

West Heslerton CE Primary School Attendance Policy

“Children are at the centre of all we do”



We encourage everyone in our school community to live life well reflecting Christian attitudes and values and working in partnership with families as part of a wider, caring community.

The hallmarks of a Christian life lived well are shown in the fruits of the Spirit – But the fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness, Self-control. Against such things there is no law. Galatians 5:22 – 23

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Statutory Attendance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Introduction

Good attendance and punctuality at school is important and ensures continuous learning. We encourage good attendance and celebrate class attendance weekly with all children and families and at the end of each term and school year. School encourages good attendance through making the school day and pupils' learning enjoyable. We encourage a positive attitude to school to nurture learning in all pupils. Children need to feel that their contribution in school is valued and all staff care about them as individuals.

Attendance Expectations at School

Parents are legally obliged that unless there is illness or some other acceptable reason for absence, children registered at school should attend school for each session during the prescribed school days of the academic year. Children are welcome to arrive between 8:30 and 8:45 each morning. Children should be collected at 3:25 or from their school club if appropriate. Pupils arriving and leaving at any other time should be signed in by a member of staff in the school office. Should parents be unsure about whether to send their child to school, support is available on the school website to help their decision.

Reporting of Absences

Schools are responsible for the safety and whereabouts of all pupils each day.

Parents are responsible for contacting the school as soon as possible and definitely before 9am every day of the child's absence. This is usually by phone, sometimes in person at the office. If an

absence is known of in advance, eg. a medical appointment, notification of this, and sight of a letter to the school prior to the absence is required. Please inform school by phone or in person of the reason for each session of absence so that it may be categorised using NYCC absence codes. It is crucial that parents adhere to this procedure to ensure that all pupils are safe and their whereabouts accounted for.

Arrival Procedure

- Children attending Early Birds will be brought to the school office for registration from 8am. They will be taken by the members of staff to the playground at 8.30am.
- At the start of each school day, a member of staff will aim to unlock the gate and be on duty on the playground from 8:30 am. In the event of bad weather, a member of staff will be on duty in the school hall from 8:30 am. Children should access the hall through the playground using their usual route.
- All children should use the school gates, closing these behind them. (no persons should walk across the car park which is for vehicular access)
- At 8:45 the playground gate will be locked. The staff member on duty will check that the gate to High Street and the car park are closed.
- Children should line up in year groups on the playground or in the hall as appropriate.
- Any children arriving after the gate closes at 8:45am must be escorted to the school office by an adult, as the playground gate will be locked, and no supervision available. The pedestrian route must be used to avoid walking across the car park wherever possible.
- For those arriving after the bell, a staff member will need to sign the child in and complete a late slip. The child will hand this slip to classroom staff taking the register. Children arriving after 8:45 will be given a late mark in the register by classroom staff completing the register. National attendance codes will be used to show arrival: 8:45-8:55 will be marked L (late). For all children arriving after 8:55, office staff will amend the electronic attendance register, order a lunch with the kitchen (if appropriate), record this on the school payment system and complete the leaving school register, checking after school club registers if needed. National attendance codes will be used to show arrival: children arriving after 8:55 will be marked U (unauthorised absence) for the session unless a prior message has been received.

Parents should:

- Bring their child into school for Early Birds if applicable.
- Encourage their child to walk up to school wherever possible, using the agreed routes.
- Say goodbye to their child before they enter the school grounds.
- Ensure their child arrives at school between 8:30 and 8:45am.
- Phone school by 9am each day stating a valid reason in the event their child will be late or absent.
- Bring their child to the school office in case of arriving late, explaining why they have had a delayed start.
- Close all gates behind them.
- Provide a lunch for their child if a school meal has not been ordered by 9:30.
- Contact the school office by phone with messages, bookings or queries please.
- Park with consideration for others – not on the zigzags or at the narrow point in the road at the top of Wold View.

Staff should:

- Lock gates at 8:45.
- Complete all registers at the start of each day and report absent pupils to the office by 9am.
- Office staff will phone and or Dojo parents/carers – if no response by 10am other known contacts will be phoned. Should we have no response by 11am, we will contact the local police to check each child is safe.
- Office staff will keep attendance data up to date for monitoring

- Display the attendance of each class on the school newsletter and award the attendance cup weekly or as appropriate.

Pupils should:

- Follow the above procedure.
- Ensure they are registered in school immediately upon arrival.

Leaving Procedure

- At the start of the school day, a leaving register will be taken to record how each child will leave (with parent, slip, childcare club, sports club, early if previously agreed).
- At the end of the school day (3:25pm), the school bell will ring and the leaving registers delivered to class staff by a monitor.
- Children will line up on the playground in year groups to be dismissed by their appointed adult.
- The person on school transport duty will collect all appropriate children and check numbers with staff in charge of class groups, and allow them to board the transport. Staff will ensure children are wearing seatbelts.
- Children attending clubs will be sent from the playground to staff running clubs.
- Children in Key Stage 2 will be dismissed from the playground by a member of staff, if written permission has been granted by the parent/carer allowing them to leave without an adult. Parents of children in Year 2 will be offered this opportunity in the summer term to aid their transition to KS2. Permission may be removed by school staff based upon pupil's behaviour and/or due to individual circumstances.
- Parents or nominated adults will collect their children from the class lines.
- In cases of extreme weather the above procedure will take place in the school hall.
- At the end of sports clubs, children will be dismissed from the school front door by a responsible adult to an adult who is permitted to collect them. Upper Key Stage 2 children are able to walk down on their slip.
- At 4.30 and 5.30, the after school childcare club staff will dismiss children from the school library door by a responsible adult who will record the time of collection. Children will be signed out by the adult collecting them.
- Any children remaining uncollected after 3:30pm, or 15 minutes after the end of their club, will be escorted to the school library and staff will check the answer phone and / or endeavour to contact parents/carers. Late collection of pupils is logged.
- In the event of parents being out of contact or the non-collection of a child, safeguarding officials will be contacted from 4pm for those attending regular school hours. For pupils staying for additional activities, procedures will be followed 30 minutes after the end of the activity.

