Attendance policy

Carfield Primary School 23-24

Approved by:	Governing body	**Date:** September 2023
Last reviewed on:	November 2022	
Next review due by:	September 2024	

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

> Promoting 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 ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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, 2016 amendments)

> The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr Wood and can be contacted via the school telephone number and/or enquires email.

3.4 The Data Manager and Home to School Link Worker

The attendance and team is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with the Inclusion and Attendance Team at the Local Authority to tackle persistent absence.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at the start of the school day and at the start of the afternoon session, immediately after lunchtime. Class teachers are responsible for making sure the pupil is welcomed back into the class and has the work provided to/for them to catch up while they are away or when they return. Any concerns, voiced to the class teacher, are then passed on to the phase leader or attendance lead.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

> Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system

> Transfer calls from parents to the SLT in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Make sure their child attends every day on time

> Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am, on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence.

> 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

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

> Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an 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 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

> The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

> For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not

> The nature of the activity if 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.40am and will be kept open until 8.50am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.05pm and 1.30pm.

Start and finish times:

Group	Start time	Finish time
FS1 (Nursery)	8.30am	3.20pm
FS2	8.40am	3.10pm
Year 1-6	8.40am	3.20pm

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff or emailing enquiries@carfield.sheffield.sch.uk (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised when a parent or carer has informed us. We will allow three instances of illness without medical evidence. From this point on, we will require evidence that the parent/carer is seeking medical help for their child. Evidence could include appointment cards, a text, email or letter.

4.2a Absence due to mental or physical illness (See Appendix 3)

When a child is absent due to illness, the child will be registered using the 'I' code. A parent/career must notify the school with details of the illness as soon as possible.

Unless the school is aware of circumstances surrounding ongoing illness, a child can be registered three times using the code 'I' where a parent or carer has contacted school **without any medical evidence.**

After three instances of illness (consecutive or sporadic) within a half term, the home to school link worker will contact the parent or carer to offer support and explain the interventions the school can put into place to encourage attendance.

The monitoring of persistent illness is conducted using four stages:

Stage one:

- When three 'I' codes have been recorded, the Home to School Link Worker will contact the parent/carer. This is a well-being check and will be done through a text message requesting the parent makes contact with school, or through a phone call.

Stage two:

- When four 'I' Codes have been recorded, the Home to School Link Worker will contact home to arrange a meeting. This can be done in school, over the phone or online. During this meeting, we will explore a 'Medical Support Plan' which may include to Home/School contract.

Stage three:

- When 5 'I' codes are recorded without medical evidence, parent/carers will receive a formal letter with an invitation to meet and discuss the Medical Support Plan. During this meeting, the LA may request the permission of parent/carers to contact the child's GP to decide on how to move forward.

Stage four:

- If absence due to illness continues following the stage three meeting, a second formal letter will be sent home. This letter will include a chronology of all the support school has put into place. The letter will include an invite into school for a second medical support meeting. It will also notify parents that the Local Authority have been notified, and wil begin their own investigations.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. We will reuest to see confirmation of the appointment. This could be a letter, text message or appointment card. Evidence can sent to enquiries@carfield.sheffield.sch.uk.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Our school day officially begins at 8.40am when all children are expected to be in school, unless they have an authorised absence pass, or parent/carers have informed the school that their child/children will be late. The school gates are closed at 8.50am for safety reasons. Pupils will be marked as late when they arrive into classroom at/after 8.50am, or to reception after 9.00am. Children arriving between 8.40am and 8:59am are to go straight to the classroom. Any children arriving after that time will need to enter at the main entrance via the intercom system and report to the office where they will be given a late mark on the register and will be able to book their lunch.

A pupil who arrives late:

> Before the register has closed the pupil will be marked as late using the 'L' code. The teacher will then enter the amount how many minutes learning have been lost.

> After the register has closed, the pupil will be marked with a 'U' code. This means that the child is considerably late to school, and may trigger punctuality monitoring from the home to school link worker.

