# Northowram Primary School

# Attendance Policy

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| **Version** | **002** |
| **Name of Policy Writer** | **NPS** |
| **Last Reviewed** | **January 2027** |
| **Next Review Due** | **March 2030** |

**Statement of intent**

**Northowram Primary School** believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:
  "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –
  (a) to age, ability and aptitude, and
  (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have
  Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."
- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health, safety and well-being of our pupils.

**Legal framework**

**This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:**

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2020) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2020) 'Improving school attendance'
- DfE (2026) 'Working together to improve school attendance.'

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. The following people have specific responsibilities relating to attendance:

**The Headteacher – Jane Scardifield**

The headteacher is responsible for the day to day implementation and management of this policy.

**Designated Safeguarding Lead – Allison Deighton**

- To regularly monitor attendance records of individual pupils and take appropriate action where attendance rates are a cause for concern.
- To liaise with other agencies (EWO/Family support/school nurse) with the aim of improving attendance and punctuality of individual children. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

**Parents/carers**

- Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time.
- Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.
- Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.

**School Staff**

Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

**School Administrator**

- To oversee the statutory recording and classifying of absence
- To monitor levels of attendance on a daily and longer-term basis
- To implement systems and processes which promote good attendance and punctuality

**Education Welfare Officer:**

- Track pupil attendance, identify persistent absence, and address truancy.
- Conduct home visits, understand barriers to attendance, and create action plans with parents.
- Ensure children's welfare, especially those facing behavioural, emotional, or social challenges.
- Work with schools, social services, and other agencies to resolve attendance issues.
- Where necessary, initiate legal action when parents fail to ensure school attendance.
- Advise schools and parents on attendance policies, bullying, exclusions, and support services.

**Governing Body:**

- To challenge and support the school leadership team to ensure that the aims of this policy are met.

**Promoting good attendance and punctuality - definitions**

Good attendance means being in school 97% of the time, or 184 to 190 days.

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| 190 school days in each academic year | 100% attendance | Brilliant! Well done |
| 184 days of education | 97+% attendance | Good |
| 181 days of education | 95+% attendance | Satisfactory |
| 171 days of education | 90+% attendance | Concerned |
| Less than 170 days of education | Less than 90% attendance | Persistent absentee- serious concern |

**Definitions**

**For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:**

**"Absence"** as:
Arrival at school after the register has closed.
Not attending school for any reason.

An **"authorised absence"** as:
An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
An absence due to a family emergency.

An **"unauthorised absence"** as:
Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
Truancy before or during the school day.
Absences which have never been properly explained.
Arrival at school after the register has closed.
Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
Leaving school for no reason during the day.

**"Persistent absenteeism"** as:
Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year **for any reason**.
A pupil becomes a '**persistent absentee'** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case where attendance falls below 95%, we will inform parents. Pupils who have had periods of low attendance are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring and intervention where absence affects attainment. Any case where attendance is a cause for concern, school refer to the Education Welfare Officer.

**Absence Procedures:**

**If children are absent parents must:**

- Contact school before 8.45am on the first day of absence and then every day in the event of a longer absence. This can be by telephone or on Parentmail. Parents need to **give a reason** for illness.

**If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. If we do not manage to make contact by 10.00am with any person on the school's list of contacts, we will make a home visit. If we still are not able to make contact, we may telephone the police.
- Invite parents in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher/Pastoral Manager if a child's level of absence is a cause for concern for whatever reason
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if the school wish to seek additional support to improve a child's attendance.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days (e.g. after taking an unauthorised extended holiday), the school may remove the pupil from the admissions register.

**Attendance register**

The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

**The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:**

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Authorised absence
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
- V = Educational visit or trip

- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- D = Duel registered – at another educational establishment
- Y = Exceptional circumstances
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

**Religious observances**

The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals. Parents will inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

**Appointments**

As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent. You will be asked to provide evidence of the appointment where possible.

Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

**Modelling, sport and acting performances/activities**

Under Section 37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963, all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises their absence(s).

Where a pupil requests to be absent for a performance or activity, the individual or organisation responsible for organising, producing or running the activity/performance will request a licence from the LA.

The organiser will allow sufficient time for the LA to process the request – the LA will refuse to consider an application if the performance or activity is less than 21 days away.

The LA will only approve a licence application once it is satisfied that:

The pupil's education, health and wellbeing will not suffer; and

The conditions of the licence will be observed.

The LA will impose any conditions it considers necessary to ensure that the pupil is fit to take part in the performance/activity, that there will be proper provision for the pupil's wellbeing, and that the pupil's education will not suffer.

The school will make sure that additional arrangements for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching (usually provided by the organising company). These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.

The organiser of the performance/activity is responsible for ensuring these arrangements are carried out.

