

Wheldrake with Thorganby CE Primary School

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY



Date of Policy: April 2024

Date of Review: March 2027

Member(s) of staff responsible: Alison Shaw

Signature of Chair of Governor

Date: 24th April 2024

Wheldrake with Thorganby CE Primary School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

At Wheldrake with Thorganby C.E. Primary School we shape our curriculum around our Christian vision:

Love your neighbour as yourselves Matthew 22:39
Let us encourage one another. Hebrews 10:25

Our school Christian values of faith, hope and love underpin everything we do and are an umbrella of other values

Our intention is that as pupils move through the school, they enjoy experiences so they can flourish; develop behaviours and habits so they gain skills and knowledge to be lifelong learners and develop a moral compass so they can recognise their place as a positive member of society.

Our school aims to meet its 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.

It is written with reference to:-

- The Education Act 1996- Sections 434 (1) (3) (4) & (6) and 458 (4) & (5)
- The Education Act 2002- part 3
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010,2011,2013 and 2016
- School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (July 2019)
- Guidance relating to pupil leave of absence from school (CYC August 2019)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- City of York Code of Conduct for the use of Education Related Penalty notices (September 2023)

1. PRINCIPLES AND EXPECTATIONS

- I. At Wheldrake with Thorganby CE Primary, we strive for the highest level of attendance from every pupil in order that they develop to their full potential during their time at school. By coming to school every day, on time, children receive the best start in life by having a good education. We expect all children on roll to attend on time, every day, when the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy to do so.
- II. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend; we believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes toward

school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy, safe and rewarding place for everyone.

- III. We also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- IV. Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure that we keep an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. This register also indicates whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- V.

2. DEFINITIONS

I. Authorised absence

An absence is authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent / carer E.g. if a child has been unwell and school receives a phone call /written note.

Only a school can make an absence authorised. Parents / carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents / carers will be classified as authorised e.g. if a parent was to take a child out of school to go shopping during school hours.

II. Unauthorised absence

An absence is unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the headteacher.

Authorised and unauthorised absences are reported to parents annually and the Department for Education three times a year. These are held on a pupil's school record throughout their school life.

The headteacher may consult with the Local Authority regarding the action to take over unauthorised absences.

Please note: Parents can be given a fixed penalty notice under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised absence. Any parent issued with such a notice will be subject to a prompt fine of either £60 per parent per child (if paid within 21 days) or £120 per parent per child (if paid after the 21st day but within 28 days) Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty Notice is likely to lead to prosecution

3. ABSENCE NOTIFICATION

If a child is absent, parents/carers should inform school of a child's absence and the reasons for the absence by:

- making a phone call prior to 9:30am on the day of a child's absence explaining the child is ill;
- send a note in advance advising of a medical appointment.

If a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, which informs the school office of the absence.

Office staff will endeavour to contact the parent/carer if school has not already received notification – this is to establish the whereabouts of the child and therefore ensure his/her safety. For this reason, a written note on the day of a child's return to school is not ideal.

4. REQUESTS FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

At Wheldrake with Thorganby CE Primary, we believe that children should be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best possible progress with their learning. However, we do understand that there are, very occasionally, circumstances where a parent/carer may legitimately request leave of absence.

Time off for leave of absence for any reason, including family holidays is not an automatic right. Schools are expected not to authorise requests for family holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances. For example:-

- Service personnel who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal effect to the pupil's education
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- Any other circumstances that the headteacher considers to be exceptional.

It is also expected that headteachers will not authorise leave where the following apply:-

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday
- Period overlaps with beginning or end of term

Parents / carers should contact school in advance to request any leave of absence. At Wheldrake with Thorganby CE Primary Primary School, we ask that at least 7 days' notice is given in order for each request to be processed by the school office.

Whilst the application must be made by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with, there is no restriction on who the leave is taken with. This is a matter for the parent(s) not the school.

At Wheldrake with Thorganby CE Primary Primary School, we treat each request for leave of absence on an individual basis taking account of the following criteria:

the exceptional circumstances outlined in the request; along with

- the amount of time requested;
- age of the pupil;
- the pupil's general absence/attendance record (Pupils should have at least 95% attendance for the current year before authorisation would usually be considered);

- proximity of SATs and public examinations (No leave for holidays will be authorised for children in Year 6 prior to the Statutory Assessment Tests);
- pupil's ability to catch up the work
- pupil's educational needs
- general welfare of the pupil;
- frequency of the activity; and
- when the request was made (leave must be applied for in advance of taking it/ accepting an invitation)

Term-time leave of absence requests should be made using the school's Leave of Absence Request Form, available from the school office or downloadable from the school website.
(See Appendix 1)

Requests for days off for religious observance will be considered as appropriate.

