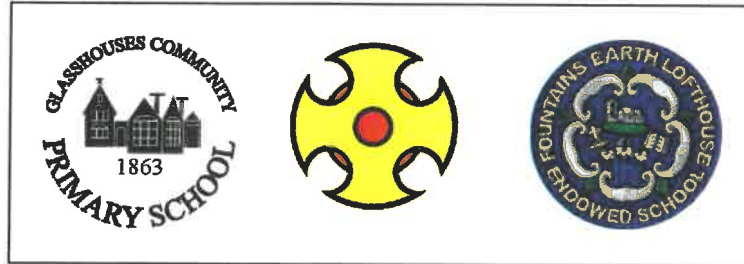


Article 28 (right to education)  
Article 29 (goals of education)



## Upper Nidderdale Primary Federation

### Attendance Policy

Policy:	Attendance
This Policy was approved:	September 2021
This Policy will be reviewed:	September 2022
Addendum to reflect the Lockdown 3 expectation	
Governor committee responsibility:	Governing Body

## Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Glasshouses Primary School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. **A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.**

## Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a **minimum of 98% attendance** for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
  - Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
  - Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
  - Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.

- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

## **Legal framework**

his policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2020) 'School attendance'
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2021) 'Keeping children safe in education'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2021) 'Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behavioural Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

## **Definitions**

### **Authorised Absence**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

## **Procedures**

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.

- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to NYCC LA and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Headteacher who has the responsibility for monitoring attendance.

#### Pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)

The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA), in conjunction with all relevant external authorities, where necessary.

The SLT will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
  - Sending letters to parents.
  - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
  - Using fixed penalty notices.
  - Creating attendance clinics.

The governing board will engage in attendance panels to reinforce messages and outline relevance in terms of training and employment.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.

Where a pupil becomes at risk of PA, the school will:

- Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meet with pupils to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.
- Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Lead **weekly** check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Consider what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:

- Children in need
- LAC

- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND

## **Responsibilities**

**All members of school staff** have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

### **Class teacher**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

### **Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- **Overall** monitoring of school attendance:
  - Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
  - Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
  - Making referrals to the EWO service

### **Administration Staff**

Staff in the school office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made. **Before 9.15am**
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home
  - **Informing the Headteacher or, Senior Teacher in their absence, of absence on a daily basis ASAP - as soon as this is known for Covid suspected cases.**
  - **In 'normal' situations, inform before 9.15am including reason for absence reasons.**
  - **In 'normal' the Family Liaison Leader contacts the parents and records on the attendance tracker**



- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

### **Family Liaison**

The Family Liaison Leader is responsible for:

- Monitoring of school attendance on a daily basis
- Monitoring trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the EWO service
- Providing termly reports and background information to the Headteacher on trends, actions and concerns
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence

### **Parents**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

### **Rewards**

A tiered reward system is in operation to ensure that a realistic approach to attendance is taken whilst encouraging good attendance.

Bronze certificate for 1 term of 100% attendance

Silver certificate for 2 term of 100% attendance

Gold certificate for 3 terms of 100% attendance. In addition, the children will have an end of school year treat.

### **Registration**

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register

on Scholarpack must be completed by the class teacher before **9.05am** and straight after lunch. (Attendance code / and \ for pupils who are present) These registers are then checked by the school office. The office will check the answering machine and email system for any absence messages and with the class teacher before calling parents.

All attendance records are documented using Scholarpack software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

### **Lateness**

Once the doors are closed at 8.55 am the only way to get into school is via the school office. Any pupil who comes into school this way from 8.55am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (Attendance code L).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.15am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

### **ABSENCES**

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then we send a letter requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

### **First Day Contact**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.05am 9.15am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware of why the child is absent and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence. Children who are not marked present and who have not notified the office, contact will be made to the parent.

If contact cannot be made with the first contact, then the other emergency contacts will be contacted. If no contact can be made to any contact, then the LA Safeguarding Team will be contacted.

### **Illness**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

Wherever possible and unavoidable, please make medical appointments and routine checks outside of school hours.

### **Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday**

The Department of Education requires Local Authorities to implement government amendments to the regulations regarding the taking of Leave of Absence in term-time, which came into force on the 1st September 2013. The new law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term-time.

Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Therefore Headteachers will only be able to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and this will be at the discretion of the Headteacher.

For absence in term time, applications must be made 6 weeks prior to the absence and made in writing using the relevant request form, which is available from our school office or on our school website.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right. The Education Regulations state that applications must be made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school taking into account any factors presented by the family. Our Headteacher will also welcome early discussion with you around potential applications.

Parent/carers will be notified in writing of the decision for a leave of absence in term time within 10 school days of the date of the application.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional'.

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parent's leave or working arrangements is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company.
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

This is not an exhaustive list and the Headteacher must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school. Where a Headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is, however, final.

Please note that the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

If the leave of absence in term time is agreed it will be recorded as 'H' on the school attendance registers (authorised absence).

If the school does not agree to grant the leave of absence and the parents/carers take their child out of school then this will be recorded as unauthorised absence 'G' (family holiday not agreed). If the child has



unauthorised absent for 10 or more sessions (5 school days) a penalty notice will be made by the Headteacher to the Educational Social Work Service.

Should the child fail to return to school within 10 school days of the agreed return date and there is no communication from parents/carers the school may remove the child from the school roll.

#### Legal Implications:

Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without the prior permission of the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the Headteacher. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Parents must, from 1st September 2013, pay £60.00 within 21 days or £120.00 within 28 days. Where a family has more than one child absent from school a penalty notice will be issued for each child who is absent. This brings attendance penalty notices in line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecution if the fine is not paid.

### **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

The school expects attendance of at least 98%.

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer.

The Education Welfare Officers (EWO's) will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

The Education Welfare Officer visits to check and monitor attendance. They carry out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 90%). They work with the school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Our office staff, have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Scholarpack attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Family Liaison Leader to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents. The Headteacher is informed (as detailed through the policy) via the office and a Termly subject leader report.

Linked policies: NYCC attendance guides, leaflet for parents, Positive Behaviour Policy, Child Protection Policy.

**Addendum to reflect Lockdown 3:** January 2021

**Absence in school or from online lessons**

Staff to set up a daily morning registration on MS Teams via the 'General' Channel at 8.50 am.

Each child/parent should respond to the 'conversation' by 9.00am by simply typing 'here'.

Staff to document any absences on CPOMS and contact families accordingly.

Any absences regarding Key Worker children who have been expected in school that day must also be recorded and families contacted.

The **Procedures and Responsibilities** sections above will then be followed if a child is not seen.

All absences and follow-up to be recorded on CPOMS (as per policy)