West Pelton Primary School & Nursery

Attendance Policy (V1)

Academic Year

2024/25

2025/26

Attendance Policy

West Pelton Primary School & Nursery

Document History Log:

Author of document:	Victoria Hewison	**Job role:**	Headteacher
Date document created:	30 September 2024	**Approval by Governing Body:**	14 November 2024

Annual Review History:

Task	Date Reviewed	Reviewed by	Signatories
First document review	20.09.2025	Victoria Hewison	V. Hewison
2nd Review			
3rd Review			
4th Review			

Revisions Log:

Revision	Date of revision	Reason for revision	Resulting version number	Signatories

Attendance Key Contacts

Please find the details of those with overall responsibility for attendance, attendance support and attendance improvement within our school below.

Name	Role	Contact details
Helen Quinn	Administration Assistant	0191 3700238
Helen Atherton	School Business Manager	0191 3700238
Victoria Hewison	Head Teacher	0191 3700238
Christine Baxter	Deputy Head Teacher	0191 3700238
Claire Donnelly	Parent Support Advisor	07771371391

If a pupil is going to be absent from school the person who should be informed is: H Atherton / H Quinn, School Office, 0191 3700238

If a pupil, parent or family is having difficulty with attending school and requires advice, help or support then they can contact:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Victoria Hewison	Head Teacher	0191 3700238
Claire Donnelly	Parent Support Advisor	07771371391

Help & Support

Where help or support is needed with attendance the sooner school know about this, the quicker people can work together to support with this. Where needed this can involve other services to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Children Missing from Education

If pupils' whereabouts are not known following enquiries schools can legally remove pupils from the admission register (the school roll) after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Pupils place in schools are at risk if whereabouts are not known. Children Missing from Education must be reported to the Local Authority and the matter may be treat as a safeguarding issue.

Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

West Pelton Primary School & Nursery seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will 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.

Specific roles and responsibilities have been published in the Working Together to improve school attendance statutory guidance.

We recognise the link between regular attendance and the well-being, development and achievement of our students / pupils. We expect everyone to attend every session they are able to, to benefit from the learning and pastoral opportunities and support we offer.

Communication is vital to ensure we are able to work with our parents and pupils and support attendance.

We ask that parents check the contact details, address and emergency contact information held by the school are up-to-date are communicated to school as soon as possible as it is extremely important school can contact parents in an emergency, keep parents informed of events and progress or discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

The school day
The school day is from 8:50am – 3:00pm (Nursery) 8:50am - 3:15pm (Reception, Year 1, Year 2); 8:50am - 3:20pm (Years 3, 4, 5, 6)

All year groups enter via the pupil entrance gate

At the end of the day pupils will exit via: -

Nursery - 3pm – main entrance gate
Year 1 to 6 – pupil entrance gate

Registration is 9am. The register will close at 9:25am. Pupils must be in school to be marked present, otherwise another appropriate code will be used (Attendance codes appended).

Pupils arriving late for registration, but before the register has closed will be recorded as late (L code).

In line with government guidance the registers will close at 9:25am (no more than 30 minutes after the registration period ends).

Pupils who are not present before the register closes but attend during the session will be recorded as a U code unless the reason means another code is more appropriate. The U code is an unauthorised absence.

Arriving late to school can be disruptive and unsettling to the child and the rest of their class. Parents should contact the school office on 0191 3700238 if there are any issues which are affecting a pupil's ability to attend school on time.

If your child is late for school:
All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school management information system.

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions
Our PSA will contact you to discuss barriers to regular attendance and how we can support you and your child to achieve this.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality
Our PSA will contact you to discuss barriers to regular attendance and how we can support you and your child to achieve this. This could be access to breakfast club, meet and greets for support or possible referral to the local authority for action if unauthorised

Term dates and planned Inset days

Parents can find term dates and Inset days on the local authority website, the school website and the weekly Friday Newsletter which is posted to the website and sent home electronically each week.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Headteachers are expected to restrict leave of absence in term-time to the specific circumstances in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. There is discretion to consider exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts, circumstances and background behind the request. Permission must be requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with by completing the form which is available from the school office.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. If an application is not made for leave then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

The DfE have stated that generally they do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

On the first day of absence

If a pupil is to be absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to contact the school office before 9am providing a reason for the absence. If a pupil is absent from school and there is no contact from parents/carers then school will contact home to find out why the pupil not in school.

