Whole School Attendance Policy

Policy consultation and review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents about this policy when their children join our school and regularly thereafter through our school newsletter and other relevant opportunities.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body/Board of Trustees on at least an annual basis. This policy was submitted and agreed by the Governing Body October 2026.

Signature	Headteacher	Date:
Signature	Chair of Governors	Date:

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Introduction

At Wheatcroft Community Primary School we recognise that positive behaviour and good school attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a wide range of evidence as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school- age education.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "Working together to improve school attendance" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance including the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing education or absent from school. This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the suitable, full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.
- Our policy outlines the school's commitment to attendance. Our policy aims to provide clear guidance to all staff, parents & carers, pupils and governors/trustees about the responsibilities and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.
- Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:
- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.

- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

Promoting regular attendance

At Wheatcroft Community Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Role	Name	Contact details
Senior Attendance Champion	Jayne Watson Headteacher	01723 375704
Attendance administrator	Jane Davis Administrative Assistant	01723 375704
Named Governor/Trustee for Attendance	Helen Thompson Safeguarding governor	

Improving school attendance is everyone's business, it is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils, and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this, we will:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families.
- Give parents/carers information about attendance in our newsletters.
- Promote the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence as required by law.

- Reward good or improving attendance.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance and the impact on their progress.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance.
- Submit a daily attendance report to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools.

Roles and responsibilities

The Local Governing Board/Trustee Board of Wheatcroft Community Primary School recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- Identifying a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior attendance champion.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the school engages and works effectively with the local authority Attendance Team and wider local partners and services to address barriers to school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker or youth justice worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

The Senior Leadership Team (including senior attendance champion) at Wheatcroft Community Primary School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior attendance champion to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governors/Trustees and on a half-termly basis to the lead governor/trustee for attendance.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.
- Set out how Pupil Premium will be used to support pupils with irregular attendance.

All staff at Wheatcroft Community Primary School will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with the regulations and other relevant legislation.

- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

The Attendance Champion will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support. The Attendance Champion will support good attendance, respond to concerns, and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance data.
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting excellent whole school attendance.
- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance.
- Managing individual pupil casework files.
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern including the instigation of an Early Help Assessment and Plan and/ or the implementation of an attendance contract.
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to if a child is absent from school without contact from parents.
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies.

Wheatcroft Community Primary School requests that parents:

- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life so that we can offer support at the earliest opportunity.
- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular attendance at school.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with a note wherever possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making medical and dental appointments for outside of school hours.
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the school by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues.

Pupils will:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and where they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class.
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance. This is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

Understanding types of absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of other pupils. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session.' Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation, and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

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
- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such 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 or unavoidable cause

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted such as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays taken during term-time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.
- Any other absence in term time which has not been agreed.

This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Persistent and severe absence

A pupil is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee' (PA)** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Over a full academic year this would be 19 school days (38 sessions) missed. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent' (SA)**. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support. The attendance of all pupils at our school is monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in our policy. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court. Schools can

decide to pursue legal proceedings for prosecution without issuing a penalty notice first when attendance is substantially poor.

A Penalty Notice can be issued under the following legislation:

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act
- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice.

See below for further information:

Penalty Notice	Details
First Notice in a **3 year period**:	Issued per child. Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second Notice in a **3 year period**:	Issued per child. Charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
Third Notice in a **3 year period**:	Alternative action should be taken, for example prosecution or other attendance legal interventions. Fines per child are capped at two within any three-year period. After a second fine, if no improvement we follow the school attendance pathway which could lead to a 'Notice to Improve, an FPN, an Education Supervision Order If a parent is prosecuted for their child's non-attendance, they could face a magistrates court appearance and a fine of up to £2,500 and/or prison. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on a Parents future DBS certificate, due to failure to safeguard a child's education.

Leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Wheatcroft Community Primary School, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of

the Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances' and supporting evidence. Wheatcroft Community Primary School will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave (see appendix). Wheatcroft Community Primary School treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, it will be marked as unauthorised. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will also result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

(The same penalty threshold table above also applies to leave of absences)

Medical appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, the parent should pick them up from the school office and sign the child out with the office. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Supporting evidence will be required such as appointment card or hospital letter to authorise the absence. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we will speak to parents/carers regarding our concerns and look at what support can be put in place to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for

absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents to attend a school-led Attendance Support Panel as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school and North Yorkshire Council policies. We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

Pupil absence for the purposes of religious observance

Wheatcroft Community Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

Discouraging staggered starts in reception

At Wheatcroft Community Primary School, we recognise the importance of children attending school full-time from the start of their education. Staggered or part-time starts for children in Reception can have a negative impact on their overall school attendance and academic progress.

We acknowledge that the introduction of 30 free funded hours of early education and childcare for 3 and 4-year-olds has meant that the majority of children now have experience of attending an early years setting for a full school day prior to starting Reception.

We will only consider part-time or staggered starts in exceptional circumstances, for example, where a child has significant additional needs that would make a full-time start detrimental to their wellbeing. In these cases, we will work closely with parents and any relevant professionals to develop a clear plan for the child to transition to full- time education as soon as possible.

For the vast majority of children, we expect them to attend school full-time from the beginning of the Reception year. We will work proactively with parents to ensure a smooth

transition into school and to address any concerns they may have about their child starting full-time. We will provide support, such as home visits, staggered drop- off and pick-up times, and a gradual increase in hours, only where absolutely necessary to meet the individual needs of the child.

Our aim is for all children to be attending school full-time by the end of their first half- term in Reception. We will monitor the attendance of Reception children closely and engage with parents promptly if there are any concerns about part-time attendance impacting the child's progress.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller pupils are among the lowest achieving groups of pupils at every key stage in education, although some pupils achieve very well at school. We recognise that there are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of these pupils. At our school, we have high expectations of all pupils, regardless of their background whilst recognising the lifestyle and cultural traditions of these communities. In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil who is a mobile child[1] and is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and
- the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted

This provision applies *only* when the family has no fixed abode and are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Lincolnshire, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. Wheatcroft Community Primary School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended Wheatcroft Community Primary School in the last 18 months. Parents can register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil’s school place at Wheatcroft Community Primary School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from

unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates

Our procedures

- Start and finishing times of registration: our doors open at 8.30am and registration closes in our classrooms at 8:40am. A child arriving between 8:40-9:00am will be marked as "late before the registers close". A child arriving after 9:00am will be marked as 'late after the register has closed'.
- The importance of punctuality and the response to lateness. If a child arrives at school after 8:40am, they will have to enter school through the main office and a record will be kept.
- In line with Health Protection Agency guidelines, a period of 48 hours absence is required for any pupil with vomiting or diarrhoea. Such absence due to illness is authorised.
- There should be daily contact between parents and school when a child is absent unless it is an illness that is guaranteed for 48 hours, for example, sickness/diarrhoea.
- If a parent wants to request an absence due to an exceptional circumstance for their child, they must contact the office and fill out a form detailing the reason. This will then be decided by the Headteacher whether it is authorised or unauthorised.
- Routine dental and doctor appointments must be made out of school hours but hospital and an emergency doctor appointment will be authorised. You will be requested to provide evidence of these appointments.
- Children should not leave school early unless they have an emergency appointment or there is an exceptional circumstance. You will be requested to provide evidence of these appointments.
- Referral routes with roles and responsibilities for pupils with emerging attendance problems. Parents of pupils with attendance below 95% will be monitored and/or contacted. This is on an individual case basis dependent on the circumstances, for example, a child may have had an operation and need to have 2 weeks absence.
- The inclusion of attendance information in school documentation, e.g. the website, reports, newsletters, home-school agreements.
- Annual reports to parents include a record of their child's attendance.
- The Headteacher's termly report to Governors records the attendance figures for the academic year to date.
- If a parent has concerns about their child's attendance or would like to discuss any matters further, they should contact the school office to make an appointment to see the Headteacher or the Attendance Champion (Sarah Garland).