The headteacher may invite parents in to discuss any proposed leave of absence in term time.

5. LONG-TERM ABSENCE

When a child has an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, we will do all that we can to send material home so that he / she can continue to learn and keep up with school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, we will contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6. REPEATED ABSENCE

Pupils with attendance rates of below 90% are categorised as persistent absentees. We will send absence reports to all parents at the end of each term and we will alert the parent/carer of any child who has a high rate of absence i.e. below 93% (Appendix 2).

If the child has a growing number of absences, we will invite the parent/carer to visit school to discuss the problem and will use the City of York Council Graduated Response to engage with early help strategies and multi-agency partners, as well as offering enhanced support in school. The impact of this support will be reviewed after four weeks.(Appendix 3).

If the situation does not improve, an attendance panel will be convened and improvement targets set. Fixed penalty Notices can be requested where attendance targets are not met.

7. ATTENDANCE TARGETS

The government expects all schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence. The school therefore sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body, and are monitored by the local authority.

The targets should be challenging but realistic and based on attendance figures of previous years. Some consideration is made of attendance figures of similar schools.

8. PUNCTUALITY

Our school hours are as follows:

<p>EYFS & KS1 SCHOOL HOURS 8:55 a.m. to 3.20p.m. Registration 8:55-9:00 a.m. Lunch 11.45a.m. - 12.30 p.m. Afternoon registration 12.30-12.35 p.m. Afternoon session 12.35 p.m. to 3:20 p.m.</p> <p>6 hours 25 minutes daily</p>	<p>KS2 SCHOOL HOURS 8:55 a.m. to 3.20p.m. Registration 8:55-9:00 a.m. Lunch 12.30- 1.15 p.m. Afternoon registration 1.15-1.20 p.m. Afternoon session 1:20 p.m. to 3:20 p.m.</p> <p>6 hours 25 minutes daily</p>
<p>Please be on time - but better late than never. Try not to have the children waiting in the playground too early, especially in cold or wet weather; five minutes before school begins is early enough. KS2 children should not arrive before 8:40 a.m. Doors open at 8.50a.m. and children may come into school when they arrive. The KS1 and KS2 doors will close at 8.55a.m. when school starts and anyone arriving late will need to enter via the main school entrance.</p>	

We open the school doors at 8.50am so the children can come in and be ready for the start of the school day at 8.55am. Registration takes place between 8:55 and 9:00am. If children arrive during registration but before 9:15am, they are marked as late. The registers close at 9:15am, therefore, if a child arrives after this time, they will be recorded as 'late after the register has closed' which shows as an **unauthorised absence** in the overall attendance figures.

Persistent lateness causes problems for the child, the class and the teacher. Parents should therefore try to ensure that their child arrives in time for the start of school.

9. ROLES, RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I. Parents / carers

Parents / carers must do all they can to ensure their child attends school. They should monitor their child's attendance rate (data can be obtained from the school office) and ensure that the rate does not fall below unacceptable levels. They are expected to inform school before 09.30 a.m. on the first day of absence and to give an expected date of return. They may be asked to provide school with details of medical appointments / medication if their child's attendance falls below certain levels.

II. Class teacher

It is the class teacher's responsibility to:

- mark the register and record all known absences using the appropriate code

- discuss frequent absences or patterns of absence with the headteacher
- encourage pupils to maintain good levels of attendance and punctuality at all times

III. Headteacher

It is Headteacher's responsibility to:

- set attendance targets each year (see above);
- review attendance and take appropriate action;
- oversee and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality;
- report levels of attendance to governors in the Headteacher's Report;
- access Integris to collect information on whole school, class or individual attendance;
- monitor and tackle low attendance and refer any children with attendance concerns to the local authority;
- develop home-school links and meet with parents if there is concern over a child's attendance.

IV. Office staff

It is the responsibility of office staff to:

- seek to contact parents / carers of absent children to establish the whereabouts of a child and reasons for absence

V. Local Governor Committee

It is the responsibility of the Local Governor Committee to monitor overall attendance. Attendance rates are communicated in every Headteacher's Report so they can monitor this closely. The Local Governor Committee also has the responsibility for this policy: for seeing that it is carried out and for its review. They will therefore examine closely the information provided to them in order to ensure the attendance figures are as high as they should be.

