



# Carfield

## Primary School

### Attendance Policy

### 2024-2025

Date Written:	26 September 2024	Review Period:	1 year
Date of next review:	September 2025		

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## Summary

Carfield Primary School is committed to promoting good attendance to ensure that all pupils are able to achieve their full potential both academically and socially.

Regular attendance and good punctuality are vital to the educational achievement and personal development of the child. Only pupils who attend regularly can fully benefit from the academic, personal, and social opportunities which are offered to them within the aims of Carfield Primary School.

This guidance is for Pupils, Parents, Staff Members, Governors and the wider school community.

This guidance is based on **'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' August 2024**

## Aims

- ✓ To encourage all pupils to achieve their maximum potential.
- ✓ To raise awareness of the importance of attendance and its impact on progress and attainment.
- ✓ To provide quality first teaching that your child wants to engage with.
- ✓ To recognise and reward pupils who achieve good attendance.
- ✓ To encourage parents/carers to play a vital role in supporting the school and encouraging their child to reach good attendance levels.
- ✓ To monitor and track pupils' attendance and punctuality through effective systems.
- ✓ To utilise this information to support the school and parents to improve attendance.
- ✓ To listen and understand the barriers preventing your child attending school every day.
- ✓ To facilitate support to remove any barriers to learning.
- ✓ To address poor attendance through clear, consistent, and effective procedures.

## The Legal Position (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996)

- Parents must ensure their child/ren receive a full-time education suitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. This can be through enrolment at a school, or education otherwise.
- Parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age, who are registered at a school, attend regularly.
- Sheffield City Council School Admissions will provide a school place to parents who wish their child to be educated at school. Parents have a right to apply for their preferred schools with an allocation criterion (see [Apply for a school place | Sheffield City Council](#) for more information).
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- The school must consult with the Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Service to consider formalising, or enforcing support when voluntary support has been offered and attendance has not improved.
- The school will request a fixed penalty notice be issued to parents who choose to take their child out of school for the purposes of term time leave. The headteacher will consider any exceptional circumstances when making the decision to authorise or unauthorise the absence.

## Our School Day

<b>7.45am</b>	Gates open for those attending breakfast club
<b>8.30am</b>	Gates open for all pupils and their families
<b>8.50am</b>	Registers are taken in class. Teachers will enter a present mark (/). Any child not in class when the register is taken will be marked with an absence code (N) until a reason has been provided
<b>9.00am</b>	Children arriving after 9.00am must report to the office with their parent/carer. Parent/carers must provide a reason for lateness.
<b>9.30am</b>	Children arriving after 9.30am must report to the office with their parent/carer. Parent/Carers must provide a reason for lateness. The register mark will be a U for late after registers closed. This is considered an unauthorised
<b>12.30pm-1.30pm</b> Depending when their lunchtime finishes	Afternoon registers are taken in the classroom.
<b>3.10pm-3.15pm</b>	Home time for Foundation stage who will be allowed to leave once a parent/carer is identified to collect the child.
<b>3.15pm</b>	Home time for Foundation stage Year 1 Children who will be allowed to leave once a parent/carer is identified to collect the child.
<b>3.20pm</b>	Home time for Year 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 pupils children will be allowed to leave once a parent/carer is identified to collect the child. Year 5 and 6 pupils may walk home alone with a signed consent form from the parent/carer. Parent/carers are responsible for safeguarding their child once they leave the school yard.

Carfield Primary will work together with pupils, parents, family members, the Local Authority and partners to improve attendance. Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners will work together to:



Expect



Monitor



Listen and Understand



Facilitate Support



Formalise Support



Enforce



## What You Can Expect From Us

Pupils and Parents can expect the school to:

- ✓ Provide quality first teaching in a classroom where your child wants to learn and achieve.
- ✓ Provide a broad and balanced education to capture children's interests.
- ✓ Welcome children into the classroom, being observant of any concerns, they may have.
- ✓ Regular monitoring and accurate recording of attendance.
- ✓ Contact parents if their child is absent from school and parents haven't already made contact providing a reason for absence.
- ✓ Share with parents' advice from public health regarding the length of absence required for the illness present.
- ✓ Communicate regularly with parents, sharing their child's attendance percentage and the impact of any lost learning.
- ✓ Have a zero-tolerance bullying policy to ensure children are not avoiding school due to bullying, including online bullying.
- ✓ Take prompt action where barriers preventing a child from attending, or learning have been identified.
- ✓ Liaise with external agencies where appropriate to assist and support pupils and their families.
- ✓ Attend networking sessions within the locality to share good practice, and ensure that the attendance of the whole family is considered where siblings attend different schools.
- ✓ Consult with the Local Authority when the support offered hasn't improved attendance, to protect the child's right to their education.



## What We Expect From Our Pupils

- ✓ To attend school regularly.
- ✓ To take some responsibility for getting up and ready for school in a morning.
- ✓ To be wearing the correct uniform.
- ✓ To wear PE kit on PE days, and old clothes for Woodland days.
- ✓ To be prepared for the day with any appropriate equipment.
- ✓ To remember their homework, swim kit, musical instruments.
- ✓ To have a water bottle in school each day.
- ✓ To be on the yard before the bell and lined up when the bell rings.
- ✓ To go promptly into the classroom and into their place in the classroom.
- ✓ To share with the teacher, teaching assistant or another staff member if they have any worries stopping them from wanting to attend school.



## What We Expect From Parent/ Carers

We expect all parents and carers to:

- ✓ Promote the importance of attending school every day.
- ✓ Ensure their child attends school regularly.
- ✓ Ensure their child is on time and prepared for the day.
- ✓ Contact school before 9am to report any absences, providing a reason for the absence.
- ✓ Be open and honest with staff the reason for their child's absence.
- ✓ Ensure their child is off for the minimal amount of time recommended by Public Health (visit [Home: Healthier Together \(sybhealthiertogether.nhs.uk\)](https://www.sybhealthiertogether.nhs.uk) to find out more)
- ✓ Make routine appointments outside of school hours.
- ✓ Ensure the child attends before and after any medical appointments that could not be booked outside of school hours, providing appointment card/text messages.
- ✓ Take term time leave (holidays) during the school holiday periods. In line with the Sheffield City Council Exceptional Leave during Term Time Policy, a Penalty Notice Fine will be requested if parents choose to take their child on holiday.

*\*\* Requests for term time leave must be made to the Head Teacher on the Term Time Leave Request form, available from the school office or website. A return to school date must be provided and a prompt return is essential.*



## Monitor

### First Day Calling

We will monitor the attendance of all children daily. If your child is not in school (and you have not already notified us of the reason for absence) we will contact you. This is a supportive call, but also a safeguarding call. We will contact parents of Y5 and Y6 first, prioritising those pupils where parents have informed us they bring themselves to school.

### Regular Monitoring

We will monitor the attendance of all children weekly. This ensures we can monitor any patterns of absence, and ensure prompt support is offered when a child has irregular attendance.

If we identify irregular attendance, patterns of absence, or your child's attendance drops below school target you will expect:

- ✓ Your child's teacher to discuss this at parent's evening
- ✓ Your child's teacher to contact you to discuss these concerns
- ✓ A letter home to highlight the concerns and offer support
- ✓ A meeting in school with a member of the senior leadership team

### School Attendance Support Meetings

Each term we will meet with the Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Specialist to discuss whole school attendance, the attendance of key cohorts of pupils, and individual pupils with irregular attendance. We will gain advice around appropriate next steps and further support that we could offer.



## Understand

The purpose of all meetings will be to listen and understand what the concerns are that prevent your child from attending school every day. We call these concerns 'Barriers to Learning'.

We will listen to you, as parents/carers and we will listen to your child.

As part of the meeting we will agree, together, what the strengths are for your child, what we are concerned about, and what the next steps should be to ensure they can start attending regularly and on time.



## Facilitate Support

When considering your child's strengths, areas of concern and next steps we will do this across Education, Health, and Care. Together we will be able to identify where the predominant needs lie, and who is best to support these needs.

Some of the next steps may include referrals to other agencies. If this is the case, we will support you through the process.

