

# Welburn Community Primary School



## Pupil Attendance and Punctuality Policy

# Revised May 2023

## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department of 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The headteacher will report to the governing body on attendance at least termly.

Attendance will form part of governor review sessions with the Safeguarding Link Governor.

### 3.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Monitoring attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

### **3.3 Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **3.4 School admin staff**

School admin staff are expected to make and take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session (after lunch). It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational facility
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken between 9.00am and 9.10am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

- Parents should call the school office on 01653 618301 or email [admin@welburn.n-yorks.sch.uk](mailto:admin@welburn.n-yorks.sch.uk) to report an absence.
- If no notification of absence is received by 9.30am, school will make a phone call starting with the first emergency contact and then working through other numbers provided to make contact.
- If no contact can be made, a message will be left (if possible) and an email sent to the email held in school asking for contact to be made.
- Where possible, a further phone call will be made at 11.30am and, if no contact can be made, two members of staff will make a doorstep visit to the address held on file.

- If no contact can be made during the doorstep visit, school will notify the police and any Social Worker or Early Help Worker that is involved with the family.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents should notify the school of any planned absence due to a medical or dental appointment via the school office on 01653 618301 or email [admin@welburn.n-yorks.sch.uk](mailto:admin@welburn.n-yorks.sch.uk).

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

School will monitor lateness on a half-termly basis. Letters will be sent to inform parents of issues with lateness. Following the letter, there will be a two-week period of monitoring and if no improvements are made, a meeting will be held with parents to discuss and agree a way forward.

### **4.5 Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by following our response to unplanned absence.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.

### **4.6 Reporting to parents**

School will monitor attendance on a termly basis. Any pupil falling below 90% attendance will be issued a letter and monitoring will be put in place for two weeks. If there is no improvement, a meeting will be held between parents and the HT.

Attendance is reported to all families in their end of term report where authorised and unauthorised absences are recorded.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include, but are not limited to the following:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see section 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail).
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

### 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

As part of safeguarding, school will monitor absences and address any patterns. On a termly basis, school will analyse attendance data and letters will be sent to parents of any pupil falling below 90% attendance unless school are aware of exceptional circumstances for the absence. On return to school, attendance will be monitored over a period of two weeks for improvement. If no improvement is noted, a meeting will be held with the Headteacher to discuss absences and how school can support. If absence continues to fall or does not improve, school will contact the attendance officer.

### 5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice 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 the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Attendance Monitoring

The headteacher monitors attendance on a half-termly and termly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill-health (see section 4.2).

Where a pupil is off for an illness that has a required isolation period e.g 48 hours for sickness, school will not expect a further phone call to explain absence on the second day. Where the illness is ongoing without an isolation period, school will expect confirmation of illness to be recorded each day or an expected return date to be stated.

If a pupil's absence goes above 10 days, the school will contact the parent/carer, to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## 7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration.
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration.
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed.
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school.
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered.
J	Interview	

		Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment.
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school.
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school.
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement.

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made.
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances.
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness.
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment.
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance.
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations.
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school.
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school.
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time).
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence.
U	Arrival after registration.	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed.

Code	Definition	Scenario
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X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend.
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody.
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school.
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day.