



# Yorkshire Learning Trust

## Student Attendance Policy

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### 1. Purpose and Context

Yorkshire Learning Trust is committed to ensuring that every child attends school regularly, feels that they belong, and is able to benefit fully from their education.

Attendance is not simply a procedural or administrative matter. It sits at the heart of safeguarding, school culture, belonging, educational success and personal development.

Students who attend well are more likely to achieve well, feel connected to their school community, develop positive habits and experience school as a place where they feel safe, known and able to flourish.

This policy sets out the Trust's shared expectations, principles and statutory framework for attendance across all schools within Yorkshire Learning Trust. It establishes a consistent approach while recognising that schools operate in different contexts and will implement local arrangements accordingly.

Each school will therefore publish a [Student Attendance Statement \(Local Arrangements\)](#), which explains clearly how this policy is enacted in that school.

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### 2. Core Principles

Across Yorkshire Learning Trust, our approach to attendance is grounded in a small number of clear principles.

We believe that strong attendance is built through a culture of belonging, high expectations and strong relationships. Students should feel known, valued and supported and should experience school as a place where they want to attend and participate. Families should experience schools as open, responsive and committed to working in partnership.

We are clear that attendance is everyone's responsibility. Leaders, teachers, support staff, students, families and the Trust all have a role to play.

We will take a proactive approach to identifying concerns early and responding thoughtfully. Where students experience barriers to attendance, we will work to understand these and provide appropriate support. At the same time, we will act with clarity and consistency where attendance does not improve, including using formal and legal routes where appropriate.

Our approach is therefore both supportive and rigorous, ensuring that all students are given the best possible opportunity to attend and succeed.



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### 3. Legal and Statutory Framework

This policy is informed by, and complies with, the following key legislation and guidance:

- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE, August 2024)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)
- Equality Act 2010

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Schools and trusts have a corresponding responsibility to monitor attendance, support families, and take action where attendance is a concern.

In line with national expectations, all YLT schools will ensure that:

- this core attendance policy and the supporting local school statement are published and accessible, clearly reflecting the school's approach, culture and expectations around attendance;
- statutory guidance is accurately reflected, including current attendance codes and penalty notice arrangements;
- policies are reviewed regularly and kept up to date.

Schools will ensure that attendance registers are taken accurately and in accordance with statutory requirements. Registers will be completed at least twice daily and will record student attendance using the appropriate national attendance codes.

Schools will ensure compliance with the 2024 attendance regulations, including the correct use of attendance codes, the timely amendment of 'N' (reason not yet provided) codes within five school days, and accurate recording of dual registration and other statutory categories.

Schools will also ensure that expectations regarding illness absence, including the need for ongoing communication and, where appropriate, evidence, are clearly communicated to families.

The accurate use of attendance codes is a legal requirement and underpins effective safeguarding, monitoring and reporting.

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### 4. Expectations for Attendance and Punctuality

Yorkshire Learning Trust has high expectations for all students.

Students are expected to attend school every day that it is open, unless there is a valid reason for absence. Good attendance is the norm, and all schools will promote this consistently.

Punctuality is an important part of attendance. Students are expected to arrive on time, ready to learn. Schools will address patterns of lateness in a proportionate and consistent way.



The Trust expects all schools to strive for attendance outcomes that are at least in line with national averages, with a clear ambition to exceed these over time.

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## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

### Trust

The Trust provides strategic leadership and oversight. It will ensure that expectations are clear, that schools are supported, and that attendance is monitored across the Trust. Trustees will receive regular information on attendance patterns, including persistent and severe absence.

### Headteachers

Headteachers are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively within their school. This includes establishing a strong attendance culture, ensuring robust systems are in place, and working with families and external agencies where needed.

### Attendance Leadership

Each school will identify a senior leader with responsibility for attendance. This role is central to ensuring that attendance is prioritised, that data is understood, and that support and intervention are well coordinated. This role will ensure that attendance remains a priority within the school, that systems are consistently applied, and that appropriate challenge and support are in place.