The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school maintained by the LA issuing the licence.

The above requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:

For not less than six hours a week; and

During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and

On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and

For not more than five hours on any such day.

Where the applicant is unable to specify the dates of the performance/activity, and the LA decides to grant the application, the LA will specify that the pupil can only take part in the activity for a specified number of days within a six-month period.

Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation is needed from the school.

Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day.

The headteacher will not authorise any absences which would mean that a pupil's attendance would fall below 96 percent.

Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.

The LA will be satisfied that arrangements for chaperones, accommodation, place of performance and rehearsal, and travel are suitable before it grants the application.

The LA may decide to place restrictions on any performance or activity – this can include maximum hours and breaks.

The maximum number of consecutive days that a child can perform is six – this applies to performances only.

Pupils who perform are entitled to a break of at least 14 days following the last performance where the pupil has been performing on the maximum number of consecutive days over a period of eight weeks, unless the period to which the licence applies is less than 60 days.

A licence is also required where a pupil will be absent from school and conducting a performance or activity abroad.

The LA is responsible for enforcing all licence requirements; they may carry out inspections of the premises:

Where rehearsals during the performance period are taking place;

Where performances or activities are taking place; or

Where the pupil is receiving their education, in order to check that licensing conditions are being met.

The LA has the power to amend or revoke existing licences at any time.

If the LA refuses to grant a licence, it will provide reasons for this decision in writing to the individual/organisation applying for the licence.

The organiser of the performance/activity has the right to appeal the decision to a magistrates' court, including its refusal, revocation or variation, and against any condition under which a licence is granted or an approval is given.

**Education Welfare Officer**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems relating to attendance together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, school staff may refer the child to the School Education Welfare Officer. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement such as carrying out meetings in school with parents, carrying out home visits or writing to parents to agree methods for improving attendance or punctuality. The Education Welfare Service can also instruct school to unauthorise absences and lateness where they feel a rapid improvement is needed. However, if other ways of trying to improve

the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can and do use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Education Welfare Officer themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01422 266125.

**Lateness**:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If children miss the start of the day they can miss work and vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

**How we manage lateness:**

- Doors open at 8.50am and children need to arrive at school between this and **8.55am.** This is the start of the school day and we expect children to be ready to enter class at that time.
- Registers are marked by **9.05am** and children receive a late mark (L) if they arrive between 8.55am-9.05am.
- Children will receive a late mark between **8:55**am and **9:25am.**
- At **9.25am** the registers will be closed. If your child arrives after the close of register, or if they are deemed to be significantly late, a late after registers have closed mark (U) will be used. A 'U' mark registers that the child is in school **but counts as an unauthorised absence due to their lateness and will impact on the child's overall attendance percentage for the year.**
- Children arriving late (after 8.55am) need to report to the school office and follow procedures for registering themselves as present.
- Lateness is regularly monitored by office staff and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. If children have a persistent late record, parents will be asked to meet with the Headteacher/Designated Safeguarding Lead to resolve the problem.

**Holidays in Term Time:**

Taking holidays in term time will affect children's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to support us by not taking children away in school time. The DFE have introduced amendments to guidance around term-time holidays taking effect from September 2013. In line with this guidance, the Headteacher **will not** grant any leave of absence for holidays in term time. Holidays taken in term-time will be recorded as 'unauthorised' and the authority **will** administer fines should holidays be taken. There are exceptional circumstances and these could include

- Service personnel returning from, or prior to active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the Parents/Carers leave or working arrangements is part of organisational policy (eg Emergency Service Personnel). This must be evidenced by the production of evidence from the organisation
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parent/carers or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.

**Nursery Attendance**

Holidays

Children attending our nursery are funded by Calderdale Local Authority. Irregular attendance can result in funding being withdrawn by the Local Authority. Children taking holidays in term time will not be authorised and if a child is

taken on holiday for a period longer than four weeks in any LA designated funding period, only four weeks will be funded and the parent will be liable for any additional weeks.

Attendance

- Nursery attendance is monitored in the same way as school attendance. Parents must contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence and then every day in the event of a longer absence. This can be by telephone or on parentmail. Parents need to give a reason for illness.
- Children need to attend the full number of hours for which they are being funded.
- School are entitled to terminate a nursery place if attendance issues cannot be resolved.

Lateness

If children are persistently dropped off late or collected early from nursery, this will affect their overall attendance which could result in the child's nursery place being terminated. Punctuality habits are formed early- if a child is persistently late in Nursery, it is likely that punctuality will be an issue throughout their school career.

**Policy Review**

This policy document will be reviewed every three years in order to take account of any changes to government policy or new guidance received. The success of this policy will be measured by its implementation, usage and effectiveness as a whole school policy document.

Date of current policy: January 2027

Review date: January 2030