

Shelley Pyramid of Schools

Attendance Policy



The Shelley Pyramid School Attendance Policy

Policy	Shelley Pyramid Attendance Policy		
Current version	14.03.2023	Next review date	Summer 2024
Date approved at Pyramid Heads' Group		Date Adopted by governing Body	

The pyramid is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students. It recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting regular school attendance and excellent punctuality so that all young people take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on excellent attendance.

Aim

To promote a culture where excellent attendance and punctuality are seen as a fundamental requirement for all learners.

Objectives

To have systems and procedures in place that:

- Encourage attendance and punctuality to school and lessons
- Inform parents/carers of absences and involve them in any attendance concerns for their children
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- Promote effective partnerships with other agencies including but not limited to Kirklees Attendance and Pupil Support Service.
- Recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Monitoring and Review

This policy was written and will be monitored and reviewed by the Shelley Pyramid of Schools.

Further Reference

Appendix A - Attendance guidance for parents and carers

Appendix B - Leave of Absence

Appendix C - Application form for Leave of Absence.

Appendix D - Persistent Absentee: first warning

Appendix E - Persistent Absentee: second warning

Appendix F - Persistent Absentee: Individual Care Plan

Appendix G -Term Time Leave of Absence: First Penalty Notice

Appendix A – Attendance Guidance for Parents and Carers

WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring every child's regular attendance at school is the parents'/carers' responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE and helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to parents/carers via a termly report on their child's attendance.
- Monitor whole school attendance continuously.
- Celebrate good attendance.
- Make sure parents/carers have access to attendance data.
- Recognise good or improving attendance.

2. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

2.1 Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school (not by the parents) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absences for some religious observance will also be authorised in accordance with Government guidelines.

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

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and leave of absences in term time which have not been agreed.

2.2 PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to a School Attendance Improvement Contract and this may include:

- Allocation of additional support through a Mentor, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

- For pupils arriving late to school we will mark this with a U code (Late after registers closed) if they arrive after 9.15am.
- Other appropriate interventions that meet the individual needs of the student will be investigated and applied, where possible, as required.
- ***All PA cases are automatically made known to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service where schools buy into this service.***
- Failure to adhere to the contract may result in legal action being considered. If legal action is approved by the Kirklees Legal Intervention Panel, the matter is heard in Magistrates' Court for the offence of knowingly failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance (s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996). If found guilty, this carries a penalty of up to £2,500 or up to 3 months imprisonment and you will receive a criminal record. Additionally, other community orders may be attached.

3. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

3.1 If a child is absent parents/carers must:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Report the reason every day for continued absence.

3.2 If a child is absent school will:

- Text parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them by 10am and again at 11.30am if we have not heard from parents/carers.
- Follow this up with a phone call by 12.00pm if still no response.
- Schools will attempt a home visit if there is no response and the school has concerns about a pupil's wellbeing. School may also ring 101 to report the absence to the police.
- Invite parents/carers in to school to discuss the situation with the school's Attendance Lead if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service; if attendance falls below 85% and if the school buys into this service.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have contact numbers at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

4. LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher, getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

- Children will receive a late mark if they are not in registration unless this is due to an issue with the school bus.
- All children arriving after registration period will be required to sign in at the office. The reason for lateness is also recorded.
- If a child has a persistent late record parents/carers will be asked in to school to meet with a member of staff to resolve the problem, but parents/carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time.

5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME – see Appendix B

6. ATTENDANCE AND PUPIL SUPPORT SERVICE

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problem together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school **may** refer the child to the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer from the Local Authority (for schools who buy into this service). They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

The table below is a guide to indicate what may happen when a student's attendance falls below a certain percentage. Previous attendance history and the time of the year will be taken into consideration.

First day absence	Phone call home if not notified or absence reason
90-96% attendance	Letter home
85-90% attendance	Parental interview Action plan and set targets
Below 85% attendance	Letter home Parental interview APSO involvement Use of Action Plan/Parenting Contract by APSS Warning letter from APSO Fixed Penalty Notice Please note that APSO involvement is only for school who buy into this service.

- **The school has the right to issue a penalty notice for any absences due to a leave of absence after 5 consecutive days or where the leave of absence has been recorded by the school as unauthorised in the attendance register on at least 10 sessions (5 school days) during the current term.**
- **This is a Local Authority fine of £120 per parent, per child. This will be reduced if paid within 3 weeks to £60 per parent, per child.**
- **Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, you may be fined up to £1,000 and you will receive a criminal record.**
- **Repeated offences of leave of absence may result in the matter being directly prosecuted in Kirklees Magistrates' court.**

7. SUMMARY

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. All school staff are committed to working in partnership with parents, children and families to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Appendix B – Leave of Absence in Term Time.

It is well recognised that good, consistent attendance at school is crucial to a child or young person's future prospects and reducing absence from school continues to be a priority for the Shelley Pyramid Family of Schools. Reflecting national concerns around attendance, the Department for Children, Schools and Families (now the Department for Education) issued revised guidance in October 2007 and June 2013 strengthening the view that as a general rule, children should not be taken out of school in term time.

Leave of absence in term time may be granted for a family under special circumstances.

These might include:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking leave outside term-time if the leave will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education; and
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

All requests from parents for leave of absence must be made in writing to the school in advance, using the "Application for Pupil Leave of Absence from School" form, which is available from the school office. The request should be sent for the attention of the Headteacher and outline the specific reasons why the request meets the requirements of "special circumstances".

