

Old Town Infant School and Nursery



Our vision for attendance

Here at Old Town, we strive to ensure that all pupils have attendance of at least 96%.

We instil a culture where attendance is EVERYONE'S responsibility – this is not an area of school operation that is left to the Headteacher and Attendance Officer.

How we track and address attendance issues at Old Town

The Headteacher tracks attendance on a weekly basis and measures the schools performance against FFT Aspire (National figures). We compare attendance for all children and also vulnerable groups (including Pupil Premium, EHCP, SEND and children who were previously identified as being persistently absent).

Attendance audits are carried out by the Headteacher and Attendance Officer. Audits are carried out half-termly during the Autumn Term. From the Spring Term, audits are then carried out on a monthly basis. Should the attendance officer notice any anomalies between audits, she will immediately alert the Headteacher, who will take appropriate action.

For attendance below 96 % a standard letter is typically sent to any parent/carer whose child's attendance has dropped below 96%. This letter is for information – it notifies the parent/carer of this attendance level and explains that the school will continue to monitor their child's attendance.

For attendance between 90% and 96% the standard letter described above may be used again where a pupil's attendance sits at this level. This letter may be used twice in succession but at this point, the school will engage in other dialogue with the family in between, either through telephone conversations, informal school gate discussions or through less formal meetings. These discussions could be led by the Class Teacher, Pastoral Support Worker, Attendance Officer or Headteacher.

However, if attendance remains at this level for a third time, it will be treated as for attendance which is below 90%.

Attendance at 90% is considered to be persistent absence. In such circumstances, parents/carers will receive a specific letter which very clearly identifies that the attendance level is a significant cause for concern (except for in exceptional circumstances where the attendance may not a cause for concern such as known medical condition). Parents/carers are requested to attend a meeting, the purpose of which is to explore the reasons for their child's low attendance and formulate a plan for improvement. The content of this meeting will be used to draw up an attendance improvement plan which will be shared with the parents/carers and a review date will be agreed. Participants in that meeting will vary according to the circumstances but may often involve staff such as the Headteacher or other senior leader, class teacher, SENCo and Pastoral Care Worker.

Should attendance decline below 90%, unless there are exceptional circumstances, the school will not be routinely authorising absences at this stage. If attendance is not showing reasonable improvement within four weeks of the last communication to parents/carers, then the school will take further action which will involve further meetings with the parents/carers. It is likely that a referral for further intervention by the Local Authority will be appropriate; certainly, advice from this team will be sought.

Schools can request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice for persistent absenteeism. This would be issued when a pupil has failed to attend school regularly over a six-week period (when his/her attendance has fallen to 90% or below). The absence may comprise a series of single or half day unauthorised absences or a block of unauthorised absence for reasons such as reported illness where no evidence has been provided or unauthorised holidays have been taken.



Children at the heart of
everything that we do



How does Old Town Infant School and Nursery raise awareness of persistent absence?

From November 2022, following on from each attendance audit, class teachers will receive a register of persistent absentees for their class. This will raise awareness of the persistent absentees in each class, allowing teaching and support staff to swiftly identify the children that we need to focus on in terms of improving attendance.

Class Teachers will also use the persistent absence registers to inform conversations with families at both drop off and collection time, as well as formal meetings – such as parents evenings. Should families identify specific barriers that are preventing them from achieving good levels of attendance, class staff should let either the Headteacher or Attendance Officer know immediately.

Attendance will be discussed as part of the Autumn and Summer Term parents evenings. Individual attendance statistics will also be included within the mid-year school report.

What does the school do to promote attendance?

Each week as part of our Friday celebration assembly, we award the Attendance Cup to the class with the highest level of attendance for that week. Winning classes take great pride in collecting the award and then displaying the cup in their classroom throughout the week. The school reminds parents/carers of our attendance expectations, by formally writing to all families at the start of each academic year. The attendance policy can also be found on the school website.

We plan to include attendance as a regular feature of the school monthly newsletter. Last year, Governors also wrote to parents about the importance of good school attendance levels.

How does the school go 'above and beyond' in terms of improving attendance?

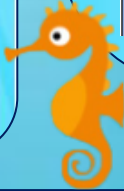

The school conducts half termly and then monthly, attendance audits.

Clear systems are embedded within the office in terms of making contact with parents/carers of absent families. In the past where we have not been able to make telephone contact, the school has carried out welfare checks. If school has not been able to make contact during these welfare checks, the Police have been informed to support us. The school has a full time Pastoral Care Worker who builds positive partnerships with our families. The PCW is able to signpost families to a wide range of external agencies who are able to provide support within the home e.g. Family Support Workers, Early Help Workers. We also have an ELSA training Teaching Assistant who can support children with emotional difficulties if needed e.g. school refusers.

From November 2022, the school will also host a BCP Navigator who is able to assist with attendance issues if necessary.

Nearly 85% of staff have accessed grief recovery training. If there are children who suffer from anxiety or attachment difficulties (with regards to separating from parents), we have a high number of skilled staff who can support with this.

We are able to offer free spaces in our breakfast club, should there be any families who struggle to get their children in on time. Parents are able to drop off from 0730. This intervention has been really successful in improving attendance levels for some of our children with persistent absence.



Tier 5	90% or below is considered as persistently absent. School to continue working with parents to improve attendance. Meetings with parents to be held on a half termly basis. School may refer to the Local Authority for further support. Fixed penalty notice may be issued.
Tier 4	91%-92% Stage 1 or 2 letter sent (depending on circumstances) following attendance audit. School to meet with parents to see what support we can offer in improving attendance. School to work alongside parents in writing attendance improvement plan.
Tier 3	93%-94% Stage 1 letter sent following attendance audit. Class teacher to explore potential attendance issues during parents evening or at collection/drop off. The Headteacher or Attendance Officer should be made aware of any barriers that parents raise.
Tier 2	95%-97% Class teacher to monitor attendance and praise
Tier 1	Above 97% attendance. This is the level of attendance that we strive for all children to achieve. Headteacher to praise.