At times we may invite other professionals into the meetings to advise, guide and support us in identifying the next steps.

Sheffield City Council Early Help Services provide a range of support, advice, and guidance. We may seek their support for your child, and/or family.

With your consent we may also seek advice from other partners through locality or citywide panel meetings.

If you have another child/other children at different schools we will work with them to ensure whole family support is offered, avoiding duplication.

We will ensure your child has someone in school who they feel confident speaking to and asking for support from.



## Formalise Support



Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with we will work with the local authority to put formal support in place.

Initially we will arrange a further meeting with you, and your child to explore if the barriers to learning remain the same, and if so, why the agreed plan was not effective.

During the meeting we will work together to put a parenting contract together. This will be a formal contract between you, as parent/carer, the school and if appropriate any other professionals working with your family to support the improvement in attendance.

In the meeting we will agree actions and set timescales for improvement in attendance to be seen. In liaison with the Local Authority, we may (particularly where attendance has deteriorated further since the initial meeting/s or there has been no improvement) issue a Penalty Notice Warning Letter alongside the parenting contract.

If you, as parent/carer are engaging with the actions agreed previously, but your child is refusing to engage we may also consider the use of an Education Supervision Order, applied for through the family courts.

Where attendance is unsatisfactory, and there are other safeguarding concerns we may request a statutory assessment through Sheffield Social Care.

## **SAFEGUARDING**

Based on the statutory guidance for schools and colleges KCSIE 2024, persistent absence from school is considered to be a potential indicator of abuse and neglect.

Schools have a duty of care to ensure an offer of Early Help for any child who *is persistently absent from education, including persistent absence for part of the school day\**

Schools should ensure *a safeguarding response to children who are absent from education, particularly on repeated occasions and/or prolonged periods.* \*

### ***\*Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024.***

- Where there is a case of none or poor attendance, early help will be offered to the family. This may include support from school or external services, for example MAST. Attendance will be closely monitored by school and LA Link Officer.
- Where there is a case of non-attendance, school will conduct Safe and Well visits at the child's home address. These will be carried out after a period of 3-5 days of not seeing the child either in school or at home.
- Safe and Well visits are to ensure the safety and well-being of the child and to maintain contact with the family to facilitate a return to full time education. These visits may be conducted by one or more members of staff from the school and will include a member of the Safeguarding team.
- Safe and Well visits may be scheduled in agreement with the family or unannounced.
- Whilst it remains the school's responsibility to carry out Safe and Well visits, external advice and support may be sought from Local Authority Attendance Link officer.
- Where a satisfactory outcome has not been achieved: the child has not been seen by staff

or other professionals, a safeguarding referral may be made to Sheffield Safeguarding Hub.



## Enforce

Where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with, we will consult with the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion Social Workers to consider prosecution. This may include the issuing of a Penalty Notice Warning Letter, a fixed penalty notice (fine) or a fast-track offence within the magistrates' court.

***Educational neglect can significantly impact a child's future.***

### **Persistent and Severe Absence**

- Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), we will work closely with Sheffield LA to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. In doing so, we will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.
- Particular focus will be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils 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 across a range of partners. A concerted effort will be made across all relevant services to prioritise them. All partners will work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.
- If all avenues of support have been facilitated by school, local authority, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. WE will be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment. Further information is available in the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- In all cases, WE will make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of their regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Both persistent and severe absence will also be central to strategies for improving attendance.