VI. Local authority

City of York LA monitors attendance data provided by primary schools in a bid to tackle poor attendance amongst children aged 5 to 11 and meets regularly with the headteacher to discuss incidents of poor attendance and the school's response.

Appendix 1: Leave of Absence Request



APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Full name of child(ren)	Class

Address	
First day of absence	
Last day of absence	
Total number of days	
Exceptional Reasons for application	
Has leave of absence been taken in term time before?	
Are you requesting leave of absence for any siblings at another school? If so please provide details.	
Signature of parent(s) / carer(s) (Applications can only be made by parents/carers)	
Date	

ABSENCE REQUEST – SCHOOL RESPONSE

ADMIN CHECK: Attendance percentage: _____ Number of days previously requested/previous attendance: _____

HEADTEACHER DECISION:

Authorised Unauthorised (Comment) _____

Signature of Headteacher: _____ Date: _____

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

WHAT THE LAW SAYS:

All children must attend school during term time. Schools and headteachers are not allowed to authorise any requests for leave of absence in term time unless it is for exceptional circumstances.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES:

The school have to automatically report the following types of absences as unauthorised:

- All family holidays at any time during the school term
- Visiting relatives, family or friends
- Parental work or study commitments

IMPORTANT (from Sept. 2022): If your child's absence is 'unauthorised', a fixed penalty notice (fine) of up to £120 per parent/carer may be issued by City of York Council.

Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 (the act) empower authorised local authority (LA) officers, schools or the police to issue penalty notices (PNs) in cases of unauthorised absence from school. Please see <https://www.york.gov.uk/SchoolAttendance> for more information.

EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES in which absences can be authorised include:

- Attendance at family funerals and ceremonies (normally one day plus one travel day allowed)
- Medical reasons and appointments (evidence may be requested)
- Attendance at extra-curricular events (e.g. involvement in sporting competition)
- Religious worship or commitments (usually one day - as published by religious body)
- Visiting prospective future schools or educational establishments (including for examinations)
- Visiting relatives who may be terminally ill (up to 5 school days if international travel)

WHAT THE HEADTEACHER WILL DO:

The headteacher is only allowed to authorise an absence if it falls under the definition of 'exceptional circumstances'. All other absence requests will be recorded as unauthorised on your child's records.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

- It is advisable to give 7 days' notice in order for your request to be processed by the school
- Penalty notices (fines) are issued by City of York Council

Appendix 2: Low attendance letters to parents

Letter content for attendance of below 93%:

Dear

Re: «Pupil_Full_Name» DOB: «DOB»

A recent register check has highlighted a concern about the attendance of ????. This letter is to inform you that your child is currently at risk of becoming a pupil with Persistent Absence. The Department for Education (DfE) monitors the attendance of children across the country in order to raise attendance nationally. This is done by collecting the names of pupils who have Persistent Absence from school.

A 'Persistent Absentee' pupil has attendance of less than 90%.

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Obviously, the high absence rate will be affecting ?his / her? academic progress due to the amount of schoolwork being missed. I therefore ask you to give your urgent attention to ensuring that the situation improves.

We can offer support if you are having difficulties making sure your child achieves better attendance.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me.

I am sure you realise the importance of regular attendance at school and I look forward to an improvement in the future. Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours Sincerely

Alison Shaw
Headteacher

Appendix 3 Sample Warning Letter following refusal to authorise a request for leave of Absence

Dear (insert full name of parent/carer(s))

Refusal for exceptional leave in term-time.

I am writing to you regarding your recent request that your child, name be given authorised leave of absence. Unfortunately I am not able to authorise your child(ren)'s absence.

The circumstances in which we are able to authorise these requests are limited and it is only in exceptional circumstances. Advice on what constitutes exceptional circumstances suggests situations such as children of service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside the term time, and families who need to spend time together following a crisis.

The guidance clearly states that where families take children out of school for holidays for reasons such as availability of cheap holidays and availability of desired accommodation the absence should not be authorised.

If your child(ren) does not/do not attend school during the dates you requested (insert dates) the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. I will consult with the Local Authority who may issue you with a fixed penalty notice.

A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60, if paid within the first 21 days of issue, which rises to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. The Local Authority will consider taking legal action if the Penalty Notice is not paid after 28 days of the date of issue. Legal action may result in a fine of up to £1,000 and a criminal record for each parent/carer.

A copy of this letter will be placed on your child(ren)'s school file.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Shaw

Head teacher