The Headteacher will determine if the request is reasonable. Unless there are exceptional circumstances the school will not approve any term time leave of absence for:

- Any student in full time education where current attendance is less than 95%.
- Statutory exam periods.
- In the month of September

Sports Coaching

In line with the DfE guidance for attendance, all pupils of compulsory age are entitled to a full-time education. Authorisation by the Headteacher for external sports coaching will only be granted in exceptional circumstances where a pupil is particularly skilled or working towards entry to a specialist sports school or national competitions.

A written request must be made to the Headteacher by the child's parent or carer in the first instance. The school may request further details from the external sports provider.

If leave is taken without proper authorisation, the schools may respond as follows:

- The absence will be treated as unauthorised and recorded on the child's Record of Achievement.
- Parents can be given a Kirklees Penalty Notice or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised absences.
- In certain circumstances, the school may delete pupils from the register who fail to return on the date they were expected back from extended leave.

Appendix C This form has been designed to clarify the process of leave of absence requests. The school is expected to comply with Government guidance by the DfE (Department for Education) and the LA (Local Authority). Please see letter overleaf to send to parents.

School Letterhead		
APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL		
Pupil Name:		Class:
Any other school age children:	Name(s):	School(s):
Absent from school date		Back at school date:
Total amount of days absent from school:		
Does the leave of absence overlap with the beginning or end of term? Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>		
Please state the reason for your application:		
<p>Signature of Parent/Carer: _____ Date: _____</p> <p>Where a parent is unable to take leave during the school leave of absences, evidence from the employer will be needed to verify this (with the exception of armed forces personnel).</p>		
<p>The Headteacher will consider the following points before authorising leave:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whether the request fits the 'special circumstances' criteria outlined by Kirklees LA and the DFE 2. The child's attendance history (above or below 96%) 3. The time of year (Controlled Tests, Exams or September). 4. The length of leave. 5. The family circumstances <p>Penalty Notice: Where the Headteacher decides that authorisation cannot be given but the absence occurs, consideration will be given to the issuing of a Penalty Notice in line with Kirklees Code of Conduct or there is a possibility that your child may be taken off the school roll.</p>		
<p>Office use only: Current attendance % Number of late marks: Number of days requested: Number of previous sessions granted: Would granting this request mean attendance would fall below 95%</p>		<p>Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/></p>
Office use only:		
Signature:		<p>Authorised: <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Unauthorised: <input type="checkbox"/></p>
Reasons:		

Appendix D

School Letterhead

Date:

Dear Parent/Carer,

Thank you for the leave of absence request for your child.

In-line with our Shelley Pyramid Attendance Policy, I am pleased to tell you that having considered your family circumstances and the attendance record of your child I am able to grant authorisation as detailed below:

Name of child:

Class:

Period of absence:

If an agreement has been made for your child to complete school work during this period, please telephone the office to make arrangements for its collection prior to the above dates.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix E - Persistent Absentee: second warning

Date:

Dear

Please find enclosed an absence analysis report for your child

As of (date), (child's name) has a total attendance of ____% with ____% authorised and ____% unauthorised absences. This is well below the national average attendance of%... (Academic Year).

May I stress the importance of reducing all absences to a minimum, and of eliminating unauthorised absences altogether. By working in partnership with parents and our children, we want to encourage regular school attendance. As a parent we are sure you recognise the importance of regular attendance at school for (child's name) educational and social development. It has been shown that regular and sustained absence often leads to gaps in learning, lower attainment and social difficulties.

We would be grateful for your support in ensuring (child's name) attends school on a regular basis. Please inform school before 9:30 a.m. if your child is sick. We will inform you whether we feel (child's name) could actually attend school or whether they should stay off. To this end we would also ask that from this date, any absence for medical reasons must be accompanied with a doctor's note in order for it to be authorised.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Appendix F - Persistent Absentee: Individual Care Plan

School and Parent Individual Care Plan

The aim of this contract is to work together to improve school attendance and to avoid the need for referral to the Attendance and Pupil Support Service and possible legal action (penalty notice / prosecution).

Name of Pupil:	
Date of Birth:	
Date of Meeting:	
Meeting attended by:	
Overall attendance:	
Unauthorised attendance:	
Lateness:	

Discussions / Issues:
The parent / carer will:
The pupil will:
The school will:

The target for attendance during the next __ weeks is __%

This plan will be reviewed at the school on:

Date: _____ Time: _____

If this agreement is not followed and the target attendance figure is not met the referral will be made to the Attendance and Pupil Support Service.

Signed: (parent / carer)

Signed: (school)

Appendix G - Term Time Leave of Absence: First Penalty Notice

Date:

Dear (*Name of Parent/s*)

Penalty Notice Warning – Term time leave of absence.

It has come to my attention that has taken days leave from to This absence was not authorised by the school.

The school's attendance policy makes it clear that parents must seek permission in writing from the Headteacher in advance should they wish to take students out of school in term time, and that if leave is taken in term time which has not been authorised, a Penalty Notice may be issued.

From September 2013, payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 or within 28 days is £120.

On this occasion I have decided not to issue a Penalty Notice against you. You should consider this letter as a warning that any further leave of absences taken in term-time without prior permission **will** lead to such action being taken against you.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Dear (*Name of Parent/s*)

Penalty Notice Warning – Term time leave of absence.

It has come to my attention that has taken days leave from to This absence was not authorised by the school.

The school's attendance policy makes it clear that parents must seek permission in writing from the Headteacher in advance should they wish to take students out of school in term time, and that if leave is taken in term time which has not been authorised, a Penalty Notice may be issued.

From September 2013, payment of a Penalty Notice within 21 days is £60 or within 28 days is £120.

Unfortunately, on this occasion I have decided to issue a Penalty Notice against you and I will be informing the local authority of my decision.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher