

Whickham Parochial C of E Primary School



Attendance Policy

‘For I know the plans I have for you ... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’
Jeremiah 29:11

Mission Statement

At our Parochial school we aim to provide a stimulating and caring environment in which every child flourishes, with Christianity at the heart of all we do.

Aims

At Whickham Parochial we believe that every child is entitled to enjoy their childhood, celebrate their individuality and reach their full potential. We aim to do this through:

- Creating a caring school family living by Christian values.
- Celebrating everyone's strengths and efforts.
- Valuing the opportunities we have to contribute to our community and the wider world.
- Offering wide ranging quality experiences that stimulate children's minds.
- Encouraging respect for others, positive behaviour and good manners, enabling all children to feel secure and valued.
- Building strong links between school, home and church.
- Preparing children for future challenges in a changing world

We wish every child to take with them happy memories of Whickham Parochial into their future life.



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.

Legislation and guidance

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

Roles and responsibilities

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

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

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues



- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

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.

School administrative staff

School administrative staff are expected to take calls and messages from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They are also responsible for first response, which involves checking the whereabouts of every child whose absence is unexplained. This is done by phone and is completed by 9:30am.

Recording attendance

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. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- 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

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 at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:15pm.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

The school can be notified on MyEd, our electronic messaging service, or by phone.

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.

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. Again, school can be notified on MyEd, our electronic messaging service, or by phone.

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.

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

Punctuality is very important at Whickham Parochial, as learning begins as soon as the child enters the classroom. If children are persistently late, parents will be contacted to discuss support that can be put in place. If no improvement follows, it is possible that we will approach the local authority attendance officer for support.

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 phone or by MyEd.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

Reporting to parents

Attendance will be reported to parents annually on the summer written report, but can be requested from the office at any time.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

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:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 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

Reducing persistent absence

Good school attendance is a vital factor in academic success, and any child who is persistently absent is missing out on the right to be educated with their peers. If a child's attendance drops below 90%, we would want to know more about why this was the case. The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that the school is a place to which the children want to come: that the school is a place where the children are treated with respect and feel valued; a place where their needs are recognised and are being addressed; a place where all children can experience success within a rich, relevant and diversified curriculum. In the first instance, we would want to ensure that the child in question (and all children) feel that school is somewhere that they feel happy.

It is clear that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. From the outset, parents are encouraged to take an active interest in the work of our school and to build and support their children's enthusiasm for attending school.

However, if all reasonable actions and remedies have been unsuccessful, the school has measures which can be actioned:

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 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.



Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance suffered in the aftermath of the Covid 19. We were aware that separation anxiety became far more prevalent as children re-adjusted to leaving their home and returning to the classroom. In order to help with this, we put transition days in place. Since their return, we have worked to help children re-engage in their learning by introducing many more experience days. We understand that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, we work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

It is our intention that Parochial will develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance. In building a culture of good school attendance, Parochial will:

- Recognise the importance of good attendance and, alongside good behaviour, make it a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life.
- Recognise the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions or disabilities, safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium).
- Recognise improving attendance is a school leadership issue and have a designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Responsibilities should include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to pupils and parents. At Parochial, this is the responsibility of the head teacher.
- Make sure all teaching and non-teaching staff know the importance of good attendance, are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents, and receive the training and professional development they need.
- Make sure attendance support and improvement is appropriately resourced, including where applicable through effective use of pupil premium funding. Where possible this should include attendance or pastoral support staff (either school based or contracted) who can work with families, conduct home visits and work in partnership with school leaders, the local authority's School Attendance Support Team and other partners.
- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels. In doing so, schools should help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development. It should also include clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.
- Visibly demonstrate the benefits of good attendance throughout school life. This may include in displays, assemblies or in registration periods.
- Recognise that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.
- Recognise children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.

Attendance monitoring

The head teacher at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly 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)

We ask that parents ring on every subsequent day of absence UNLESS:

- The child is absent with sickness and/or diarrhoea, in which case we will agree a return date that is 48 hours after the last incident of sickness
- The child has Covid, in which case we will agree a return date based on the most recently released guidance

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil 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.

Our school collects and safely stores attendance data on our SIMs system. This is held only on password protected computer and it itself password protected. This is used to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support
- Report to parents, governors and the local authority

Monitoring arrangements

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

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy

Approved by:	Date:
Last reviewed on:	May 2022
Next review due by:	May 2025



Appendix 1:

Gateshead Education Welfare Service Punctuality Information for Parents and Carers

Every Minute Counts



Punctuality is an important life skill

Good school attendance includes being there on time. The habit of good punctuality in primary school will help your child throughout their education and on into adult life and the work place.

If you are having a problem getting your child to school on time

- Talk to your child
- Talk to the school
- Contact your Education Welfare Officer

Types of lateness

Late before the register closes – when your child is a few minutes late

Late after register closes – this counts as an unauthorised absence

Persistent lateness, after the register closes, can result in prosecution under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act.

Why is punctuality such a good thing?

Being on time for school:

- Gets your child's day off to a good start and puts your child in a positive frame of mind so that they can make the most of their learning
- Sets positive patterns for the future
- Leads to good attendance
- Leads to better achievement
- Helps your child understand that school is important and education is valuable
- Helps your child develop a sense of responsibility for him/herself and towards others
- Help your child make and keep friends
- Leads to success and self confidence

Why is lateness such a bad thing?

Being late for school

- Gets your child's day off to a bad start



- Can be embarrassing for your child
- Will be noticed by other children who might make negative comments
- May lead to your child losing confidence
- May lead to your child feeling confused all day! They will have missed out on vital instructions and bits of news at the start of the day
- Disrupts the lesson for everyone
- Can cause your child to fall behind with their work
- Creates a bad habit that can be hard to break in secondary school and in the workplace
- Can lead to poor attendance – if your child thinks it's ok to be late for school they can soon start to think it's ok not to go to school at all

Lateness = Lost Learning

Each minute of school missed is a minute of your child's education

Persistent lateness can add up to days of learning lost, as shown below

5 minutes late each day	3 days lost
10 minutes late each day	6.5 days lost
15 minutes late each day	10 days lost
20 minutes late each day	13 days lost
30 minutes late each day	19 days lost