Appointments should be made outside of school time where possible. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they should do.

Periods of extended absence

Parents are expected to contact school for each day of absence to update the school.

No reason for absence provided

If no reason for absence can be ascertained by 9:30am the school office and/or the PSA will make contact with the family, this could be via telephone, messages or a

home visit. If contact can still not be made with the family advice will be taken from first contact and the police – this may involve a welfare check.

If the school do not receive a reason for any absence it will be recorded as unauthorised. Regular absence and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Where 10 or more unauthorised absences are recorded in any 10-school week period the school must consider whether a penalty notice may be appropriate and if so will refer the matter to the local authority.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Headteacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We want to support all our pupils to ensure they can access their education and will take a support first approach. This will sometimes require communications and conversations to better understand the circumstances which may lead to absence.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- Give parents/carers details on attendance
- Promote the benefits of high attendance to pupils by weekly certificates
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absences
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance

Attendance data

We will use data we have such as whole school, year group, form/class and individual pupil level to analyse for patterns of absence which may require some support to improve.

We will also consider different pupil cohorts such as all pupils, those who have free school meals, those with special educational needs or disabilities, pupil premium, children who have a social worker or are looked after etc to identify where additional support may be required.

We will use the information to inform what we do to support and aid discussions between staff, pupils and families.

We will monitor the data to understand the impact of what we do.

We will communicate information to parents, staff and other professionals such as early help, TAF, TAS

Absence concerns

Parents may identify concerns about school attendance early if there is a change in child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns should be shared with school so people can work together to ensure that school attendance does not decline. The earlier concerns are identified and shared, the quicker they may be resolved.

Persistent absence

Pupils who miss 10% or more of their sessions at school are persistently absent. In order to reduce persistent absence, we will identify pupils at risk of falling into the PA bracket (below 95%) and put into place a range of support and advice. Access to wider support services may include (but not be limited to) Early help, PSA, Emotional well-being for effective learning team, emotional resilience nurse, CAMHS and the local offer.

Severe absence

Pupils who miss 50% or more of their sessions at school are severely absent. In order to reduce severe absence, we will identify pupils at risk of falling into this bracket and put into place a range of support and advice. We will work with pupils, parents and partner services and agencies to provide additional support through a more formal, planned approach in conjunction with the local authority to prevent severe absence (persistently absent pupils 70% or below) – we will also hold a review Attendance Support Meeting involving the School Attendance Champion.

National framework for penalty notices and other legal intervention

To improve consistency of practice across the country there is a national framework for penalty notices.

At the point where there are 10 unauthorised absence sessions recorded in any 10 school-week period, schools must consider if:

- further support is appropriate.
- support is appropriate but is not being engaged with.
- support is appropriate but is not improving attendance.
- support is not needed, such as in cases of term-time leave of absence.

If support is appropriate, this should continue.

If support is appropriate but is not improving attendance or is not being engaged with, then a referral for consideration of legal intervention should be made to the local authority. This can include, but is not limited to a Notice to Improve, an application for an Education Supervision Order, Penalty Notice or Offence investigation Interview (PACE caution).

If support is not appropriate, such as where a holiday in term-time has taken place, a referral for a penalty notice will be made. (DCC - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct)

Penalty notices offer the opportunity to deal with an irregular attendance offence without the need to go to court. Penalty notices are issued at a rate of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

There is an escalation policy which means that if a second notice is issued within a three-year period, the second notice will only be payable at the rate of £160. Further offences will not be eligible for the offer of a penalty notice and parents may be prosecuted in court. (DCC - Penalty Notice Leaflet)

If penalty notices are not paid then a prosecution for the original irregular attendance offence will take place.

