

Attendance Policy

2021-22

Summary

This policy outlines the procedures for pupil attendance at Fieldhead Carr Primary School.

Author's Role	Deputy Headteacher/ Pastoral Lead
Date	Autumn 2021
Internal Review Date	Summer 2021
Official Review Date	Autumn 2022

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1. Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

Field Head Carr Primary School (hereafter, referred to as 'School') believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling 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.

Our school value's all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, 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. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act 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.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. 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.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

What does the law say?

- This advice summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.
- These requirements are contained in:
 - The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

3. Categorising absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. **All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.**

Parents should advise the school by telephone, email or text message (T2P), before 8:50am, every day when a child is absent and provide the school with an expected date of return. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

If we are unable to make contact by 9:30am, the register will be marked as unauthorised. See section 4 – school policy for safeguarding protocols.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointments Parents 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 This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence.

Family Holidays and Extended Leave Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on holiday during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday. Should a parent wish to apply for leave of absence they must complete a request for leave form and the headteacher will consider if the leave is for exceptional circumstances. In line with the Leeds policy leave should only be granted for exceptional circumstances. If parents take children on holiday during term time without authorisation they will be subject to a Penalty Warning Letter and then potentially be fined.

Parents wishing to take their child on holiday during term time must send a written request to the head teacher before holiday arrangements are made. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Length of the proposed leave
- Age of the pupil
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity of SAT's and public examinations
- Pupil's ability to catch up the work missed
- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Previous term time holidays taken

- When the request was made

All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents must contact school should any delays occur
- That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected

If a pupil fails to return and contact with the parents 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.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school may issue a Penalty Notice or a fine.

Religious Observance Fieldhead Carr Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

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

Late Arrival - procedures

- Gates open at 8:40am
- The school doors open at 8:45am and children will make their way to class for their soft start session, this runs from 8:45am-9:00am
- A staff member will be on each door
- School gates will be closed at 9.00am
- Children arriving after this MUST go to the school office for a late mark. Parents/ Carers must use the electronic signing in system to record time and reason for lateness
- If a child receives 5 late marks in a month, the parents will be sent a text message reminding them to be on time
- If this persists, a member of the attendance team will call to arrange a meeting to explain the reasons for their child's lateness.
 - If the lateness persists, the parent/s will be called in again to meet with the Attendance Improvement Officer (Seacroft/Manston Cluster). This officer is from an outside agency.

Unauthorised absence

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

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"

- Holidays taken without the authorisation of school

4. Children Missing in Education

There are many reasons why a child may become missing in education. Although not exhaustive, the most common being:

- Pupils at risk of harm/ neglect – for children who are in immediate danger or at risk of harm, a referral should be made immediately to children’s social care and the police, if appropriate;
- Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families;
- Children of Service Personnel;
- Missing children and runaways;
- Children who cease to attend school;
- Children of new migrant families.

(Taken from CME 2019)

Schools’ responsibility: Schools must enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child’s whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity. School will return a form to the Local Authority, detailing information on the child. Schools have a safeguarding duty in respect of their pupils, therefore must closely monitor pupils’ attendance through their daily register. As part of this, it is important that pupils’ poor attendance is referred to the local authority. (CME 2019)

Deletions from the register: School will seek to make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child, jointly with the local authority. The local authority should be notified in advance of the deletion, when the school becomes aware that the deletion will be made. School must notify their local authority when they are about to remove a pupils name from the school admission register under any of the grounds set out in the CME 2019 guidance – see Appendix A. When removing a pupil’s name, the local authority must be notified of:

- a) The full name of the pupil;
- b) The full name and address of the parent with whom the child normally resides;
- c) At least one telephone number of the parent;
- d) The pupil’s future address and destination school (if known);
- e) The reason(s) why the pupil name has been removed from the admission register.

Local authorities have a duty^s to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.