Register keeping and recording

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present
- Absent
- Present at approved educational activity or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

[1] A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

Expected absence procedure for parents

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- If a child is absent, parents must phone the school office on 01723 375704 or email on absences@wheatcroft.n-yorks.sch.uk by 9:00am on that day. If they phone before school hours, they can leave a message on the answerphone or send an email. The message must include the reason for absence. If a child is absent from school and parents have not phoned the office, the school office will phone home. If the first contact does not answer, the next contact on the list will be contacted.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9:00am.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible

Senior Attendance Champion – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school	Jayne Watson	01723 375704
Administrative Assistant Senior Administrator	Jane Davis Ellen Mann	01723 375704 absences@ Wheatcroft.n-yorks.sch.uk

If your child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9:00am and where no reason for absence is known. The school will telephone or email if there is no answer, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. However, it is your responsibility to contact us;
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, send emails and a home visit may be made, in the interests of safeguarding.

We will also inform all professionals involved in supporting the pupil if there are unexplained absences from school in line with statutory requirements. We will also inform all professionals involved in supporting the pupil if their name is to be deleted from the school register.

Late arrival at school

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

At Wheatcroft Community Primary School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 8:40am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The gates open at 8:30am. The school register will be taken at 8:40am. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to provide a reason for their absence. This will be recorded in our register system. If their arrival is before 9:00am, it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9:00am. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be

marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with the Attendance Champion but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.
Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

Monitoring and support systems

At Wheatcroft Community Primary School, we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.
Strategies we may use to monitor and support our families include:

- Attendance is monitored daily. A report is sent to the HT / Attendance Champion each day to monitor individual children.
- Parents will be routinely contacted if attendance falls below 90% in Autumn term and below 95% from Spring term onwards unless exceptional circumstances are known.
- Every half term, the Attendance Champion monitors all children's attendance across school and children who are less than 95% are monitored and may be contacted via a letter (Letter 1 - see appendix). This is continually monitored every half term and each child is looked at individually. This can depend on the term: in the Autumn term, a letter will only be sent if attendance is below 90% as this will have only been one bout of illness unless there has been an unauthorised holiday. From the Spring term, anyone with less than 95% may be contacted. Again, each case is looked at on an individual basis.
- If the attendance does not improve, a second letter is sent (Letter 2 - see appendix) inviting the parents to meet with the Attendance Champion to discuss any issues and putting actions in place e.g. referred to Early Help, complete an EBSA referral.

- For pupils that further drop below 95%, parents will be requested to meet with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors to attend a SAP (School Attendance Panel). This is a more formal meeting and actions are agreed from it. (Letter 3 – see appendix).
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 95% and/or approaches 10 unauthorised sessions (whether accumulated within a ten week period or not in one period), a warning letter may be sent (Letter 4 – see appendix). This letter will advise parents that attendance must improve or a fine may be issued.
- If a child has at least 10 unauthorised sessions over a ten week rolling period, a letter will be sent when they return to school (letter 5 – see appendix).
- The policy cycle including letters and meetings, does not restart each year. Previous years' attendance will be taken into consideration when following the next step.
- At the end of each academic year, any child who has attendance of less that 90% may be sent a letter to state this and that it needs to improve in the future (see appendix – improve letter at end of academic year)
- A 'well done' letter is sent to all children who have attended school 100% at the end of each main term (3 times per year). (See appendix)
- A 'well done' letter (nearly 100% attendance) is sent to all children who have attended school at least 99% at the end of the year. (See appendix)
- A 'well done' letter is sent to all children who have attended school 100% of the time at the end of the year. (See appendix)

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

Part-time timetables

All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable where a pupil's individual needs indicate they cannot currently access a full- time education, and it would not be in their best interest to do so.

We will not use a part-time timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a part-time timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil where it is safe to do so; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family.

In line with Lincolnshire County Council guidance, we will notify the Attendance Team of all part-time timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

School attendance and the law

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 introduced a National Framework in England. By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

National framework for penalty notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

For further information see the North Yorkshire Code of Conduct for issuing penalties regarding school attendance https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Safeguarding/Child%20Protection%20and%20Safeguarding%20in%20Schools/School%20Attendance/Appendix_5_Code_of_Conduct_for_the_use_of_Penalty_Notices_April_2016.pdf

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours.

In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

We will work with parents and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

Deletions from the Register

At Wheatcroft Community Primary School we will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. At Wheatcroft Community Primary School we will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and North Yorkshire Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above.