Punctuality procedures

- The Home to School Link Worker and Data Manager monitor lateness.

- When the child is late, the parent/carer will receive a text message, politely reminding them of the importance of punctuality and the statutory requirement of the school to safeguard our children.

- If a child is late three or more times, this will trigger punctuality monitoring by the home to school link worker. The Home to School Link Worker will phone home to offer support and reiterate the importance of punctuality to school.

- If a child is late 4 times in a half term, school will send a letter inviting parents/carers into to school. This is a supportive meeting with the aim of improving punctuality. During this meeting, you may be offered a punctuality support plan, and may be requested to sign a home school contract that recognises the steps we are taking to support the child.

- If a child is late 6 times in a half-term, the parent/carers will receive a chronological letter. This letter will outline all of the support offered so far, and include reference to the meeting before where a plan was agreed and a home school contract signed.

- If punctuation continues to be an issue after this point, parents and carers will receive a formal letter informing parents/carers that school is seeking the advice and support of the Attendance and Inclusion officer from the Local Authority. The letter will provide an overview of the total learning time lost.

Punctuality when collecting children at the end of the school day is just as important. If a parent/carer is running late school should be notified by telephone, so that the child/children can be cared for by school until they are collected. If the school is not notified they will try to contact the parent/carer. If no contact can be made and the child/children are still in school one hour after the end of school the relevant Children's Social Care Area Team or the Police will be contacted.

Group	Start time	Finish time
FS1 (Nursery)	8.30am	3.20pm
FS2	8.40am	3.10pm

Year 1-6	8.40am	3.20pm

Staff cannot be requested to walk children back home.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence (See Appendix 2)

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will follow four stages of intervention. These stages have been developed in collaboration with the Attendance and Inclusion Team at the local authority, and are in line with guidance provided by The Department for Education.

Stage 1:

Attempts to confirm the reason for absence with parents will be made through text messages and phonecalls. If a parent/carer has not informed the school of absence, the following will happen:

- o A text will be sent, politely reminding the parent/carer to contact school with a reason for absence.
- o If this contact is not made, attempts to phone the parent/carer will be made by the Data Manager, or the Home to School Link Worker.
- o If school is still unable to confirm the reason for absence, a second text message will be sent. At this point, the absence will be recorded as 'Unauthorised'. Three 'U' marks will trigger contact from the Home to School Link worker who will offer support and put a plan in place to ensure the child attends school.

Stage 2 occurs when school has been unable to make contact with parents regarding absence on **three occasions.**

- o Three unexplained absences will trigger attendance monitoring with the Home to School Link Worker.
- o Parent/carers will be invited into school to offer support.

Stage 3 occurs when school have been **uncuccessful in conducting a meeting with parent/carers and further absence is recorded.**

- o Four unexplained absences will prompt a formal letter from the school inviting the parent/carers into school. During this meeting, school will create an 'Attendance Plan'. This will allow school to identify the barriers to attendance and offer support.
- o At the end of the plan is a home school contract, outline the commitments made by the support plan.
- o **If the parent/carer fails to attend the meeting, a home visit may be conducted in line with the safeguarding policy.**

Stage 4 occurs when a home visit, or in school meeting has not resulted in improved attendance.

- o If school are unable to engage with the parent/carers regarding absence, a chronological letter will be sent to the parent/carers. This will outline all of the support that school have implemented to encourage attendance.
- o The letter will make a final offer of a meeting.
- o The letter will also inform parent/carers that the school are referring the case to the **Attendance and Inclusion officer to escalate through the local authority, where they will begin their own investigations. This stage could lead to formal legal intervention and fixed penalty notices (See 5.2).**

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels, if concerning, via:

- First day calling

- Text messages requesting contact with the school.

- Letters informing parets and carers of the current interventions in place and the next steps.

- Discussion with home to school link worker

- Discussion with SLT attendance lead/Headteacher

- Correspondence with external agencies

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Exceptional leave during term time.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. Leave for holidays **WILL NOT** be granted, as outlined in the guidance provided by the Department for Education (September 2023).

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 4 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. If the leave isn't granted but still taken then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a fixed penalty notice will be issued.

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 during the absence

5.2 Legal sanctions and fixed Penalty notices.

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Carfield observe the 'Sheffield Code of Conduct for the Issuing of Penalty Notices' (September 2023). This document is available on the school website and updated. Please refer to this document for further information on when a fixed penalty notice will be issued.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Carfield, we recognisethat it isn't always possible to send your child to school. This could be anything from illness to family circumstances. We understand that things are sometimes beyond your control. This doesn't stop us from having aspirational expectations of our children.

We recognise hard work at Carfield and will celebrate efforts made by families to increase attendance. There will be events throughout the school year to support parents and carers with strategies and support on how to improve punctuality.These resources will be published through our school website.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

Monitor attendance on a daily basis, making contact with families where the reason for absence is unknown and communicating the expectations of the school.

> Monitor attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis, paying particular attention to patterns of absence and beginning appropriate intervention to increase attendance.

> Monitor attendance on a half-termly basis to initialize preventative strategies for the next half term.

> 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.

7.2 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

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 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 –

> Follow the four stages of absence procedure outlined above

> Follow the guidelines provided by the Local Authority for improving attendance

> The Home to School Link Worker will contact parents/carers

> The Home to School Link Worker will look at strategies for improvement

> Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

> Internal and external agencies may contacted for support and intervention to provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

> Legal intervention will be explored with the LA when school has implemented all of the support procedures available.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection and safeguarding policy

> Behaviour policy

> Pupil premium policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Absence Monitoring

		Dates	Intervention and Support	Additional Information
Stage 1	2 'I' or 'O' attendance marks.		Triggers monitoring by the Home to School Link Worker. Text message sent.	
Stage 2	3 'I' or 'O' **Phone contact made with home.** **Meeting arranged with parents.**		Prompts a phone call home from the Home to School Link Worker. Additional support offered – either an in person meeting or a phone call meeting to discuss issues around attendance. Home School Contract signed here. Ensure to get the voice of the child at this point (two attempts required for evidence)	
Stage 3	4 'I' or 'O' marks. **Home visit if unable to make contact with the family at this point.**		Formal letter inviting families into school to begin an attendance support plan. Make it clear to families that if the attendance support plan fails, school will have to refer the child to the LA for support.	
Stage 4	6 'I' or 'O' marks **Chronological letter sent.** **Evidence collated ready to send to legal.** **Final opportunity to meet in school offered.**		6 'I' codes or failure of family to engage with school triggers a chronological letter of the interventions and support that have been put into place. The letter offers a final meeting opportunity for families to receive support from school. The letter outlines the referral process onto the LA.	
Failure to engage with final letter: school refers to LA with evidence.				

Appendix 3: Illness monitoring

		Dates	Intervention and Support	Additional Information
Stage 1	Three 'I' codes that are self-certified without evidence from medical professionals. **First contact made through Home to School Link Worker.**		Triggers monitoring by the Home to School Link Worker. Text message sent.	
Stage 2	Four 'I" codes that are self-certified without evidence from a medical professional. **Invitation to meet and medical support plan/contract put in place.**		Prompts a phone call home from the Home to School Link Worker. Additional support offered – either an in person meeting or a phone call meeting to discuss issues around illness. Home School Contract signed here.	
Stage 3	5 "I" codes that are self-certified without evidence from medical professionals **First formal letter.**		Formal letter inviting families into school to begin a Medical Care Support Plan. Request for LA to access medical records requested at this meeting. If consent is given, school to contact the LA to begin GP protocol.	
Stage 4	Continuing issues around illness and attendance following the meeting, or following non-attendance of Stage 3 meeting **Second formal letter.**		6 'I' codes or failure of family to engage with school triggers a chronological letter of the interventions and support that have been put into place. The letter offers a final meeting opportunity for families to receive support from school. The letter outlines the referral process onto the LA.	