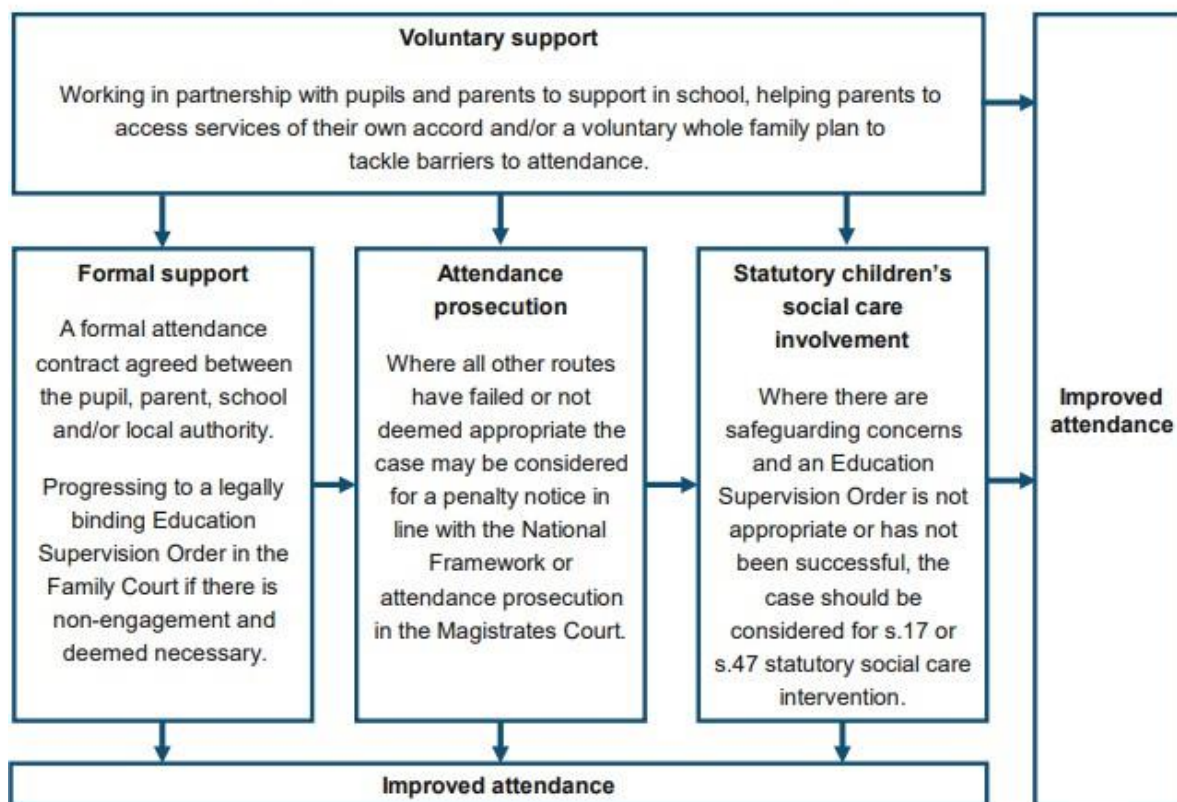
### **Attendance Legal Intervention**

- As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, we will work together with LA and other professional partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects

pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.

- We will work together with LA and other professional partners to make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family.
- These are:
  1. **Attendance contracts**
  2. **Education supervision orders**
  3. **Attendance prosecution**
  4. **Parenting orders**
  5. **Penalty notices\***
- Where they are used, it should be clear that it is the most appropriate intervention to change parental behaviour and in making the decision to use an intervention, headteachers and local authority officers should have regard to their safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance on ***Keeping Children Safe in Education***.
- WE will decide which parent(s) to involve in attendance legal intervention, but this should usually be the parent or parents who have allowed the absence.

### Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



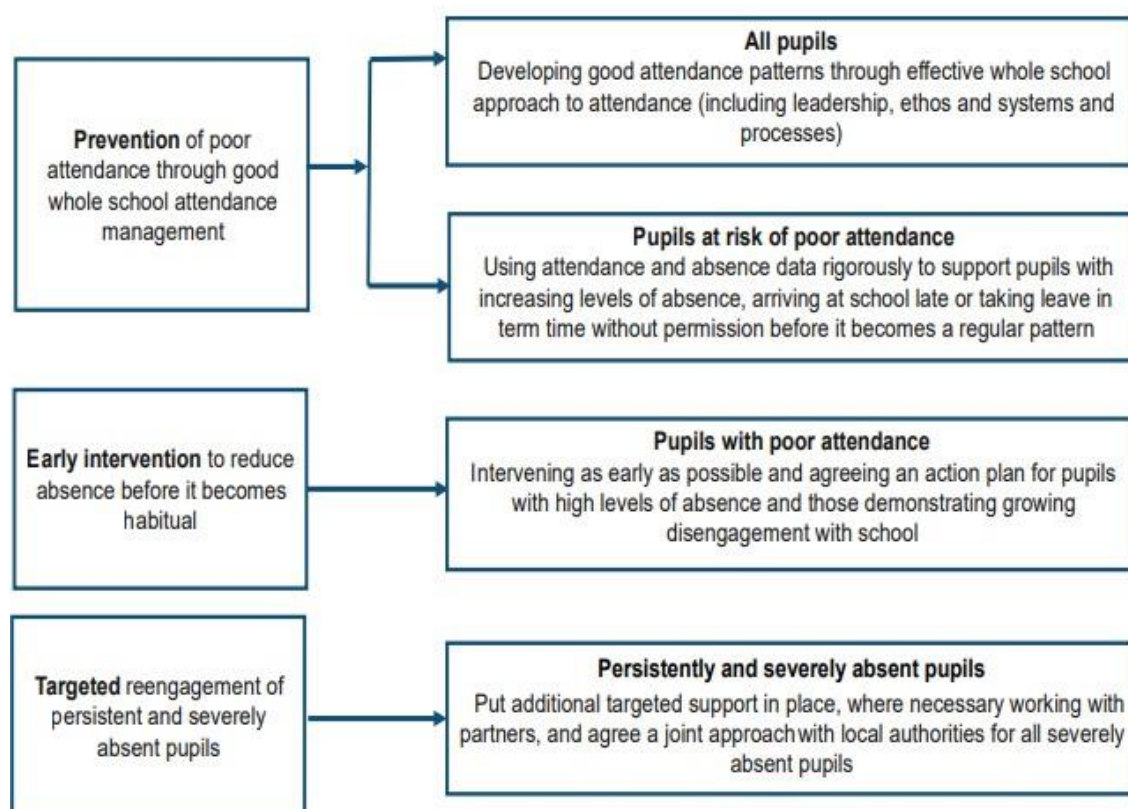
## National Threshold when it is appropriate to issue a penalty notice\*

- All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country. The threshold is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks**. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (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).

## Two penalty notice limit and escalation in cases of repeat offences

- A penalty notice is an out of court settlement which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. If repeated penalty notices are being issued and they are not working to change behaviour they are unlikely to be most appropriate tool. Therefore, only 2 penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:
  - The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil, will be charged at **£160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.**
  - A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of **£160 if paid within 28 days.**
  - A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

## Effective school attendance improvement and management



### Should my child go to school today?

The Healthier Together team within the NHS have created a website to help parents to understand if their child should attend school with minor ailments, and if not, how long they should stay off

### Flexi-Schooling

Carfield primary school does not offer flexi-schooling. If a parent or carer withdraws their child from school for activities that have been organised by the parents, this will be coded as an unauthorised absence.

Carfield cannot facilitate activities outside of the school offer. Privately organised activities do not adhere by our rigorous and statutory safeguarding policy. Repeated absences of this nature will be referred to the Local Authority in accordance to the changes to the Penalty Notices Framework. Parents should expect to receive communication from the Local Authority regarding fines and prosecution.

If your child has a flexi-schooling arrangement named in their Education Health and Care Plan our SENDCO will already be putting the necessary provision in place.

If your child does not have an EHCP, it is for the parent to identify a school that offers flexi-schooling. As mentioned above, Carfield does not offer flexi-schooling and will unauthorise any

absence in relation to this. This is due to our statutory obligation to safeguarding and we will be following statutory attendance legal processes.

Should you wish to raise a complaint regarding our stance on flexi-schooling, please follow our complaints process with the governors

## Further Information

Carfield Primary School Website:

<https://www.carfieldprimary.co.uk>

Sheffield City Council website

[www.sheffield.gov.uk/schoolmatters](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/schoolmatters)

The Department for Education

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

DFE Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance

[Children missing education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

DFE Keeping Children Safe in Education

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

DFE Ensuring a Good Education for Children who cannot attend school because of Health Needs

[Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)