Wheatcroft Community Primary School will follow North Yorkshire Council's Child Missing in Education (CME) https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/children-missing-education when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, the school will carry out joint enquiries with North Yorkshire Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

Related policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding including child protection
- medical needs
- admissions
- anti-bullying
- exclusion
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- behaviour and rewards

Statutory framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Working together to improve school attendance, DfE (August 2024)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE (January 2015)
- Children missing education, DfE (September 2016)
- Keeping children safe in education, DfE (September 2023)
- Working together to safeguard children, DfE (December 2023)

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

Appendix

Beginning of academic year and new starter letter

September 2026

Important updates in School Attendance: Penalty Notices and Unauthorised Absence.

Holidays, Term-Time Absence & Persistent Absence – What Parents/Carers Need to Know

Dear Parents and Carers
I hope this letter finds you well. As part of our commitment to maintaining high levels of school attendance, we would like to inform you about guidance around holiday absences and unauthorised leave.
This aligns with the Department for Education (DFE) updated guidance on improving school attendance, effective from 19th August 2024 in collaboration with the Local Authority.

Taking your child out of school during term time, whether for holidays or other reasons, can disrupt their education and may lead to unauthorised absences. If your child misses 10 or more sessions (5 days) without agreement, this could result in a penalty notice from the Local Authority. This applies to both term-time holidays and persistent non-attendance without a valid reason. Please speak to the school if you're unsure or need support with attendance.
As a school we consistently emphasise the significance of good attendance. We recognise that absences impact not only a student's academic performance but also their social well-being within the school community. The school closely monitors the attendance of all our learners and communicates with families when concerns arise. Our aim is to continue to work collaboratively with the families to address any issues and we will provide support and explore solutions together to support all learners to be in school regularly and on time.

Reporting Absence
If your child is going to be absent from school, please promptly notify the school providing the reason on each and every day of the absence. Accurate and detailed attendance records are essential, and your swift action contributes to this.
Tel: 01723 375704
Email: admin@wheatcroft.n-yorks.sch.uk

Medical Appointments
While we encourage scheduling medical appointments outside of school hours, we understand that it's not always feasible. If you must have an appointment during the school day, please take only the essential time away from school to minimise disruptions to your child's education. Additionally, we kindly request that you provide the school with a copy or screen shot of the appointment letter so that we can document it in the child's file.

Term Time Holidays
The DFE emphasises that term-time holiday should be avoided. Absence during this time can significantly impact your child's education. We kindly request that you plan holidays during breaks to minimise disruption in learning. Any such absences will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
If you believe there are exceptional circumstances that require a term-time holiday, please submit a written request to the school as soon as possible. We will assess each case individually and provide guidance accordingly. However, if we determine that the circumstances do not qualify as exceptional, we will notify you in writing, indicating that you may be subject to a penalty notice issued by the local authority, which could result in legal action.

Unauthorised Absence
These could be situations where a pupil is absent without valid reason or permission.
This could include being absent without notifying the school of the reason, taking term time holidays, arriving late to school, leaving early without a valid reason or truanting. Occasionally, we may request evidence to validate an absence. For instance, providing a medical appointment letter can change an absence from unauthorised to authorised.

Penalty Notices and Prosecution

It is important to be aware that poor attendance may result in the issuing of penalty notices to parents. These notices can apply to term-time holidays, any unauthorised absences, or a combination of both.

The national threshold for issuing a penalty notice in England is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a 10-week period. This typically equates to 5 school days. (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks).

These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks).

The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

A Penalty Notice can be issued under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**

- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**

- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty**

Please note: A Fixed Penalty Notice can also be issued if your child is seen in a public place within the first 5 days of an exclusion from their school.

- **Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes it a duty for parents in relation to pupils subject to a fixed period or permanent exclusion to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of any such exclusion.**

- **If a child is present in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion during school hours the parent may be guilty of an offence for which they can be prosecuted by the LA before a magistrates' court or issued with a Penalty Notice.**

See below for further information:

Penalty Notice	Details
First Notice in a **3 year period**:	Issued to each parent. Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second Notice in a **3 year period**:	Issued to each parent. Charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
Third Notice in a **3 year period**:	Alternative action should be taken, for example prosecution or other attendance legal interventions. Fines per parent are capped at two within any three-year period. If a parent is prosecuted for their child's non-attendance, they could face a magistrates' court appearance and a fine of up to £2,500 and/or prison. Cases found guilty in Magistrates' Court can show on a Parents future DBS certificate, due to failure to safeguard a child's education.