Parents should:

- Ensure their child knows each day how they are going home and with whom.
- Phone school in the event they will be late in collecting children.
- Phone the school office to inform all staff of any changes in usual routines please.
- Provide permission for their child, if in Key Stage 2 (or Year 2 pupils in summer term), to leave school at the end of the day unaccompanied, should they feel this appropriate for their child.
- Ensure their child has been signed out in the school office, if leaving early.
- Wait until all children have been placed on school transport, delivered to clubs and dismissed for leaving independently before collecting children from the playground.
- Ensure all gates are closed after use.

Staff should:

- Complete the leaving register at the start of each day.
- Consult the register to see how each pupil will get home, with whom and at what time.

- Amend the register when informed of changes during the day.

Pupils should:

- Know how, with whom and at what time they are going home.
- Not leave the premises without an adult unless permission has been received by the school office and they have been dismissed by a member of staff.
- Close identified gates after use.

Long term Absences

Occasionally, some pupils experience physical or mental health difficulties that prevent them from attending school for some time. School deals with each case individually, using medical evidence to provide support as required. Procedures for integrating pupils will be discussed with each family as the need arises. This may include dual registration or part-time timetables. Please contact the Headteacher to discuss if your child would benefit from such an arrangement.

Recording and Monitoring of Absence Data

A registration system is in place to record, in an accurate manner, attendance, lateness and absences. This complies with Government and L.A. guidelines.

When a child fails to attend school for one or more sessions the school determines whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised using these guidelines.

Data is collected and collated. Attendance figures for individual pupils are shared with their parents on a termly basis and included in their school report. Pupils' attendance and punctuality data is closely monitored by the school's senior attendance champion, Mrs Rachel Wells and by attendance officers at North Yorkshire Council.

Support for Attendance

When attendance reaches 15 days illness during any school year or an attendance pattern is spotted, the attendance champion will discuss with pupils and parents the barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

School will work to reduce or remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalised support for attendance

Where attendance data causes concern, a referral to the Local Authority School Attendance Team is made and their procedure will be followed. Attendance contracts will be issued to record the agreement between parents, schools and/or local authorities to improve attendance for pupils whose engagement causes concern.

Enforced Attendance

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance will be enforced through statutory intervention. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024 will be followed and penalty notices issued where necessary to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Attendance information is passed on when pupils transfer to other schools to comply with the Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024.

Leave of Absence (including holidays)

Leave of absence can be granted by the Attendance Champion for

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave for public examinations
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

We aim to publish and circulate, as soon as possible, term dates, including school holidays and non-contact days, so that parents have this information for forward planning and booking interviews, performances and holidays.

Periods of exceptional absence for special events, including religious holidays, should be applied for in advance. Leave of absence forms are available in the school entrance hall and online on the school website. Absence of short periods may be authorised, in exceptional circumstances, by the Headteacher, provided 1 or more leave criteria are met and leave of absence forms have been completed 6 weeks in advance.

Criteria for leave:

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

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

Leave taken in term time is disruptive to a child's education. Leave from school taken at the time of tests will be unauthorised. Please see the term dates, included on the website and available from the school, for dates of national tests which are set nationally and alter each year.

Fines for taking children out of school

Your local council can give each parent a fine of £80 for taking holiday during term time, rising to £160 if you do not pay within 21 days. Each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period. If you get a second fine in 3 years it will be £160. If you do not pay the fine in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school. If your child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years you will not be fined but may be taken to court.

If you're taken to court you could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence up to 3 months. The court could also give you a Parenting Order.

Illness during the school day

From time to time, pupils show symptoms of illness at school. School will contact parents and other family members if a child needs to go home. School asks parents to ensure we have up to date contact names and telephone numbers for this purpose.

Parents are informed that they should not send children to school who seem unwell. Pupils who are ill are often very distressed and illnesses are quickly spread. Guidelines for the return of recovering pupils are detailed in the school medical policy.

In the event of School Closure

During winter months it occasionally becomes necessary to close the school due to adverse weather conditions. If this closure takes place at the start of the day we will try to state this on our school website and contact parents via Dojo to inform them of the closure. If the weather or other conditions mean that a decision is taken to close school during the school day parents and guardians will be messaged on Dojo and telephoned and asked to collect their children as soon as possible. The school staff will remain on the premises until all children have been collected.

Other links:

- Security Policy
- Managing the health care needs of pupils

This policy addresses national Statutory guidance from 19 August 2024 Working together to improve school attendance.