENCE

#### Illness / Emergency medical appointment:

My child is unable to attend school (unplanned)



Parent or guardian should email the child's Form Teacher and include [absences@oldhall.co.uk](mailto:absences@oldhall.co.uk) before 8.30am on the first day of absence.

If the absence continues for more than one day, the parent / guardian must email on each day of the absence. If the illness is expected to last for an extended period of time e.g., the child has a medical note, this can be submitted to the school and further emails about the absence will not be required. Please note that following an extended absence, parents / guardians are asked to contact the school ahead of the child returning to school to ensure that any support measures can be put in place.

If no reason for absence is given, the school will make contact with the parents / guardians via telephone or email. The absence will be recorded as 'N' (reason for absence not yet provided) until the reason has been established. This must be updated within 5 days. If no reason has been established then it will be changed to unauthorised 'O'.

## Planned Absence:

My child has a planned medical / dental appointment.



Parent or guardian should email the Form Teacher in advance stating the date and time of the appointment.



This will be recorded on the register as 'M' (Medical) – Authorised leave. The child should sign in / out of school (as appropriate) at the School Office. Children should be collected from / dropped off here.

I would like to request a leave of absence for my child (exceptional circumstances). This does not relate to a medical appointment.



Parent or guardian must complete an absence request form (to be submitted to the Headmaster). The reason for the absence must be given. These are available from the Headmaster's PA [office@oldhall.co.uk](mailto:office@oldhall.co.uk) and are also on the school's website



The absence will be approved by the Head and this will be recorded on the register as 'C' (authorised leave for exceptional circumstance).



The absence request will not be approved (deemed not to be exceptional circumstances e.g. general holiday request). This will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Please note that, due to new regulations which came into force in August 2024, holidays in term time would not generally be deemed to be an exceptional circumstance and cannot be authorised by the school. Additionally, the school cannot grant leave of absence retrospectively.