Introduction

This report outlines the roles and responsibilities of key personnel within Oxfordshire County Council's County Attendance Team. The team covers four core functions:

- Attendance
- Licensing
- Elective Home Education (EHE)
- Children Missing Education (CME)

These teams work collaboratively to safeguard children, support schools and families, and ensure statutory compliance.

Attendance: County Attendance Officers (CAT) Roles and Responsibilities

County Attendance Officers support schools, pupils, and families to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence, in line with DfE guidance.

- Provide guidance on voluntary/formal support for pupils and families.
- Clarify school responsibilities prior to LA involvement.
- Ensure shared responsibility for attendance between schools and the LA.
- Act as named contacts for schools; facilitate Targeting Support Meetings.
- Coordinate engagement sessions and share best practices.
- Lead on consistent messaging and protocols across Oxfordshire.
- Support implementation and review of DfE's Targeting Support Meetings.

Licensing : Child performance Licensing Roles and Responsibilities

Licensing Officer manage the issuing of licenses for child performances, chaperones, and child employment, ensuring legal compliance and safeguarding.

- Issue licences for child performances, chaperones, and child employment.
- Conduct/support inspections.
- Interview chaperone applicants.
- Validate DBS checks and raise concerns as needed.
- Provide guidance to employers and entertainment organisations.

Elective Home Education (EHE) Roles and Responsibilities

EHE Officers support families who choose to educate their children at home, ensuring safeguarding and educational standards are met.

- Provide advice and support to EHE families.
- Monitor educational provision and wellbeing of EHE children.
- Liaise with other services where safeguarding or SEND needs are identified.
- Maintain accurate records and ensure compliance with statutory guidance.

Children Missing Education (CME) Roles and Responsibilities

CME Officers are responsible for identifying and supporting children who are not receiving suitable education and are not on a school roll.

- Investigate cases of children missing education that are not on a School Roll.
- Liaise with schools, families, and external agencies to locate and re-engage children.
- Ensure safeguarding protocols are followed.
- Maintain accurate records and contribute to CME tracking and reporting.

National Context: DfE Attendance Framework

The Department for Education's updated attendance framework (2024) outlines strengthened statutory duties for local authorities, schools, and multi-agency partners. Key expectations include:

Local Authority Duties:
- Lead strategic attendance improvement across the area.
- Facilitate Targeting Support Meetings for persistently/severely absent pupils.
- Provide early help and formal interventions.
- Monitor school-level attendance data and challenge poor performance.
- Use legal powers where support is refused or ineffective.

School Duties:
- Maintain accurate registers and codes.
- Engage families early when concerns arise.
- Collaborate with the LA on referrals and support.
- Communicate expectations clearly to parents.

Virtual School Duties (from Sept 2026):
- Champion education for children with a social worker and those in kinship care.
- Promote practice that supports engagement and narrows attainment gaps

Oxfordshire County Council Implementation

Regular School Engagement:
Attendance Officers are conducting two weekly/termly meetings with all secondary schools across Oxfordshire. These meetings focus on early intervention to improve pupil attendance and ensure access to education.

District Meetings:
All schools in Oxfordshire are invited to participate in District Meetings. These sessions are designed to share good practice, provide training, and communicate important updates. They foster collaboration and consistency across the county.

Internal Audit:
An internal audit of the Attendance Team and Children Missing Education (CME) processes is nearing completion. This audit is helping to identify gaps in service delivery and will inform future improvements to strengthen support for schools and families.

Performance Overview

Overall absence by school phase, Oxfordshire and national
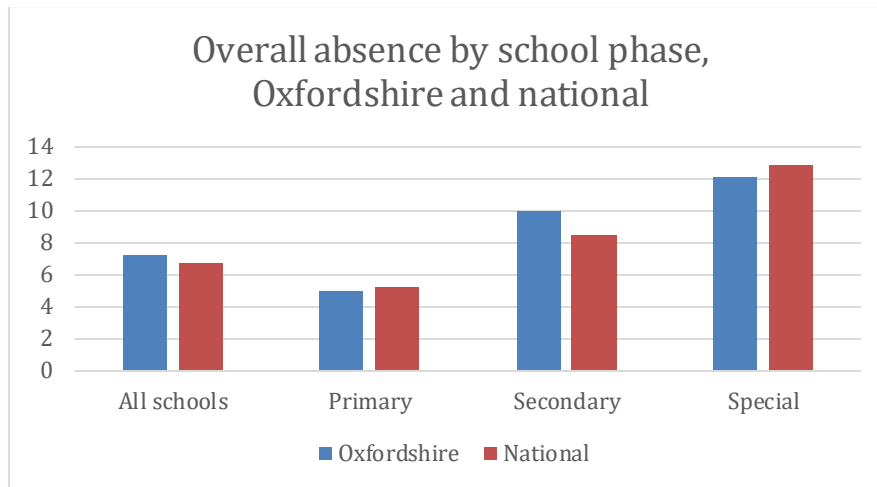
Overall Absence: 7.1% (vs. 6.6% nationally); Secondary: 9.7% (vs. 8.2% nationally).

Absence by type and school phase
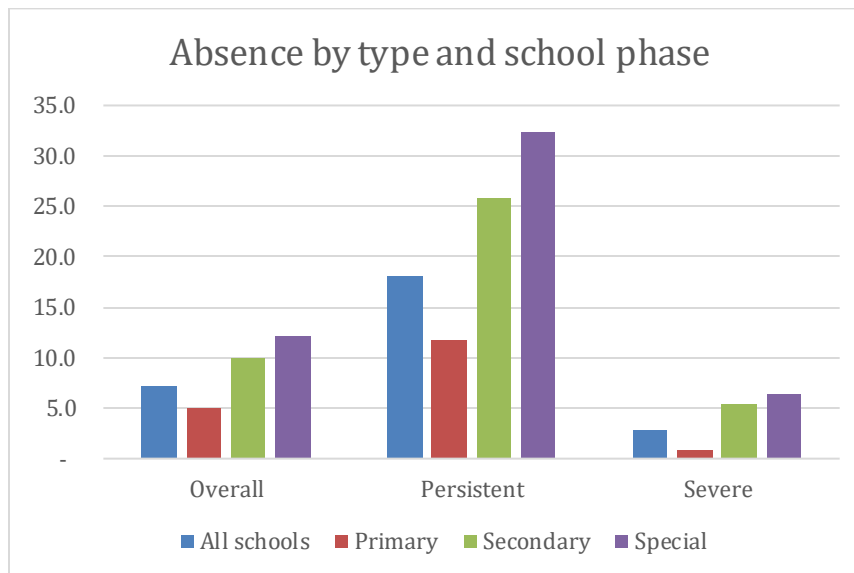
- Persistent Absence: 17.9% (slightly better than national 19%).
- Severe Absence: Secondary schools at 5.2%; slight increase in special schools.
- SEN Support Absence: Rising trend; further analysis needed.
- EHCP Absence: Improved in Term 4.
- Children We Care For: Higher absence rates, especially within Oxfordshire placements

Three-Stage Attendance Monitoring (TAM) Process

Stage 1: Initial Audit conducted with schools identified as having whole School attendance rates below 94% to assess attendance concerns and identify children at risk due to poor school attendance.

Stage 2: Targeted Follow-Up Meetings were held with each school. Each child was discussed to ensure a clear educational plan was in place.

Stage 3: Third TAM Meeting all participating schools were invited to a central meeting to share feedback from the Stage 1 and 2 processes, present data from the TAM process and showcase good practice

Example of good practice

The need for targeted transition was raised during TAM 2 with a primary school. The school identified a cohort of children with attendance concerns who often go unnoticed during standard transition processes.

CAT Officers facilitated a bespoke meeting between the primary and secondary school. Members of the Exclusion and Re-Integration Team were invited to contribute insights and raise awareness.

The meeting enabled the schools to share in-depth information about individual pupils including family circumstances, known barriers, and attendance history.

As a result the secondary school gained a broader understanding of the pupils transitioning in September. They contacted families over the summer to offer early support and implement attendance strategies from the start of Year 7.

Elective Home Education (EHE) Parent Engagement Meetings

Three in-person meetings were held with parents who are currently home educating or considering home education. The meetings were attended by Admissions Team to answer questions about returning to mainstream education.

As well as improving communication and strengthening relationships between OCC and parents who home educate, EHE Officers shared examples of acceptable evidence of education provision.

Work on the Attendance Strategic Board

The Attendance Team is actively engaged in the development and delivery of the Attendance Strategic Board. This board is guided by a clear vision: that all children and young people Priorities attendance at school and are kept safe. We recognise the importance of collaboration across services to ensure that help is available at an early stage, reducing the number of pupils missing out on their education entitlement due to poor attendance. Current efforts include reviewing how the board is structured, identifying the right stakeholders to be involved, and refining the terms of reference to ensure the board operates effectively and with clear purpose.

Next Steps

- Data Integration: Power BI dashboards for real-time access.
- Audit Planning: Themed audits proposed for EHE and CIN/CP cohorts.
- Graduated Pathway: Development underway to guide professionals on attendance interventions
- Virtual School Support: Key barriers to attendance for children we care for.