



Attendance and Registration Policy

Applicable to:	✓	Astley Community High School
	✓	Seaton Sluice Middle School
	✓	Whytrig Middle School
Approval body:	Executive Headteacher	

Status:

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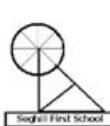
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Changed by	Revision Date		
Business Manager (BW)	12 July 2019	1.0	Final approved version for publication



1 Introduction

- 1.1 Excellent attendance promotes excellent learning. Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to reconcile external requirements and legislation with the ethos and character of schools within our cluster. This policy provides a framework and guidance for all staff and parents to encourage pupils to attend school regularly so that they can take full advantage of the educational opportunities available irrespective of learning age range.
- 1.3 Achieving high levels of attendance at school involves all the key partners in the education process. This policy describes what is expected to happen throughout the federation in any given circumstance.
- 1.4 We believe that regular school attendance is crucial to allowing children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- 1.5 We define our key levels of attendance as:

Attendance	Description
98% - 100%	Excellent
96% - 97.9%	Good
94% - 95.9%	Satisfactory
90% - 93.9%	Unsatisfactory
Under 90%	Persistent Absence

- 1.6 We value all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to early identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.
- 1.7 We believe attendance is a shared responsibility, involving the whole school community and local community. This policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a thread that runs through all aspects of school improvement, and is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

2 Principles

- 2.1 As a partnership of schools we believe the following important principles underpin our approach to managing attendance:
- Pupils and parents/carers understand the issues and procedures for attendance and punctuality
 - All school staff, including governors, administrative and support staff understand the issues and procedures for attendance and punctuality
 - Clear procedures for enabling pupils to come to school
 - Attendance issues are addressed in the curriculum

- Parents/carers and pupils having the opportunity to raise concerns and share in addressing those concerns
- Allocating resources e.g. time, people, space to support the policy
- Rewarding students who have good attendance and those who strive to improve their attendance
- Identifying patterns of absence and intervening early - patterns of attendance are established early in a school career; children who miss significant amounts of their education in primary schools are more likely to truant later on, and our Education Welfare Officer will work with the school partnership using data to identify students early
- Sanctions for failing to ensure regular attendance are fully understood by the whole school community and parents/carers

2.2 Rewarding good attendance is very important, and each school will do this and communicate with parents in their own individual way.

2.3 Each of these principles is explained in full detail in the following guidance.

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Of pupils who miss more than 50 per cent of school only three per cent achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A* to C including Maths and English. We believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents/carers, pupils and the wider school community.

3.2 A positive learning climate is essential for promoting good attendance.

3.3 The governing body will:

- ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents/carers
- have a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- annually review the federation's Attendance and Registration Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- ensure that the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- monitor the federation's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at governing body meetings
- ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority and Department for Education as required and on time
- have clear systems in school to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

3.4 The Senior Leadership Team will:

- actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers
- form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers

- ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- monitor the implementation of the Attendance and Registration Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- make staff aware of the Attendance and Registration Policy and are adequately trained to address attendance issues
- ensure that the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- have a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resources
- return school attendance data to the Local Authority and Department for Education as required and on time
- report the federation's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the governing body and on a half-termly basis to the lead governor for attendance
- have systems in place to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- collate and analyse attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- interpret the data to develop solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- involve Education Welfare and develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

3.5 Staff will:

- actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers
- form positive relationships with pupils and parents/carers
- contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- work with the Education Welfare Officer and other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

3.6 Parents/carers will:

- talk to their child about school and what goes on there
- take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- instill the value of education and regular school attendance within the home
- encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, and follow this up with a note where possible

- avoid unnecessary absences, and wherever possible make doctor/dentist appointments outside of school hours
- ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- support the school, taking every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- avoid taking their child on family holidays during term time

4 Legal framework

- 4.1 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 4.2 A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their fifth birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.
- 4.3 Under the Education Act 1996, the local authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement. This responsibility is undertaken by Education Welfare.
- 4.4 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 expect schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
- 4.5 The register must record whether the pupil was:
- present
 - absent
 - present at approved educational activity
 - unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

5 Categorising absence

- 5.1 Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- 5.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation and or evidence for the pupil's absence has been received.
- 5.3 Parents/carers should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

5.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness

5.5 In most cases, notification via School Gateway, a telephone call or a note from the parent/carer informing the school that their child is ill is acceptable. Where there are repeated absences due to reported illness parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointments

5.6 Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

Other Authorised Circumstances

5.7 This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, wedding of immediate family member, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package. These will be dealt with on a case by case basis.

