



Attendance Policy and Procedure

Document control

Item	Detail
Policy title	Attendance Policy and Procedure
Category	Safeguarding and Pastoral
Statutory status	Statutory. Required by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, July 2026)
Policy owner	Mr Joe Hughes, Designated Safeguarding Lead
Senior leader responsible	Mr Joe Hughes, Designated Safeguarding Lead
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Policy summary

This policy explains why attendance matters at Cokethorpe, how we promote and monitor it, how registers are taken and absence is notified and followed up, how we support pupils who find attendance difficult, and the statutory returns we are required to make to the local authority. It is prepared for implementation in the 2026/27 academic year, with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 in force from 1 September 2026.

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Key attendance contacts

Attendance Champion (senior leader): Mr Joe Hughes, Director of Safeguarding — 01993 703921 / 07860 960507 — jeh@cokethorpe.org

Attendance Officer: Mrs Sam Wadeson

Reporting an absence: 01993 703921 — seniorattendance@cokethorpe.org (Senior School) / juniorattendance@cokethorpe.org (Prep School), by 8.30am.

1. Why attendance matters

We want every pupil at Cokethorpe to feel that they belong here and to be in School, ready to learn. Good attendance is the foundation of a happy, successful education: it supports attainment, wellbeing, friendship and wider life chances. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education, and where parents have enrolled their child at the School they have a legal duty to ensure the child attends regularly.

2. What we are seeking to achieve

Through this policy we aim to:

- develop and maintain a whole-School culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
- help every pupil benefit from, and contribute fully to, the life of the School;
- improve attendance and punctuality and reduce absence, preventing children from becoming children missing education (CME);
- recognise the close link between attendance, wellbeing and safeguarding, and respond with care; and
- promote a whole-School culture of safety, equality and protection.

3. Scope and application

This policy applies to the whole School, including the EYFS setting. Cokethorpe is a day school; there are no boarders and no boarding-specific arrangements apply. It addresses the School's statutory obligations to record attendance and absence and sets out how we promote and manage attendance.

4. Definitions

- **Parent** means all natural parents (whether married or not), any person with parental responsibility, and any person who has day-to-day care of a pupil.
- **Pupil** means anyone receiving education at the School (subject to the statutory age limits).
- **Children missing education (CME)** means children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

- **Attendance Champion** means the senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance (referred to in national guidance as the Senior Attendance Champion).

5. Responsibilities and allocation of tasks

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the matters in this policy and has appointed the Attendance Champion as the designated senior leader responsible for championing and improving attendance.

Task	Allocated to	Frequency
Keeping the policy up to date and compliant	Attendance Champion	At least annually
Monitoring implementation of the policy	Attendance Champion	Termly
Analysing attendance and absence data	Attendance Champion / Attendance Officer / Heads of Year	Weekly & termly
Day-to-day recording and follow-up of absence	Form tutors / class teachers & Attendance Officer	Daily
Governor oversight of attendance trends and casework	Compliance Committee	Termly
Formal annual review	Governing Body	Annually

6. Promoting good attendance

We promote good attendance by making Cokethorpe a place where pupils want to be and by working in partnership with families. Our approach combines a welcoming environment with early, supportive intervention. We:

- provide an engaging, relevant curriculum that motivates pupils to attend;
- offer pastoral support – from tutors, counselling and peer mentoring – to pupils facing barriers to attendance;
- work closely with parents and communicate early where attendance concerns arise;
- maintain a safe and welcoming environment in which pupils feel secure and valued;
- monitor attendance closely and intervene promptly when patterns of absence emerge;
- offer a wide range of extra-curricular activities; and
- register individual lessons to understand the impact of absence on progress.

We share with pupils and parents the impact attendance has on learning:

- 97% attendance $\approx$ 1 teaching week missed over a year;
- 94% attendance $\approx$ 2 teaching weeks missed over a year;
- 91% attendance $\approx$ 3 teaching weeks missed over a year.