- ^sUnder section 436A of the Education Act 1996

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days following an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and local authority have jointly made reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies where the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause. (CME 2019).

Following guidelines, School has a strict policy regarding absence when School has not been notified of absence and/or cannot contact parent/ guardian.

Day 1 - First day contact, text or telephone the pupil's parent or carer to establish reasons for the absence. This is done before 9:30am.

NB- in some circumstances, the attendance team may carry out a home visit if they feel this is needed

Day 2 - Follow up on first day contact, a subsequent telephone call and/or text must be made. School will explore all known contact details listed for the pupil including any email addresses.

Day 3 – Repeat steps for day 1 and 2. If no contact has been established school will complete a safeguarding home visit.

Day 4 – Repeat steps for day 1 and 2. Additional investigations to establish the pupil's whereabouts will include making contact with.

- Professional agencies currently involved with the family/pupil
- The school where a known sibling attends
- The pupil's school friends
- Neighbours or known associates of the family
- Social Media (where possible)

Day 5 – Repeat steps for day 1 and 2. Write to the parent/carers requesting contact to be made with the school immediately.

5. Monitoring Attendance Procedures

The school target for attendance is 97% for academic year 2021-22.

Ongoing- The office and Pastoral team to have daily discussions in relation to pupil lateness and absence.

1st Half-Term (Oct) - the attendance team will meet and discuss individual children's attendance. Any families that are of concern (below monitoring threshold of 95%), pastoral lead will carry a well-being phone call to discuss potential attendance difficulties. Registration certificate to be sent home.

End of 1st Term- the attendance team will monitor individual children's attendance. If a child continues to fall below the monitoring threshold of 95%, parents will be issued with attendance letter 1 (appendix B). The letter is a reminder of attendance expectations. A copy of the registration certificate will be enclosed. If a parent wishes to discuss this or requires external support, an appointment with the attendance team can be made.

At Feb Half-Term- for families that continue to fall below the monitoring threshold of 95%, letter 1 will be issued.

For Persistent absence families (monitoring threshold of 90% or below), letter 2 (appendix C) will be issued. This letter requests a meeting with school and a referral to the attendance improvement officer. Following the referral, a further meeting will take place with the attendance improvement team. They will then work to support the family with improving attendance.

The above procedures will continue to be used to monitor attendance throughout the remainder of the school year (Feb-July).

6. Home Educated Children

Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full time education but this does not have to be at a school. On receipt of written notification to home educate, school

will inform the pupil's local authority that the pupil is to be deleted from the admission register. School will not seek to persuade parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the pupil or because the pupil has a poor attendance record. There is no requirement for parents to obtain the school or local authority's agreement to educate their child at home. However, if parent/ guardian fails/ refuses to provide notification, a referral will be made to the Local Authority with immediate effect.

⁶ Section 7 of the Education Act 1996.

7. Child relocates

When a child moves, attempts will be made by School to contact local schools to provide a setting for the child where they will be educated. If no provision is available, support will be offered to complete a transfer request. The Local Authority will be notified to ensure suitable support can be offered to provide education. When a child transfers both into and out of School, a form must be filled in and returned to the Local Authority notifying the pupil movement.

8. Exclusion and Permanent Exclusion

School must arrange full-time education for excluded pupils from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion. If a permanent exclusion has been put in place, the Local Authority will be notified with immediate effect.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

School believe that improved attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community. As such, the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Bi-annually review the school's Attendance 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 Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems 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

The Leadership Team and Attendance Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- A member of SLT is always on school gate
- 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 Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed bi-annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named senior leader to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body and on a half termly basis to the lead governor for attendance
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- 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

Teachers, support staff and inclusion team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- 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 Registration Regulations, England, 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 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

Request that Parents will:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress, talking to children positively about school
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- 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.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. 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; take 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, home learning, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, for a birthday or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time, where this is unavoidable, send a written leave request to the Head Teacher in advance of booking the holiday

11. Support Systems

School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Attendance panels
- Referrals to support agencies
- Pastoral Lead to support parents
- Pupil Voice- worry monsters, speak out boxes, school council and SLT monitoring
- Friendship groups
- PSHE- daily crew sessions
- Feelings charts
- Reward systems- dojos
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, School will consider the use of legal sanctions.