Excluded (no alternative provision made)

5.8 Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's class teacher/form tutor/Head of Year/Student Progress Leader will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Leave of Absence During Term Time

5.9 Amendments in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 remove references to family holiday, extended leave and the statutory threshold of ten school days being authorised at the discretion of the head teacher.

5.10 The amendments make clear that:

“Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.”

5.11 Leave of absence during term time is entirely at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher and is not a parental right.

5.12 It is at the Executive Headteacher's discretion to request the local authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

5.13 All decisions in relation to whether leave of absence is granted (authorised) or not (unauthorised) should be applied consistently and equitably.

5.14 The application process is as follows:

- A parent/carer requesting leave of absence during term time should make the application in writing at least two weeks in advance

- School may invite the parent/carer into school to discuss the reasons for the application and the impact the absence may have on the child's education
- The school will reply to all applications, and all replies will be signed and dated by the Executive Headteacher
- If leave is not granted, the reason for not authorising a request will be clearly stated, explaining why exceptional circumstances have not been met, and the possible consequences of disregarding the refusal to grant absence i.e. a request to the local authority to issue a Penalty Notice
- If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated including the date the child is expected to return to school and possible consequences if the child fails to return on that date
- If a parent/carer removes their child from school without requesting leave of absence or without authorisation from the Executive Headteacher, and the Executive Headteacher wishes the local authority to issue a Penalty Notice, the parent will be informed in writing that a request to the local authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice is being made; N.B. a minimum absence of ten sessions (five school days) which are unauthorised must be recorded against the pupil's name within a 6-12 week period (this guidance is in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices which was reviewed and revised in September 2013)

5.15 If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents/carers has not been made or received, school may take the pupil off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

Religious Observance/Wedding

5.16 We acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognise that on some occasions, religious festivals and weddings may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

5.17 It is reasonable for a parent/carer to request their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent/carer's religious body.

5.18 Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

5.19 However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival or wedding and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

Traveller Absence

5.20 In common with all other children, the aim for the attendance of Traveller children is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

5.21 To protect Traveller parents/carers from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944 Section 86 states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires

them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

- 5.22 It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents/carers of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.
- 5.23 When in or around Northumberland, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.
- 5.24 Our school will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's place at our school will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.
- 5.25 Our school can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents/carers must:
- advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen
 - inform the school regarding proposed return dates
- 5.26 We will authorise absence for Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.
- 5.27 Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:
- the child is on roll and attending another visited school
 - undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another local authority's Traveller Education Service
 - the child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced
- 5.28 Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

Late Arrival

- ACHS registration takes place from 8.50am to 9.05am
 - WMS registration takes place from 8.55am to 9.05am
 - SSMS registration takes place from 8.55am to 9.00am
- 5.29 Pupils arriving after 8:50am/8:55am will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The register will close at 9.20am/9:25am and pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late after registration (U); this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.
- 5.30 On arrival after the close of register, pupils must immediately report to the school office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.
- 5.31 Absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, evidence of attendance at a medical appointment.

- 5.32 The absence will be recorded as unauthorised if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

Unauthorised Absence

- 5.33 Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

- 5.34 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- a pupil's / family member's birthday
- shopping for uniforms/shoes
- having a haircut
- closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Leave of Absence taken without the authorisation of school

6 Deletions from the register

- 6.1 In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with the Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days' continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority

- 6.2 We will follow Northumberland County Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts are unknown.