Attendance patterns are monitored weekly, with a fortnightly review forming part of Pastoral Team meetings and a formal half-termly review led by the Attendance Champion and Deputy Head, Pastoral and Wellbeing. We treat absence as almost always a symptom of wider circumstances and seek to understand and address the cause before considering any sanction.

7. Registration and registration windows

Accurate registers are a legal requirement and an essential safeguarding tool. Form tutors and class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both the morning and afternoon sessions each day, using the correct national codes and submitting them online via Involve.

Prep School:

- Morning registration (AM): during form time, 8.40–8.55am; registers must be completed accurately by 8.50am.
- Afternoon registration (PM): during form time, 1.00–1.15pm; registers taken within the first 10 minutes.

Senior School:

- Morning registration (AM): during form time, 8.40–8.55am; registers must be completed accurately by 8.50am.
- Afternoon registration (PM): during Period 7, 1.45–2.00pm; registers taken within the first 10 minutes.

Registers must be taken at the same time for all pupils in each session. This applies equally to pupils on part-time timetables, phased returns or other bespoke arrangements: registration timing itself must not vary, and any difference in a pupil's expected attendance pattern must instead be reflected through the correct national attendance code.

If a pupil arrives after the registration period has closed, they must sign in at the Senior School Office (Senior School) or the main reception in the Mansion House (Prep School). A pupil who arrives after the register has closed is recorded with code U ('arrived after registration closed'), which counts as an unauthorised absence. Attendance is monitored by the Attendance Officer (Mrs Sam Wadeson) and the national attendance and absence codes are set out in Appendix 2.

8. Notifying and dealing with absence

If a pupil is unable to attend, parents must contact the School as early as possible and by 8.30am, by telephoning 01993 703921, emailing seniorattendance@cokethorpe.org or juniorattendance@cokethorpe.org, or contacting the tutor directly. Please give the child's name, tutor group and the reason for absence, and contact the School on each day of absence unless a longer period has already been notified.

A daily list of absent pupils is circulated to Senior School staff and to the Head of Prep School. Where a pupil has not registered and no message has been received, the Attendance Officer will telephone before 9.30am, using all contact information held. Parents must keep the

School updated with any change of address, email or telephone number. If an absence remains unexplained it will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a reason for absence has not been established, code N will be used and updated as soon as the reason is known and no later than five school days after the absence; if no reason can be established within five school days the record will be amended to code O. Where illness is given as the reason, we may signpost parents to current NHS guidance on whether a child is well enough to attend. We do not operate a blanket requirement for medical evidence and will only request it where a pupil's health needs are complex, long-term or frequently recurring, or where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about an absence.

If a child is missing education through unauthorised or unexplained absence for a continuous period of ten school days, this becomes a safeguarding concern and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will inform the local authority.

9. Monitoring attendance and escalation

The School analyses attendance data regularly at individual, cohort and whole-School level to identify pupils who need support, including those at risk of becoming persistently or severely absent or CME. Our monitoring gives particular attention to pupils with SEND, mental-health needs, those known to social care, and **young carers**, who are now named explicitly in national guidance as a cohort to monitor.

As a matter of course, the following supportive actions are taken:

- 3 days (cumulative): tutor contacts home;
- 5 days (cumulative): Head of Year contacts home and, where appropriate, meets to agree strategies to improve attendance;
- 10 days (cumulative): Attendance Champion contacts home and, where appropriate, meets to agree strategies and consider engagement with external agencies.

The School identifies 6% absence as a 'concern', 10% absence as 'persistent' and absence of 50% or more as 'severe', and will work with Oxfordshire County Council and relevant partners to support the pupil and family.

10. Additional needs and reasonable adjustments

Some pupils find attendance harder than others. We build strong, trusting relationships and work with pupils and parents to remove barriers and put the right support in place. We make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage in relation to attendance, and we work with parents and, where appropriate, the local authority to develop support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities — for example, ensuring provision in an education, health and care (EHC) plan is accessed. Where a pupil has an EHC plan we will contact the local authority if attendance falls or new barriers emerge.

Suitable strategies, including time-limited phased returns, will be considered for pupils whose attendance is affected by social, emotional or mental-health needs, and remote education will only be used as a last resort, after reasonable adjustments have been considered, and as part

of a planned return to School. Where barriers are outside the School's control, we will help identify alternative support or, where appropriate, make an early-help referral.

11. Late arrivals and temporary absence

The School day begins at 8.40am and we expect all pupils to be in class by that time. Registers are marked by 8.50am and a pupil not present by then receives a late mark; registers close at 8.55am. A pupil arriving after 8.55am is recorded as on site but this does not count as present and is treated as an unauthorised absence (code U). Pupils arriving late, or missing afternoon registration, must sign the late register at the Senior School Office or Prep School Office.

Parents are strongly encouraged to arrange appointments (for example dental, medical or music exams) outside School hours. Where this is not possible, parents should email the relevant attendance address so the register can be updated in advance. Before leaving site, a pupil must sign out at the Senior School Office having obtained a permission slip from their Head of Year; Prep School children sign out at the Prep School Office.

12. Leave of absence and term-time absence

Absence during term time, including family holidays, is actively discouraged. Any request for leave of absence must be made in advance, in writing, to the Head of Year. Each request is considered individually on its merits, taking account of the reason, the effect on the continuity of learning and the pupil's overall attendance. We do not operate blanket policies that automatically grant or refuse leave for particular circumstances; each application is judged on its own facts. The increased cost of a family holiday during School holidays is not a valid reason. Leave will usually be authorised for religious observance where the day is exclusively set apart by the religious body to which the parents belong.

13. If a child becomes unwell during the day

If a child is unwell during the day they will be taken to the School Medical Centre. The School Nurse will contact parents if the child needs to be collected. Parents must notify the School if the pupil remains unwell the following day.

14. Parent responsibilities

Parents play a central role in good attendance. We ask parents to:

- ensure their child attends every day the School is open, except where absence is allowed (such as illness or authorised leave);
- notify the School of any absence, as early as possible and by 8.30am, giving an accurate reason;
- make applications for authorised leave at the earliest opportunity;
- keep the School updated with current contact details; and
- work with the School to explore and remove any barriers to attendance.

Parents are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the parent contract.

15. Information sharing and statutory returns

Personal information about attendance is shared only in line with data protection laws and government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education. The School works jointly with the local authority and partners where this benefits a pupil, and is legally required to share information from its registers with the local authority, including:

- New pupil and deletion returns (when a pupil is added to, or deleted from, the admission register at non-standard transition points);
- Attendance returns (names and addresses of pupils of compulsory school age who fail to attend regularly, or who have been absent for a continuous period of ten school days recorded with an unauthorised code – G, N, O and/or U);
- Sickness returns (pupils recorded with code I whom the School reasonably believes will miss 15 school days consecutively or cumulatively; only one return is required per continuous period of sickness in a school year).

Where enquiries lead the School to believe a child will not return and no alternative provision is confirmed, a referral will be made to the home local authority's CME team without delay. Action will also be taken under the Missing Child Policy and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy where any absence raises a welfare concern, including referral to children's social care and requesting a police welfare check where necessary.

Reporting responsibilities: the Admissions Team notifies the Local Authority when a pupil is removed from the admission register; the Bursar completes the School-Level Annual School Census (SLASC) each January; and the DSL notifies the Local Authority of Children Missing Education concerns, including where a pupil has been absent without explanation for 10 school days or more.

If the School sponsors any pupil under the Child Student visa route, it will report to UKVI where the pupil misses ten consecutive expected contact points. The School holds a Student Sponsor License.

16. Record keeping and confidentiality

Records created under this policy are managed in accordance with the School's retention arrangements. Entries in the admission and attendance registers are preserved for six years. Personal data is handled in accordance with data protection laws, as explained in the School's privacy notices.

17. Governor oversight

Attendance trends and casework are reported to the Governors' Compliance Committee on a termly basis, and the Committee provides genuine oversight of attendance rather than simply receiving a headline figure.

18. Training and communication

The School provides guidance and training on attendance at induction and at regular intervals so that all staff understand the importance of good attendance, that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances, and the School's procedures for recording, following up and improving attendance. Staff with a specific attendance function receive dedicated training covering the law and registers, working with partners to support pupils, and interpreting attendance data. Written records of training are maintained.

19. Monitoring, review and publication

- This policy is published on the School website and is provided to parents when pupils join the School and when it is updated.
- It is available in hard copy on request and can be provided in large print or another accessible format if required.

The Attendance Champion keeps this policy up to date and monitors its implementation termly; attendance and absence data are analysed weekly and termly. This policy is reviewed annually by the Governing Body.

20. Related School policies and procedures

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following School policies and procedures:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and Procedures;
- Missing Child Policy;
- Promoting Good Behaviour (Behaviour) Policy;
- Learning Support Policy;
- First Aid Policy;
- Risk Assessment Policy;
- Transport Policy;
- Complaints Procedure; and
- Data Protection Policy / Privacy Notice.

21. Legislation, regulation and guidance

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under the following legislation and has regard to the guidance below. Where guidance is updated, the School will refer to the current published version.

Legislation:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- Education Act 1996 and Education and Skills Act 2008;
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Children Act 1989 and Childcare Act 2006;
- Equality Act 2010; and

Data Protection Act 2018, UK GDPR and the **Data (Use and Access) Act 2025** (together, ‘data protection laws’).

Statutory and other guidance (current versions):

- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE, **July 2026 edition**)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education **2026 (in force 1 September 2026)**;
- Children missing education (DfE);
- Communicating with parents about school attendance (DfE, 2026);
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (DfE);
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (DfE); and
- “Is my child too ill for school?” (NHS).

22. Useful information

- Oxfordshire attendance team: 01865 323513 / attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- County Attendance Officer: Dawn Softley — dawn.softley@oxfordshire.gov.uk
- Oxfordshire Schools County Attendance Team: <https://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/access-learning/county-attendance-team>
- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE) — current version:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Version history

Version / date	Summary of change	Author
February 2026	Previous approved version	Joe Hughes, Director of Safeguarding
August 2026	Reviewed, modernised and reformatted to the School policy template (V4). DRAFT — not yet approved.	Policy Review
August 2026	(V5) Errors corrected.	Joe Hughes, Director of Safeguarding

Appendix A — School attendance arrangements

The operational detail in sections 8–14 (registration windows, first-day contact, sign-in/out and escalation) constitutes the School's day-to-day arrangements.

EYFS-specific arrangements:

In addition to the arrangements above, and in line with the EYFS statutory framework, the School will, where possible, hold more than two emergency contact numbers for each EYFS pupil, in addition to parents'/carers' primary contact details. Where an EYFS pupil is absent without notification, or for a prolonged period, staff will attempt to contact the parent/carers

and the emergency contacts. In deciding whether an absence should be treated as prolonged, staff will use professional judgement, taking into account the pupil's and family's circumstances and any known vulnerabilities. Any concerns will be referred to the DSL, who will consider whether a referral to children's social care and/or a police welfare check is required.

Appendix B – National attendance and absence codes

The School uses the national attendance and absence codes set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the DfE statutory guidance.