### Staff

All staff contribute to attendance. This includes promoting high expectations, providing welcoming and inclusive environments, noticing concerns early, communicating appropriately with families, and following agreed procedures and school-level attendance responsibilities.

Schools may further define attendance-related responsibilities through local role descriptions and operational guidance.

### Parents and Carers

Parents and carers are expected to ensure that their child attends regularly, arrives on time, and that the school is informed promptly of any absence. Schools will work in partnership with families, recognising that this relationship is key to improving attendance.

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## 6. Promoting Good Attendance

Strong attendance is underpinned by a positive school culture.



YLT schools will promote attendance through:

- creating environments where students feel safe, known and valued;
- maintaining high expectations;
- promoting and recognising the importance of strong attendance and improved attendance over time;
- communicating clearly and consistently with families.

Attendance will not be treated in isolation, but as part of the wider culture of the school.

Schools will set out within their Student Attendance Statement how they actively promote and incentivise good attendance. This may include assemblies, tutor time routines, positive communication with families, and consistent messaging around the value of attendance and belonging.

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## 7. Monitoring and Early Identification

Attendance will be monitored carefully and consistently in all schools across Yorkshire Learning Trust. This ensures that concerns are identified early and that appropriate support can be put in place.

Schools will review attendance regularly and analyse patterns over time. This will include consideration of:

- individual students;
- cohorts and groups;
- emerging patterns or changes in attendance;
- students with known vulnerabilities.

Particular attention will be given to:

- students at risk of persistent absence (10 or more days absent across the school year);
- students who are persistently absent (19 or more days absent, equivalent to attendance below 90%);
- students at risk of severe absence;
- groups of students where absence may be more prevalent.

Attendance data will be considered alongside wider contextual information, including pastoral knowledge and safeguarding concerns, to ensure that responses are informed and proportionate.

Schools will seek to identify concerning patterns early in the academic year, recognising that absence accumulated early can quickly place students at risk of persistent absence.

Where concerns are identified, schools will act promptly. This may include early contact with families, discussion with the student, or the introduction of appropriate support.



Schools will implement clear and structured approaches to reducing persistent and severe absence. This will include early identification, targeted support, regular review, and escalation where necessary. Further detail will be set out within each school's Student Attendance Statement.

Attendance information will also inform leadership and governance. Schools will report attendance patterns and concerns to governing bodies, and the Trust will monitor attendance across all schools to ensure consistency, identify trends and provide support where needed.

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## 8. Graduated Response

The Trust believes that the strongest attendance outcomes are secured through positive school culture, strong relationships, clear routines and students experiencing school as a place where they feel safe, successful and connected. Attendance processes should therefore be proactive as well as responsive.

Schools will ensure that attendance information is shared regularly with families so that emerging concerns can be identified and addressed early.

Yorkshire Learning Trust adopts a graduated approach to attendance, in line with national guidance. This approach is based on early identification, supportive intervention and, where necessary, clear and proportionate escalation.

In the first instance, schools will seek to understand the reasons for absence and work with students and families to address any barriers to attendance. This may include pastoral support, reasonable adjustments, or engagement with external services. The emphasis at this stage is on building relationships and securing improvement through support.

Where concerns persist, schools will move to more structured support. This may include formal meetings with families, the development of attendance plans, and involvement of relevant external agencies. At this stage, expectations will be clearly communicated and progress will be reviewed regularly.

If attendance does not improve, or where support is not appropriate or not engaged with, schools may take further action in partnership with the local authority. This may include:

- formal monitoring and review processes;
- attendance panels or similar structured interventions;
- consideration of legal intervention where thresholds are met.

Where appropriate, schools and the local authority may make use of the full range of legal interventions available, including attendance contracts, education supervision orders and prosecution. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Legal intervention is always a last resort. However, it remains an important part of the framework to ensure that all students receive their entitlement to education. This will include alignment with the National Framework for Penalty Notices and, where appropriate, the use of Notices to Improve and other formal mechanisms. Schools will ensure that thresholds, expectations and potential consequences are communicated clearly to families.



Each school will set out clearly in its Student Attendance Statement the staged processes it will use to support and improve attendance, ensuring that students and families understand how concerns will be addressed and escalated where necessary.

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## 9. Inclusion and Support

The Trust recognises that attendance difficulties can arise from a wide range of factors, including special educational needs, mental health, medical conditions, and family circumstances.

Schools will take a thoughtful, inclusive and proportionate approach, ensuring that responses are proportionate and that reasonable adjustments are made where required. This may include reasonable adjustments to support attendance, phased returns to full-time education, and consideration of transport or routine adjustments for students with SEND. Schools will ensure that such arrangements are clearly planned, regularly reviewed and focused on supporting sustained attendance.

Support may involve:

- pastoral and wellbeing support;
- SEND provision;
- adjustments to the school day or provision;
- engagement with external agencies.

At all times, the aim is to remove barriers and enable students to attend successfully.

Where alternative provision or part-time timetables are used, schools will ensure that these arrangements are lawful, time-limited, jointly agreed with families, and subject to regular review. Attendance will be recorded accurately using appropriate codes, and such arrangements will not be used as a long-term substitute for full-time education.

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## 10. Absence and Leave of Absence

Parents and carers are expected to notify the school on the first day of absence, providing a clear reason and an indication of when the student is expected to return.

Schools will ensure that more than one emergency contact is held for each student, in line with safeguarding expectations.

Where a student is absent and no reason has been provided, the school will make contact with parents or carers on the first day of absence. This is a key safeguarding expectation. Where contact cannot be established, or where concerns remain, the school will take appropriate action, which may include further attempts to contact, home visits, or escalation in line with safeguarding procedures.

Schools will follow up all unexplained absence to establish the reason and ensure that the correct attendance code is recorded. This will be completed as soon as possible and, in all cases, within five



school days of the absence. Accurate recording of attendance is a legal requirement and underpins effective safeguarding and monitoring.

Schools may request reasonable evidence where absence is frequent, prolonged or gives rise to concern.

Where absence is authorised, it will be recorded using the appropriate national attendance codes. Where the school is not satisfied that the reason for absence is valid, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. Requests must be made in advance and will be considered on an individual basis, taking into account the specific context and evidence provided. Family holidays and other discretionary absences will not normally be authorised.

In line with national expectations, schools may request the issue of a penalty notice where a student has accrued 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks.

Where attendance does not improve, or where support is not appropriate or not engaged with, schools may take further action in partnership with the local authority. This may include formal monitoring, attendance panels, and the use of legal interventions where necessary. Legal intervention is always a last resort, but it remains an important part of ensuring that all students receive their entitlement to education.

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## 11. Safeguarding

Attendance is closely linked to safeguarding.

Unexplained absence, persistent absence and patterns of non-attendance may indicate wider concerns. Schools will follow safeguarding procedures where necessary and ensure that appropriate action is taken.

This will include regular welfare checks or visits to ensure a child is safe and well if not attending any provision. School will determine how often this required and will work in partnership with other agencies to this end.

The Trust and its schools will follow statutory procedures relating to children missing education. Where a student's whereabouts are unknown or attendance raises significant concern, appropriate action will be taken in line with safeguarding and local authority requirements.

Attendance concerns will be considered alongside wider vulnerability indicators. Where appropriate, schools will work with and notify the Youth Offending Team in line with statutory expectations, particularly where absence forms part of a wider pattern of vulnerability or risk.

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## 12. Elective Home Education

Parents have the right to educate their child at home.



Where a parent indicates that they are considering elective home education, schools will seek to discuss this decision and ensure that parents are fully informed.

Schools will notify the local authority in line with statutory requirements and work with families to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place.

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## 13. Local Arrangements

Each school will publish a [Student Attendance Statement](#) which provides clear and accessible information about:

- daily routines and expectations;
- how absence should be reported;
- how attendance is monitored and supported;
- local authority processes where relevant.

These statements ensure clarity for families while allowing schools to reflect their context.

While local arrangements may vary, all schools will operate within a consistent Trust framework and shared expectations for attendance.

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## 14. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains accurate, effective and aligned with national guidance.

The Trust will continue to develop its approach through shared practice, collaboration and ongoing evaluation.