

Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Applies to	OMG Education Independent School
School type	Independent special school
Location	Tower Hamlets
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Headteacher / DSL	Victoria Early <i>V Early</i>	Date: 16/06/2026
Approved on behalf of the Governing Body by the Chair of Governors:	Gary Macey <i>G Macey</i>	Date: 16/06/2026

We believe that education is essential for all. To achieve their full potential, children need to attend regularly and punctually. Non-attendance at school for any reason is a significant issue that must be addressed promptly and seriously. In all cases of non-attendance, it is essential to take early action.

Parent/Carers: To support your child's attendance by ensuring they are attending school in line with school policies and the Home School agreement. "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." DfE 2022

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

Written following guidance in the DfE:

- [Working together to improve school attendance](#)
- [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold. The Governors, Headteacher and staff acknowledge that there is a strong correlation between high attendance and pupil progress.

Policy Aims

- Attendance registers are kept, and attendance and punctuality are monitored to ensure that positive attendance patterns are established from the programme's outset.
- The school should achieve, as a minimum, an attendance rate of 75% (as a group average), should have the ambition of 90% actual attendance and put in place effective interventions when there is a concern around individual attendance and should put in place effective interventions if this is not achieved.
- We recognise that whilst national guidelines exist for minimum attendance figures for individual pupils, with the nature of OMG's pupil intake, sometimes these figures may not immediately be met. OMG, believe that continuously supporting pupils to improve their attendance is key; if a pupil arrives at us with an attendance average of 60% from their referral school, an immediate increase of at least 15% may be unlikely. However, OMG will work with all involved to steadily increase this number until it reaches the target figure. There is, of course, no 'one size fits all number for this approach, and as such, individual learners require individual planning and implementation techniques.

Policy Implementation

The school is committed to promoting pupils' well-being, engagement, and readiness to learn. To support this, the formal start of the school day is set at **9:30 a.m.**, allowing all pupils sufficient time to access the school's breakfast provision prior to the commencement of lessons at **10:00 a.m.** Pupils arriving after 10:00 a.m. will be sent home.

The school recognises that, on occasion, there may be valid reasons for lateness. Where a pupil or parent/carer contacts the school **before 9:45 a.m.** to report an unavoidable delay, flexibility may be exercised at the discretion of the pastoral or senior leadership team, taking into account the nature and frequency of such occurrences.

We require a phone call or email from all parents and carers to notify OMG Education of any absences. For appointments, proof will be mandatory. This can be submitted via email or text. Failure to do so will result in an unauthorised absence. The Local Authority will also be notified of all unauthorised absences.

Authorised absence occurs when the Headteacher has either given approval in advance for a young person to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for the absence. All other absences must be treated as unauthorised. Parents may not authorise absence, whether in advance or retrospectively. A young person can legally leave school on the last Friday in June of the school year when they reach 16 or 18.

In achieving those aims, these principles of good practice should be followed:

- **Establish good habits early** - help individuals to establish good regular attendance and good behaviour from the start, involving parents/carers/guardians in the process (i.e. at the point of contract).

- **Early intervention** - prompt intervention is needed where there is poor behaviour or unexplained absence, so that it is clear that these behaviours will not be accepted. There is a clear scale of intervention when learner attendance falls below 75% (Appendix B).
- **First-day response** - establishing the first-day response can be a positive and proactive measure and a visible demonstration of OMG's vigilance, care and concern for a learner's safety and well-being.
- **Rewarding achievements** - positive recognition of individual learners or groups of learners in good behaviour and attendance.
- **Supporting behaviour management** - using a range of behavioural strategies to maintain and improve high standards of behaviour and discipline.
- **Working with parents/carers** - project staff should encourage parents/carers to support good attendance and behaviour through home-project agreements, meetings, etc.
- **Involving learners** can help reinforce behaviour policies/strategies through active involvement in anti-bullying/harassment policies.
- **Identifying underlying causes** - through regular review of the learners' progress, i.e. tutorials, frequent contact with parents/carers and other agencies, monitoring absence patterns and investigation.

Completing Attendance Registers

The school is required to take a register twice a day, at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon. The register indicates whether the young person is present, engaged in an approved off-site activity, or absent.

AM registration

AM registration is taken at 9:30 a.m. daily. Pupils arriving after 10:00 a.m. will be marked as late or absent according to the school's attendance policy.

PM registration is taken between **12:15 p.m. and 12:45 p.m.**, Monday to Friday. There is no 'Late' mark for PM registration; however, pupils arriving after this time from any off-site activity will receive a '**U**' code, recorded as an unauthorised absence.

All attendance register data is stored on the OMG MIS, unless a technical failure prevents access to the MIS. In the rare event of this occurring, then:

- Registers can either be kept in a bound format or on single pages and must be completed in either black or blue ink.
- Staff must ensure the original entry in a register, and any subsequent correction must be distinguishable.
- Both the original entry and the correction should be preserved so that, on retrieval, the entries appear in chronological order – this means that correction fluids must not be used on the register.
- Paper-based attendance data must be transferred to OMG MIS as soon as practically possible.

If a young person is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised by marking it with the appropriate code.

Monthly attendance monitoring meetings are held between the Headteacher and the Head of Centre to review absence trends, the effectiveness of attendance interventions, and pupil lateness.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

It is for the school, not the parent, to decide whether or not to authorise any absences. The school will not authorise absences in the following circumstances:

- Where no parental explanation is given.
- For extended visits overseas where no approval has been given.
- For holidays in term time (unless there are exceptional circumstances.)
- For shopping trips.
- For leisure days out.
- Where it is believed a parent is condoning an unnecessary absence.
- In other cases, it is deemed that there is no reasonable explanation.

Leave of Absence

Requests for Leave of Absence must be made in writing to the Head Teacher. In the case of absence for family holidays, these will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. At OMG Education School, a Request Form should be obtained from the main office, completed, and sent to the school before any arrangements are made.

Absence for the observance of a religious festival will be authorised for a maximum of two days per school year. Approval for extended holidays abroad, in the family's home country, will only be considered on receipt of a written request and completion of the school's Leave of Absence Request Form, and only then in exceptional circumstances. The Governing Body has delegated this responsibility to the Head Teacher.

If the pupil fails to attend after this period, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

1 to 3 days of absence per academic year specifically for Eid following Tower Hamlets equality and diversity policy

Tower Hamlets Children Missing Education (CME) Guidance: [Tower Hamlets CME Guidance](#)

Change of Address and Other Contact Details

The school must have at least two current contact details on file at all times. This includes up-to-date mobile or landline telephone numbers and email addresses for parents, carers, and designated emergency contacts.

Parents must inform the school immediately if they, or the named emergency contacts, have a change of address, phone number or email address. In the event of an emergency, we must be able to contact the parents, carers, or a third-party person. Parents must provide this information when they first register their child and keep it up to date, including telephone numbers.

Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 each within 21 days or £120 each within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If payment has not been made within 28 days, the local authority may decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Safeguarding/Children Missing in Education (CME)

Children who are not attending school and are not being provided with suitable alternative educational provisions will be referred to the local authority (LA) as Children Missing Education.

Children going missing can be a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities, including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE). CMEs are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

The school will work in partnership with Tower Hamlets Children's Services or the home LA of the child to report any child deemed missing in education in accordance with the DfE guidance. The school reserves the right to withdraw a child from their role in accordance with the DfE guidance and LAs' protocols.

For the correct annotation of the Register, see Appendix A: [DfE Absence and Attendance Codes](#)

Appendix A: DfE Absence and Attendance Codes (General)

Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes:

- **Registration Code / \:** Present in school / = am \ = pm
- **Code L:** Late arrival before the register has closed

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in a supervised educational activity, such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as having received off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in Regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

- **Code B: Off-site educational activity**
This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school.

- **Code D: Dual Registered** - at another educational establishment
- **Code J:** At an interview with prospective employers or another educational establishment
- **Code P:** Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- **Code V:** Educational visit or trip
- **Code W:** Work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education.

Authorised Absence from School

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

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

- **Code C:** Leave of absence authorised by the school
- **Code E:** Excluded, but no alternative provision made
- **Code H:** Holiday authorised by the school
- **Code I:** Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
- **Code M:** Medical or dental appointments
- **Code R:** Religious observance
- **Code S:** Study leave
- **Code T:** Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence occurs when a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

- **Code G:** Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.
- **Code N:** Reason for absence not yet provided
This code should not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time, it should be replaced with code O (absent from school without authorisation).
- **Code O:** Absent from school without authorisation
- **Code U:** Arrived in school after registration closed.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as possible attendance in the School Census:

- **Code X:** Not required to be in school
This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school-age children are not expected to attend.
- **Code Y:** Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:
 - The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause or
 - The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available, and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance or

- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel, which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- The pupil is in custody and detained for a period of fewer than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities, then they can record those sessions as code B (present at the approved educational activity).
- **Code Z:** Pupil not on admission register
This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining, easing administrative burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.
- **Code #:** Planned whole or partial school closure