If convicted at court under section 444 of the Education Act for failing to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil at school, a parent may be fined up to £1000 for each offence.
If there is evidence that a parent knowingly failed to secure the attendance and there is no reasonable justification for this, they can be fined up to £2500 and/or face up to 3 months in prison, be subject to probation supervision or have a curfew imposed as maximum sentences.

Pupils with specific needs
Specific needs of individual pupils and pupil cohorts will be accounted for through the fair and consistent application of this policy. The school will consider the individual needs of pupils and families who have specific barriers to attendance.

In the development and implementation of this policy, we will consider obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This policy is supported by our policies on:
Safeguarding, bullying and behaviour

APPENDIX 1

Absence Codes

Codes	DfE description / explanation	Statistical meaning
C	**Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance** – the specific facts, circumstances and background for each leave of absence application should be considered individually.	Authorised absence
C1	**Leave of absence - performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad** – where the Local Authority have granted a performance licence or Body of Person Approval or a JP has granted licence for performance abroad.	Authorised absence
C2	**Leave of absence - compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable** – where schools and parents agree, exceptionally that part-time education is in a pupil's best interest.	Authorised absence
E	**Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision** – if no provision has been made for the pupil to continue education	Authorised absence
G	**Holiday not granted by the school** – leave of absence not granted by the school. Leave of absence cannot be granted retrospectively or if no application was made in advance.	Unauthorised absence
I	**Illness (not medical appointment)** – parents should notify schools on the first day a child is unable to attend due to illness.	Authorised absence
J1	**Leave of absence for Interview** – where an application has been made in advance to attend an interview for employment or admission to another educational establishment.	Authorised absence
M	**Leave of absence for medical or dental appointment** – appointments should be made outside of school time wherever possible, but where this is unavoidable and a pupil is not present in registration this could is used	Authorised absence
N	**Reason for absence not yet established** – parents should inform schools of reasons for absence – where the reason is not known, efforts should be made to clarify this and the appropriate code used. If no reason is established within 5 school days, the absence should be recorded as 'O'	Unauthorised absence
O	**Absent in other or unknown circumstances** – school are not satisfied with the reason for absence	Unauthorised absence
Q	**Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements** – Local Authority travel arrangements not fulfilled	Attendance not required
R	**Religious observance** – a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs	Authorised absence
S	**Leave of absence for Studying for a public examination** – to be used sparingly and not be granted by default once tuition of exam syllabus is complete. Provision must still be made for pupils who wish to continue to come to school to revise	Authorised absence
T	**Parent travelling for occupational purposes** – parent engaged in trade or business of a nature which requires travel from place to place and the pupil is of no fixed abode. Applications should be made in advance. Where possible, parents should arrange continuity of education and be dual-registered.	Authorised absence
U	**Arrived in school after registration closed** – registers should be open for no longer than 30 minutes. This code to be used where a pupil arrives after registers close, but before the end of the session.	Unauthorised absence

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

3 BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD
4 MAKING RIGHTS REAL
28 ACCESS TO EDUCATION
29 AIMS OF EDUCATION

Expect

Statement of expectation –

We all want the best for pupils and therefore aspire to have the highest attendance possible for each individual to allow them to access the education on offer to them in a culture they feel safe, part of the community and where they want to be.

Monitor

Data from our management information system will be used to monitor, identify and support attendance to enable school to address concerns at the earliest opportunity using a support first approach.

Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance

Our Parent Support Advisor is available to listen to any concerns which may be affecting attendance. The school will communicate with parents where concerns are identified by school. This should acknowledge attendance is everyone's responsibility and led by the Senior Attendance Champion from the school leadership team.

Facilitate support

The school intends to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where there are wider issues affecting attendance.

The school's strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, includes access to wider support services in order to remove the barriers to attendance. Support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.