Pupils who have more than 4 broken weeks of illness during one term will be required to provide medical proof of illness before any further illness absence can be authorised. Medical proof can be in the form of a medical appointment card or a prescription in the child's name.

12. Legal Sanctions

Prosecution Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority 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.

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.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Appendix A:**Grounds for deleting a pupil from the school admission register (CME 2019)**

1	Where the pupil is registered at the school in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
2	That the child has been registered as a pupil at another school - except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the pupil should be registered at more than one school.
3	Where a pupil is registered at more than one school that he has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor of any other school at which he is registered has given consent to the deletion.
4	Where the child has ceased to attend the school and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school.
5	That child has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school at which he is registered.
6	In the case of a pupil granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation that (i) the pupil has failed to attend the school within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
7	Where the child is certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he nor his parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
8	Where the child has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and — at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor of the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the pupil is.
9	That the child is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to the school at the end of that period.
10	The pupil has died.
11	That the pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age before the school next meets
12	That the child has been permanently excluded from the school.
13	Where the pupil has been admitted to the school to receive nursery education, that he has not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher class at the school.

Appendix B:

Letter 1- DATE

Dear Parent and Carers,

I am writing to make you aware that your child (s) attendance since September has fallen below our monitoring threshold of 95%. If your child has 9 days absence over this school year their attendance will fall below 95% overall. 95% is the school's monitoring threshold for attendance and is below the school's overall target for attendance of 97%.

We understand and appreciate that your child may have been ill and we may have authorised this absence, however we are striving to improve attendance across the whole school. Research clearly shows that children with below average attendance patterns are more likely to struggle at school and achieve less than their potential. This can affect their progress right up to GCSE level, as it is often the case that children who miss basic concepts taught in primary school are left with key gaps in their learning.

Our school is working hard at the moment to improve the attendance of our pupils. You should be aware of the following systems which are now in place and may affect your child.

- If your child has had 5 or more day's illness, any further absence may require a doctor's note or proof of prescribed medication.
- If your child has a holiday during term time these will be recorded as unauthorised.
- If your child's attendance falls below 90% (this is classed as a persistent absentee by the local authority), they may be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer who may prosecute through the courts.

Please support the school by bringing your child to school every day and on time. If you wish to discuss this letter further please call the school office and arrange a meeting with a member of the attendance team.

A copy of your child (s) Attendance Registration Certificate is attached for further information.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix C:

Letter 2- DATE

Dear Parent and Carers,

I am writing to make you aware that your child (s) attendance since September has fallen below our monitoring threshold of 90%. If your child has 19 days absence over this school year their attendance will fall below 90% overall. 90% is well below the school's monitoring threshold for attendance and is below the school's overall target for attendance of 97%.

Our school is working hard at the moment to improve the attendance of our pupils. You should be aware of the following systems which are now in place and may affect your child.

- If your child has had 5 or more day's illness, any further absence may require a doctor's note or proof of prescribed medication.
- If your child has a holiday during term time these will be recorded as unauthorised.
- If your child's attendance falls below 90% (this is classed as a persistent absentee by the local authority), they may be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer who may prosecute through the courts.

It is possible to raise your child's attendance record for the remainder of this year by ensuring they come to school whenever possible. We understand that there are occasions when keeping your child of school is the best option, however, we urge you to seriously consider whether it is really necessary for your child to have time off.

We will be contacting you to make an appointment to discuss your child(s) attendance and to discuss options of support the school can offer. In addition to this, a referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer will be made.

I am obliged to inform you that under the provision of Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time. Failure to do so could result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings being taken by the Local Authority.

Yours sincerely,