Attendance Policy

Approved by:	ESICC	Date: September 2022
Last reviewed on:	September 2020	
Next review due by:	September 2024	

Contents

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

> Promoting good attendance

> Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

> Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence

> Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The local school board (LSB)

The governing board is responsible for:

> Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

> Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

> Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

> Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

> Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

> Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

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

> Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

> Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The Headteacher is also responsible for:

> Leading attendance across the school

> Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

> Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

> Having an oversight of data analysis

> Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

> Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

> Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

3.4 Redcar & Cleveland Local Authority Attendance & Welfare Service

The Attendance & Welfare Service are responsible for:

> Receiving attendance data from Central Team Officer to assess for further action(see section 7)

> Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

> Working with Headteachers and school staff with attendance responsibility to tackle persistent absence

The attendance and welfare service is a division of Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council and can be contacted via 01642 837738 and/or AWS@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information onto the MIS directly by 9.15am

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

> Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

> Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Monitoring Team in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every day on time

> Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return

> Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day supported by medical evidence

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time

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. 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

> Whether the absence is authorised or not

> The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

> The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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 8:45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:30pm

4.2 Unplanned absence

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

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 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.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible, supported by medical evidence. 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 up to 7 weeks in advance but at least 4 weeks prior to 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 an unauthorised late, using the appropriate code.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

> Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts after 3 days, a member of school staff will make a home visit to ascertain the safety of the child in compliance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

> Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider beginning formal attendance procedures.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

All parents will receive information regarding their child's attendance on their annual report using the following statements:

• Good or better – Above 96%

• Below average – 96% – 95%

• Cause for concern – 94.9% - 90%

• Persistent absence – 89.9% - 85%

• Serious concern – Below 85%

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

Since September 2013, Headteachers have been unable to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

Requests should be made at least four weeks before the intended absence. Parents and carers should not risk making any arrangements before a school decision is made on their leave of absence request application.

The exceptional circumstances of the request must be given in writing on the correct form issued by the school office and consideration will be given to the individual circumstances and the time of school year, as well as the child's attendance, progress, behaviour and wellbeing

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

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school can refer to the local authority to request the issue of a penalty notice in respect of unauthorized leave of absence during term time, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice takes into account Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council criteria:

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Each school within the trust has various strategies in place to reward good attendance. This is at the discretion of the Headteacher

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

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.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will damage the child's education and the school needs parent's support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school will thoroughly monitor all absence and the reasons given on a weekly basis. When pupils who are persistently absent or in danger of being persistently absent are identified, the school takes action as detailed below.

If a child's attendance falls below 95% in an academic year, parents will receive a Letter 1 from the Headteacher. The child's attendance will be closely monitored by school until attendance improves to above 95%.

If a child's attendance falls below 90% in an academic year, parents will receive a Letter 2 from the Headteacher. If, 6 weeks after the issue of the letter 2, the child's attendance has not improved parents/carers will be invited to a planning meeting with a representative from the school. During the meeting, attendance will be discussed and school will offer additional support if required from agencies such as early help or school health. An attendance target of 95% over the next six weeks will be agreed plus any other relevant targets e.g punctuality, which will be documented and signed by both the school and the parents. School will then monitor the child's attendance on a weekly basis.

If the child's attendance does not improve or stays the same, an immediate referral will be made to the Local Authority's Educational Welfare Officer. A formal Attendance Case Conference meeting will be arranged by the LA with parents or carers. This is also combined with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

The Trust can use sanctions such as penalty notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

The school, supported by the Local Authority, reserves the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum biannually by the CEO. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust Board.

9. 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
Authorised absence		
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
Unauthorised absence		
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
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