



# *Attendance and Punctuality Policy*



| Date      | Review Date | Coordinator            | Nominated Governor |
|-----------|-------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Sept 2021 | Sept 2022   | Chair of the Governors | Rachel Bain        |

|                              |                |              |           |
|------------------------------|----------------|--------------|-----------|
| <b>Headteacher:</b>          | Pamela Acheson | <b>Date:</b> | Sept 2021 |
| <b>Responsible Governor:</b> | Rachel Bain    | <b>Date:</b> | Sept 2021 |

## Status of Policy:

The Governing Body of the Federation of Grewelthorpe and Fountains C of E Primary Schools adopted this policy in September 2021. It will be reviewed in September 2022.

## Rationale

Regular and punctual attendance is vital if pupils are to thrive both academically and socially at school. Absence from school disrupts pupils' learning and progress, and in some cases can have a detrimental effect on their relationships. As such, children should only be absent from school due to illness or unavoidable circumstances. This policy outlines the responsibilities of the Headteacher, school staff, parents and governors in ensuring that all pupils attend regularly and are punctual.

## Aims and Principles

Registered pupils of compulsory school age are required by law to be in school for every session the school is open. Whilst it is right to recognise that individual pupils and families may from time to time have problems, our aim should always be to expect regular attendance. The majority of pupils want to attend to learn and achieve, but some may not be able to do so for reasons beyond their control. It is our responsibility to identify these pupils and investigate. Good communications with home is a fundamental ingredient in promoting good attendance and punctuality. Parents should be encouraged to see themselves as partners with our school and instil respect for education and those who teach their children.

## **Aims**

- To provide a structured and consistent approach to dealing with attendance issues.
- To provide clear guidelines of how attendance issues will be dealt with to all relevant parties.
- To improve our overall attendance and punctuality rates as part of a multi-faceted approach to raising standards.

In order to further these aims and principles it is our responsibility to:-

1. Identify a senior member of staff with oversight and responsibility for attendance.
2. Integrate attendance within the pastoral policy of the school.
3. Ensure the Headteacher frequently comments on and communicates about attendance and punctuality to pupils, parents and staff.
4. Ensure teachers are punctual, expect good attendance and frequently comment on and praise this behaviour in their group.
5. Ensure pupils who are late or have been absent are told they have been missed and what it means for them and others.

## **Legal Requirements**

All children aged 5-18 must receive full time education.

## **Registration**

Schools must take an attendance register twice a day. Any absences will be recorded with a specific code depending on the type of absence. Absences fall into two main categories; authorised or unauthorised. Only the school, not parents can authorise absence. If leave of absence is required parents must ask for permission in advance. If a child is sick or for other unforeseen absence, school should be notified as soon as possible.

### **Registration Procedure**

- Registration in each class must be completed no later than 10 minutes after the start of each morning and afternoon session.
- Registers must be completed using Scholarpack
- Lateness should be clearly indicated if a child arrives 10 minutes after the start of registration, and the number of minutes late recorded on Scholarpack

## **Pupil Illness**

If a child is sick, the absence must be authorised. Schools should accept parents' notes and not routinely ask for doctors' letters. However, if the absence is long-term or repeated, proof may be required that a child is genuinely unwell and unable to attend school. Copies of any appointment letters or medical reports should be kept. If a child is too ill to attend school for

more than 15 working days, the local authority should be providing some education for them. If they provide home tuition this should be for at least 5 hours a week.

### **Role of the Parent**

To call school before the start of the first school day that your child is absent from school to inform them that your child will not be attending due to illness or report the illness via the school website function . Keep school informed during the period of illness as appropriate.

Following sickness / diarrhoea, children should not return to school less than **48** hours after they were last ill. For advice on when to return your child after other illnesses, please contact your healthcare professional.

### **Role of the School**

To record illnesses in the register and advise the parent where relevant as to an appropriate date to return to school.

### **Role of the Class teacher**

To arrange work for the child where the absence may be extended and where the child is capable of completing tasks at home.

## **Pupil Punctuality**

Pupils should arrive at school on time each day (by 8.55 am at both schools). Arriving late is detrimental not only to that child, but to other children in the class where the teacher needs to accommodate a pupil part way through a lesson. If a pupil is not present when his/her name is called at the beginning of the day, s/he is recorded in the register as having arrived late. Registers close at 9.30 am. After this time, absence without prior notification or acceptable explanation is recorded as unauthorised.

### **Role of the Parent**

To ensure that your child is on the playground ready to begin school at 8.55 am. Should you be late due to unavoidable circumstances, it is important that you call school to inform us of this.

### **Role of the School**

To record all late arrivals (e.g. after the register has been taken) using Scholarpack. If a pupil has not arrived after the register has closed (9.30 am) without prior notification, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is the school's duty to ensure that, where a child is absent

without notification, the administrator contacts parents/carers to find out why. If the administrator is unable to contact the family of a pupil absent without notification, the Headteacher will be informed.

### **Role of the Headteacher**

The Headteacher will implement a range of procedures to build a culture that promotes high levels of attendance while appropriately supporting and challenging absence.

## **Monitoring attendance**

- The HT in conjunction with administrative support will review attendance data at the end of each academic half term. Where any pupil has attendance below the expected target of 97%, the HT will review the daily attendance of that pupil for the term or terms of that academic year to investigate reasons/causes or patterns.
  - Persistent Absenteeism (PA 90% or below) will be closely monitored every half term. Parents will be informed via a personalised letter. Letters will be personalised depending on the nature of the absence and the explanation(s) offered.
  - Where absence is clearly explained and down to explained illness or exceptional circumstances, parents will be reassured but will be reminded of the expected % attendance figure and offered support in helping their child achieve this.
  - Where absence is unexplained, parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss strategies to improve attendance and / or punctuality.
  - Where absence is unexplained or persists, pupils' attendance would be monitored on a half termly basis or in serious cases of persistent absenteeism on a weekly basis.
  - If parents fail to engage with this process support would be sought via the prevention team this may involve visits to families in the home from appropriate professionals. At this stage the HT may seek advice on the benefits of requesting the Local Authority to pursue a penalty notice.

## **Missing from Education**

### **What 'children missing education' means**

All children of compulsory school age, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. 'Children missing education' are those who are not registered at a school, not receiving a suitable education otherwise (i.e. Elective Home Education or alternative provision), are not regularly attending the school where they are a registered pupil or cease attending and/or their whereabouts or destination school is unknown. These children can be at

significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation and in later life becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training).

Information sharing between parents, schools, the community and the local authority is therefore crucial to ensure that these children are kept safe and are receiving the education they are entitled to. In accordance with DfE Statutory guidance, Children Missing Education (Sept 2016) the Local Authority has effective tracking and enquiry systems in place and an appointed named person to whom schools, other agencies and the public can make referrals regarding children who they believe are missing from education. Joint reasonable enquiries can then be made as quickly as possible by schools and the LA. Joint working arrangements are also in place with agencies and services such as, Housing, Health, the Police, and other local authorities.

This policy recognises further information and guidance on children missing from education can be found at - <http://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/children-missing-education>

## Leave during term time

The law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Headteachers are only able to grant leave of absence in **exceptional circumstances**. The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment.
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation / company.
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis. This is not an exhaustive list and the circumstances of each case will be considered.

Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school. Please note that the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without the permission of the school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the Headteacher. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court. Amendments to 2007 Penalty Notice regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice. Parents must, from 1st September 2013, pay

£60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices in line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecution if the fine is not paid.

Taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt a child's educational progress. Requests for leave of absence in term time must be made 6 weeks prior to the leave of absence and in writing on the holiday request form which is available from the school. Parents may be required to attend an interview to discuss their request for a term time leave of absence. Parents / carers will be notified in writing of the decision for a leave of absence in term time within 10 school days of the date of the application.

## Letter templates

### Letter 1

Date:

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

**Name:**

**D.o.b:**

**School:**

Please find enclosed a copy of your child's registration certificate. There are concerns regarding the amount of times your child is registered as late for school.

**Please note that arrival after the close of registration\* is classed as an unauthorised absence. Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 these absences could be used as evidence against you if legal action were to be considered by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.**

National statistics show that poor time keeping seriously affects a young person's chance of achieving their full potential. Arriving late may mean that your child misses important instructions for the day and can lead to feelings of isolation and disengagement from learning.

I hope that you will make the necessary arrangements to ensure that your child arrives at school on time in the future.

Yours sincerely,

## Letter 2

Date:

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

**Name :**  
**School :**

**D.o.b:**

I wish to draw your attention to the enclosed registration certificate for your child. He/she has only achieved .... % attendance so far this academic year. As an acceptable level of attendance is a minimum of .....%,(school target) we are concerned about this amount of absence.

**Irregular school attendance may have a serious impact on your child's academic progress if it is allowed to continue and you as parent are legally responsible to ensure that his/her regular and punctual attendance is maintained.**

We understand there may at times be unavoidable, genuine reasons for your child's absence of which the school should be informed as soon as possible.

However, if your child continues to have absences, you may be requested to provide medical or other evidence before any further absence can be authorised. Medical evidence can be in the form of a doctor's note, appointment card or prescription or a letter.

Should you have any queries, or require further support, please do not hesitate to contact me on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

### Letter 3

Date:

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

**Name:**

**Dob:**

**School:**

There are concerns regarding your child's attendance this current academic year, which currently stands at .....%. This level of attendance is below the threshold by which the Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as being a persistent absentee (under 90%) and can seriously affect your child's academic progress if allowed to continue.

All parents who have children of compulsory school age have a legal responsibility to ensure that they receive an efficient education.

Parents whose children are registered at school are therefore responsible for ensuring that they attend regularly, punctually and stay in school during school hours. Failure to do so is an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

I would like to discuss this matter further with you, with a view to looking at ways we can work together to improve the situation.

Please contact me on the above telephone number to arrange a mutually convenient time to meet.

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| <b>Policy:</b>                     | <b>Attendance and Punctuality Policy</b> |
| <b>Signed Chair of Governors:</b>  | <i>R Bain</i>                            |
| <b>Date Signed:</b>                | <b>September 2021</b>                    |
| <b>Governors Meeting Ratified:</b> | <b>September 2021</b>                    |
| <b>Review Date:</b>                | <b>Autumn 2022</b>                       |
| <b>Review schedule</b>             | <b>Annually</b>                          |