Code	Description	Statistical Classification
/	Present at the school – Morning session – present at the school when attendance register begins to be taken.	Attending
\	Present at the school – Afternoon session – present at the school when attendance register begins to be taken.	Attending
B	Attending any other approved educational activity – The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience. The activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded, and the school <i>must record the nature of the approved educational activity</i> .	Attending an approved educational activity
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance – Each application must be judged individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context. Where leave is granted, the school determines the number of days at its discretion.	Authorised absence
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.	Authorised absence
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable – This is for very exceptional circumstances where, in the pupil's best interests, a temporary part-time timetable is agreed to meet their individual needs.	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another school – Attending another school at which they are a registered pupil.	Not a possible attendance
E	Suspended or permanently excluded – The pupil is suspended or permanently excluded from school on disciplinary grounds, their name remains on the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education.	Authorised absence
G	Holiday not granted by the school – Absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday.	Unauthorised absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment) – The pupil is unable to attend due to illness, including both physical and mental health-related illness.	Authorised absence
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.	Authorised absence

K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority – Attending a place other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil for educational provision arranged by the local authority (under Section 19(1) of the Education Act 1996 or Section 42 of the Children’s and Families Act 2014). Where schools use code K, they <i>must also record the nature of the educational activity.</i>	Attending an approved educational activity
L	Late arrival before the register is closed – Absent from the school when attendance register begins to be taken, but attends before the taking of the register has ended.	Attending
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.	Authorised absence
N	Reason for absence not yet established – If the reason has not been established before the register closes, code N must be used. The correct absence code must be entered as soon as the reason is established, but no more than 5 school days after the session; if it cannot be established within 5 school days, the record must be amended to code O.	Unauthorised absence
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances.	Unauthorised absence
P	Participating in a sporting activity – Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity.	Attending an approved educational activity
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements.	Not a possible attendance
R	Religious observance – Day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.	Authorised absence
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination.	Authorised absence
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes – Mobile child whose parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and who is travelling with that parent.	Authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed – Absent for registration - arrived in school after registration closed.	Unauthorised absence
V	Attending an educational visit or trip – Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a visit or trip.	Attending an approved educational activity
W	Attending work experience – Attending a place for an approved education activity that is work experience.	Attending an approved educational activity
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school – Absent with leave, not of compulsory school age and timetable does not require them to attend.	Not a possible attendance
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available – Unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of pupil’s home and transport to and from school normally provided is not available.	Not a possible attendance
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel – caused by a local, national or international emergency.	Not a possible attendance

Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed — Part of school premises is unavoidably out of use and pupil cannot be accommodated in the parts of the premises that remain in use.	Not a possible attendance
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed — This applies where the school was planned to be open for the session but closed unexpectedly. It must not be used for planned closures such as weekends or holidays.	Not a possible attendance
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention — This includes police detention, being remanded to youth detention awaiting trial or sentencing, or being detained under a sentence of detention.	Not a possible attendance
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law — The pupil is well enough to attend, but Government rules or guidance to limit the spread of infection or disease say they should not attend; their travel to or attendance at school would therefore be contrary to relevant guidance or prohibited by relevant legislation.	Not a possible attendance
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause — This applies only where an emergency not covered by another “unable to attend” code prevents the pupil from attending the session. The unavoidable cause must affect the pupil, not the parent, and the school <i>must record the nature of the unavoidable cause</i> .	Not a possible attendance
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register — Used to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school and ease administration. This code is not collected for statistical purposes.	Not collected for statistical purposes
#	Planned whole school closure — no session to take place (not collected in the school census).	Not collected for statistical purposes

Appendix C — Attendance Poster

Attendance is *Everyone's* Business

Every day in school counts.

Make the most of every opportunity in School with excellent attendance.

100%	OUTSTANDING! Excellent Attendance. Making the most of every opportunity in and out of the classroom.
97%	MISSING OUT Approximately 5 – 10 days absent. Missing out on opportunities and learning.
94%	CONCERN Approximately 11 – 19 days absent. Harder to keep up with learning.
90%	'PERSISTENT' ABSENCE Approximately 20 – 28 days absent. Noticeable impact on learning and achievement, wellbeing and opportunities outside the classroom.
50% or below	'SEVERE' ABSENCE Approximately 95 days or more absent Serious impact on learning and achievement, wellbeing and opportunities outside the classroom.

Source: Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2026

Days are illustrative based on a 190-day school year