



We Dream Big; We
Believe We Can; We
Achieve Excellence.

Attendance Policy

2025-2028



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Aims

Willerby Carr Lane Primary School is a nurturing, friendly, safe and secure environment where pupils and staff work together to help children to flourish and achieve excellence. In order to achieve this, we support our pupils to attend school regularly and punctually. To encourage this, we aim to make our school a place the pupils want to attend because they are respected, valued, supported and included.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.



Legislation and guidance



This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools





Roles and responsibilities

The governing body

The governing board is responsible for setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers and making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

- Making sure the school records attendance accurately, and shares the required information with the DfE and LA
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures and evaluating the effectiveness of the processes to make sure needs are being met
- Working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance when needed
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school through the implementation of this policy at the school
- Setting a clear vision for maintaining and improving attendance
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and authorising the attendance officer to be able to do so
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers
- Sharing information from the school register with the LA or ensuring that the attendance officer shares this information
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Arranging targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Ensuring that the school is following DfE guidance, including that on Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

Senco

The Senco is responsible for:

- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs





Roles and responsibilities

The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office.

School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls/messages from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on Arbor
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to another member of staff where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance .

Parents

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call/email/message the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance
- Support the school to identify and remove (where possible) any barriers that may be impacting on their child's attendance

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time
- Work with school to identify any barriers that may be impacting on attendance





Recording absence

Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

We will also record:

- [For pupils of compulsory school age] Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:40am and ends at 3:30pm.

- Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.
- The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40 and will be kept open until 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am, or as soon as practically possible, by contacting the school via phone, email or Arbor..

- We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible.
- Parents must apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible by requesting a form from the school office. These absences can only be authorised if certain criteria are met.

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Recording absence

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- If a pupil is repeatedly late, school will contact parents to discuss ways to support the pupil to be able to be in school on time. This will be done by the class teacher in the first instance and then the attendance officer, SENCo or headteacher. If the lateness persists after the initial meeting, school may seek advice from Education Welfare on how to proceed.

Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the safeguarding team for advice.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with contact education welfare and follow agreed procedures.

Reporting to parents

A pupil's attendance figures are available for parents to see on Arbor. If the attendance figure falls below the desired level then school may contact parents to arrange a meeting to discuss this and put a support plan in place where needed.

At all times, school will adopt a supportive, sensitive, individualised approach by listening to parents, and pupils, building relationships and engaging support from other professionals where appropriate.





Authorised and unauthorised planned absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only authorise absence in line with the East Riding Behaviour and Attendance Partnership 'Absence From School For Exceptional Circumstances Policy'. They will not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a child's education.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the Education Welfare Officer prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Further details and clarification:

The school follows the guidance on:

<https://www.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/schools-colleges-and-academies/school-attendance/holidays-during-term-time-and-authorised-absence-from-school/>





Strategies for promoting attendance

- Regular reminders in the newsletter about the importance of good attendance
- Regular reminders to pupils in class assemblies of the importance of good attendance
- Reasons requested from parents when reporting absence
- Telephone calls, face to face meetings and home visits from the ELSA, SENCo or class teacher
- Any unreported absences followed up by a text and then phone call on the same morning
- Parental support provided for identified families where there is persistent lateness or absence including meetings where targets are set
- Half-termly analysis of data
- Involvement of the Educational Welfare Officer/

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Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Meet with the Education Welfare Officer on a termly basis to discuss attendance and absence data.

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Letters are sent to parents/carers of pupils who are persistently absent.

These are followed up with meetings with parents where support strategies are discussed and agreed and targets are set. Close monitoring of all pupils in this category takes place on a weekly basis. Where no significant improvement is seen in a pupil's attendance, the school may refer to the Education Welfare Officer to identify further support and/or suitable next steps to promote attendance.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the headteacher and safeguarding lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

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- Strategies for promoting attendance
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Linked policies:

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy

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