It is important to note that fines are a last resort, and parents are offered support from the school on many occasions to improve their child's attendance first.

Thank you for your cooperation in ensuring that your child's education remains a priority. If you have any questions, or you would like any support with the attendance of your child, feel free to contact the school Attendance Champion /Headteacher.

Sincerely,

Mrs J Watson
Headteacher

Wheatcroft Primary School

APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

If you consider you have to take a holiday in term time, and that you have exceptional

circumstances, please complete this form and return to the school at least 10 days before the date you wish to remove your child from school.
Pupil Name ..... Class .....
Home Address
.....
First day of absence ..... Date of return to school .....
Total number of days missed .....
Reasons for absence (please make it very clear why there are exceptional circumstances)
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the Lincolnshire Education and Welfare Service will be notified if the holiday is taken and a Penalty Notice may be issued. I understand that a Penalty is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £160.00 (reduced to £80 if paid withing 21 days).

Name of Parent/Carer making application
.....
Signed ..... Dated .....
(Please ensure you are giving at least 10 days' notice of the proposed absence)

Pupil Name …… Class ……..
☐ AUTHORISED: Your request has been authorised for the following dates:
___ / ___ / ___ to ___ / ___ / ___
☐ UNAUTHORISED: Your request for a leave of absence during term time has not been authorised because:

Headteacher signature ……

Letter 1

DATE

To the Parents / Carers of

Dear Parents / Carers,

First Attendance Letter

Following a review of the school attendance data, I am writing to you because since September your child's attendance has been less than 95%.

I realise that there may be a good reason for NAME's absence and you may have already told us about it. However, it is vital that all pupils' attendance at our school should be at least 95%. This is important because NAME's progress can be seriously affected and it is your legal responsibility to make sure that HE/SHE is in school.

I would like to thank you in anticipation of your co-operation in this matter and if you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Watson
Headteacher

Letter 2

DATE

To the Parents / Carers of

Dear Parents / Carers,

Second Attendance Letter

Following a further review of the school attendance data, I am writing to you because since September your child's attendance is now at XX% and has not improved since my last letter.

I realise that there may be a good reason for NAME absence and you may have already told us about it. However, it is vital that all pupils' attendance at our school should be at least 95%. This is important because NAME'S progress can be seriously affected and it is your legal responsibility to make sure that they are in school.

I would like to meet with you to discuss this further. Please can you come into school on DATE AND TIME.
If this time and date is not convenient, contact the school office to rearrange a more convenient time to come in or a telephone call.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Watson
Headteacher

Letter 3

DATE

To the Parents / Carers of NAME

Dear Parents / Carers,

Third Attendance Letter

Following a further review of the school attendance data, I am writing to you because since September your child's attendance has now dropped below 90% and has not improved since we met.

As we have already met and discussed any issues, put actions in place and your child's attendance has still not improved, further action is required. I would like you to meet with our Headteacher and our Safeguarding Governor for a School Attendance Panel to discuss actions moving forward.

Please can you come into school on DATE AND TIME.

If this time and date is not convenient, contact the school office to rearrange a more convenient time to come in for a face to face meeting.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Watson

Letter 4

FORMAL WARNING (Persistent Absence)

Date
Dear

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL: FORMAL WARNING

NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:

DATE OF BIRTH:

REGISTERED PUPIL AT:

CURRENT ATTENDANCE: %

I need to draw your attention to the fact that parents have a duty in law to ensure their child attends school regularly, unless they are unable to do so by reason of ill-health or other legally acceptable reason. Full details of our attendance policy can be found on the school's website.
The attached attendance certificate shows the periods when NAME was absent from school between date from 10 week rolling period. This is an unacceptable rate of attendance.
Your child has nearly met the legal threshold and you are now eligible for a fixed penalty notice. Therefore, should your child have any further unauthorised absences, including lateness between now and a reasonable date set by school – usually a half term, a fixed penalty may be issued by the Local Authority, please see details below.
A Penalty Notice can be issued under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Penalty**

See below for further information:

Penalty Notice	Details
First Notice in a **3 year period**:	Issued to each parent. Charged at £80 if paid within 21 days £160 if paid within 28 days.
Second Notice in a **3 year period**:	Issued to each parent. Charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
Third Notice in a **3 year period**:	Alternative action should be taken, for example prosecution or other attendance legal interventions. Fines per parent are capped at two within any three-year period. If a parent is prosecuted for their child's non-attendance, they could face a magistrates court appearance and a fine of up to £2,500 and/or prison.

Yours sincerely
Mrs Jayne Watson
Headteacher

Letter 5

FORMAL NOTICE (Persistent Absence)

Date:
Dear

IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL: FORMAL NOTICE
NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:
DATE OF BIRTH:
REGISTERED PUPIL AT:
CURRENT ATTENDANCE: %

I am writing in response to NAME'S unauthorised absence from school on DATE which we have reason to believe is due to a holiday during term time.

Government guidelines which came into effect on 19th August 2024, prevent Headteachers from granting any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Full details of our attendance policy can be found on the school's website.

As a result, I must inform you that North Yorkshire Council will be advised of this matter and will be requested to issue a Penalty Notice in line with their Code of Conduct. Fines are issued per parent per child at £160 each (discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days).

Failure to pay within 28 days of the fines being issued may result in parents facing legal action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. All payments are made directly to Lincolnshire County and they will be in contact with you directly.
Sincerely,

Mrs J Watson
Headteacher

Late Letter

DATE

To the Parents / Carers of NAME

Dear Parents / Carers

I am writing because I am concerned that NAME is regularly late for school.
As you know, pupils should be at school for registration at 8:50am so they can get ready to start the day. This helps us to ensure that lessons begin promptly by 9.00 am. It is really important that your child is settled in class from the start so they does not miss key information that will hinder their learning for the rest of the lesson. Even being a few minutes late can be disruptive to the class as a whole and distressing to your child. Furthermore, your child can grow up lacking the vitally important social skill of punctuality.

Please also note that children who arrive after the register has closed could be given an 'unauthorised absence' for that session.

I am sure that you will do your best to ensure NAME arrives on time for school but should you have any concerns you would like to discuss with me, please don't hesitate to make an appointment.

Yours Sincerely

Jayne Watson
Headteacher

Improve letter at end of academic year

To the Parents / Carer's of NAME DATE

Dear Parents / Carer's,

Attendance Letter

Following a review of the school attendance data, I am writing to you because since September your child's attendance has been less than 90%. This is a great concern to us as a school because lack of attendance can have a serious negative impact on your child's

academic achievement, progress, friendships and well-being. It is also an unhealthy habit that may impact their resilience and attitude to working life.

The government is requesting that schools monitor attendance closely and that we act upon any issues quickly so the impact is lessened. When the children move on to secondary school, they are also informed of your child's attendance.

Please make sure your child's attendance improves next year. It is vital that pupil's attendance should be at least 95%; it is your legal responsibility to make sure that they are in school.

I would like to thank you in anticipation of your co-operation in this matter and if you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Watson
Headteacher

Nearly 100% letter

Well done!

Your child has achieved ***nearly*** 100% attendance this year which is fantastic! The only reason they have not is due to a medical appointment or a brief illness which we understand was vital for the health of your child.

GOOD attendance is very important so that children are given as much opportunity as possible academically and socially. When children are absent from school they often find it difficult to catch up on the work they have missed and can feel unsettled.

We are asking for the support of all parents in improving attendance levels as we believe this is one of the main ways in which our children will be happy at school and achieve their full potential.

Thank you for your support and well done for achieving GOOD attendance this year. Please keep it up!

Yours sincerely

Jayne Watson
Headteacher

100% letter (term / year)

To the Parents / Carers of NAME DATE

Dear Parents / Carers,

Well done!

NAME has achieved 100% attendance this TERM/YEAR which is fantastic!

GOOD attendance is very important so that children are given as much opportunity as possible academically and socially. When children are absent from school, they often find it difficult to catch up on the work they have missed and can feel unsettled.

We are asking for the support of all parents in improving attendance levels as we believe this is one of the main ways in which our children will be happy at school and achieve their full potential.

Thank you for your support and well done for achieving GOOD attendance this term.

Please keep it up!

Yours sincerely

Jayne Watson
Headteacher