7 Using attendance data

- 7.1 Pupil attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the local authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

- 7.2 Indicators next to a pupil's name will show if their attendance has stayed the same, improved or deteriorated. This pupil level data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention below:

- **First trigger:** letter/contact advising parents/carers that attendance is approaching an unacceptable level
- **Second trigger:** letter/contact advising that unacceptable absence level has been reached and reported to Education Welfare Officer for monitoring
- **Third trigger:** letter/contact advising that action from Educational Welfare Officer has been requested

7.3 Attendance data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school/partnership strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

7.4 We will share attendance data with the Department for Education and the local authority as required.

7.5 All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.

8 Support systems

8.1 We recognise that poor attendance is often a sign that there are more serious issues going on in a child's life. This may be linked to problems at home and or in school. Parents/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school e.g. bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse etc. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

8.2 We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

8.3 Strategies used to support improved attendance may include:

- discussion with parents and pupils
- attendance panels
- School Attendance Contracts (see Appendix 1)
- attendance report cards
- referrals to support agencies
- learning mentors
- Pupil Voice activities
- friendship groups
- PSHE/SMSC
- family learning
- reward systems
- time limited part time timetables
- additional learning support
- behaviour support
- inclusion units
- reintegration support packages

8.4 Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents/carers and pupils.

8.5 Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, we will refer to Education Welfare and the use of legal sanctions will be considered.

9 Parenting contracts

- 9.1 Parenting contracts may be used in conjunction with Fast Track to Attendance and other parental responsibility measures introduced following the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.
- 9.2 A parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school, the parent/carer and the local authority. It can also be extended to include the child depending on age.
- 9.3 The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target.
- 9.4 The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.
- 9.5 Parenting contracts will be used in accordance with Northumberland County Council's protocol.

10 Legal sanctions

Prosecution

- 10.1 Where intervention by school and the Education Welfare Officer fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide Education Welfare with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.
- 10.2 Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.
- 10.3 A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2,500 and/or be imprisoned for a period of three months.
- 10.4 Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are issuing Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Penalty notices

- 10.5 Under the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, Penalty Notices will be considered in accordance with Northumberland County Council's protocols in respect of poor attendance and/or unauthorised leave of absence.
- 10.6 A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 22 days or £120 is paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.
- 10.7 Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Appendix 1: School Attendance Contract

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE CONTRACT

Name of Child:	DOB: Age: School Year Group:
Home Address:	
School: Address:	
Parent/Carer (1):	
Parent/Carer (2):	

CONTRACT

For your child to gain the greatest benefit from her education it is vital that he/she attends regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that **NAME** attends regularly.

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of your child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect her learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring **NAME**'s regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

UNDERSTANDING ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (NOT BY THE PARENTS/CARERS), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school after registration has closed
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If **NAME** is reluctant to attend, it is not acceptable to cover up his/her absence or to give in to pressure to excuse him/her from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse. If **NAME**'s attendance at school is affected by persistent illness the school will not authorise the absence until they are satisfied the absence is valid.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEE (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year FOR WHATEVER REASON. Absence at this level damages your child's educational prospects and we need your fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. If **NAME** is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark you will be informed of this immediately.

PROCEDURES

If your child is absent you must contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, via School Gateway, a telephone call or a note.

If your child's attendance deteriorates we will:

- write to you
- invite you in to school to discuss the situation with the appropriate staff
- refer you to the Education Welfare Service

CONTACT DETAILS

There are times when the school and Education Welfare need to contact you about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact details at all times. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number - if we don't then something important may be missed.

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, Education Welfare will become involved. The service will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve **NAME**'s attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, then sanctions such as Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court will be used. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the Education Welfare Service.

LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If **NAME** misses the start of the day he/she can miss work and time with his/her class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child, and can also encourage absence.

The school day starts at **8:50am/8:55am** and we expect **NAME** to be in class at that time. Registers are marked by twice a day and **NAME** will receive a late mark if he/she is not punctual.

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, if **NAME** arrives after the close of registration he/she will receive a mark that shows him/her to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with staff in school to resolve the problem, but you can approach staff at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Any applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher. In making a decision, the Executive Headteacher will consider the exceptional circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave or absence in term time.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

I have read and understood the terms and conditions of the School Attendance Contract.

Signed: **Parent/Carer**

Date:

School: