



Attendance Policy

September 2023-2024

| Statutory Policy | | | Website | |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Mrs Sue Brewster is the allocated Governor for Attendance.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Ms Claire Allen and can be contacted via the school office (01484 226650 / office@fixby.org)

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Shahida Begum and can be contacted via the school office (01484 226650 / office@fixby.org)

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.10am and 1.15pm.

3.6 School Admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Pastoral Manager in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time

- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school between 8.40am and 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office (see also section 7).

You may leave a message on the school answer machine (01484 226650 Option 2) or emailing the school office-office.fixby@kirkleeseducation.uk

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

We request that parents show the admin staff confirmation of your child's appointment in advance.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

We monitor punctuality issues on a 6-weekly cycle and we will inform you in writing at this point if your child has less than 96%.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the parent / carer each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may make a home visit or request a police welfare check, See First Day Calling Procedures (Appendix 2) By following this procedure, pupil absence will be closely monitored; ensuring that all pupils are accounted for in their absence from school and have not become unsafe or vulnerable.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will contact Kirklees Education Safeguarding Board
- After 10 days of absence and if no contact made by the parent/carer, a referral will be made to the children missing in education (CME) team. This referral may be completed earlier depending on each individual case.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels termly. Pupils will be given an individual attendance summary for each term, which identifies their attendance percentage for this and previous terms within the academic year.

Where pupils' attendance falls below 96%, we will write to parents to make them aware of this.

Parents also have access to their child's attendance data via the Parent Portal App.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

- Part time timetables as a temporary, short term solution e.g. when a pupil's medical condition prevents them from attending full time. This is only used in exceptional circumstances, when it is in the pupil's best interests.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a funeral of a person close to the family.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above reasons, the Head Teacher agrees to consult with Kirklees Education Safeguarding Board prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Unauthorised absences

An absence without a valid reason or for which no explanation has been given is treated as unauthorised e.g. being 30 or more minutes late after the start of the school day; taking term time holidays.

Term time holidays and unauthorised absences

In line with all of the North Huddersfield Learning Community Schools, we do not authorise Leave of Absences for term time family holidays. It is the policy of North Huddersfield Learning Community to request a Fixed Penalty Notice for every pupil taking a 'Leave of Absence' for 5 consecutive days or more. If parents/carers take their child out of school during term time, and this has not been authorised by the Head teacher, they may be fined £60.00 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120.00 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty Notice will result in the matter being referred to the Magistrate's Court where the maximum penalty for an offence is £1000. All penalties are issued to both parents for each child taking an unauthorised 'Leave of Absence'. Parents/carers who also choose to repeatedly take their children on unauthorised Leave of Absence (3 or more occasions in their time as a student at Fixby J&I School) may be directly prosecuted under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty, you will have a criminal record and may face a fine of up to £1000.

Parents/carers choosing to take their child out of school during term time must complete the 'Leave of Absence Request Form' and return to the Head teacher before making any travel arrangements. The form is available from the school office and proof of travel must be provided with a defined return date. Leave of Absences due to term time holidays will be recorded as unauthorised. The Head Teacher may only authorise this type of Leave of Absence in exceptional circumstances.

Parents/carers must understand that by taking children out of school they are making a choice to miss out on part of their child's education. Taking such a 'Leave of Absence' in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence; we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in term time. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time for any reason.

- All Leave of Absence due to term time holidays will be treated as unauthorised.
- School will be unable to set work during the Leave of Absence. Staff will be able to signpost parents to useful educational websites.

Removal from roll

A pupil's name can only be removed from roll in certain circumstances, for example:

- on the day that it is confirmed the child starts at another educational provision
- where a pupil has taken a leave of absence and fails to return. See below for more detail.

School will follow the following procedures for a requested leave of absence:

- We cannot take children off roll while they are on requested Leave of Absence, unless the Leave of Absence exceeds 21 school days. After the 21st day of unauthorised term time absence, a child will be taken off roll, even if school have been informed of a future return date as this is an avoidable absence.
- If a child does not return on the date given to school, school will use first day calling procedures. First Day calling procedures will be followed.

- A referral to the Child Missing in Education (CME) team will be made as soon as possible, after an unsuccessful home visit.

School will follow the following procedures for an unrequested leave of absence:

- Staff will follow First Day calling procedures and refer to (CME) if the parent can not be contacted and provide proof that they have taken an unrequested Leave of Absence.
- Within 21 school days, if the child has not returned, the decision to take the child off roll will be taken.
- School will issue penalty notices to the parents of these children.
- Staff will follow the Kirklees LA Guidelines for Children Lost or Missing in Education.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If a child has two previous unauthorised extended absences then a decision to move to 'direct prosecution' may be taken. Further information about this can be obtained from the Kirklees Attendance Policy at <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/schools/school-attendance-absence.aspx>

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Fixby J&I School we encourage and promote regular attendance in the following ways:

- Providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- Celebrating good and improved attendance (examples include weekly best class attendance trophies; most improved class attendance certificates; weekly 100% attendance celebration for each child; weekly 100% attenders prize draw, bronze, silver and gold attendance badges, celebration of attendance in the school newsletter, annual 100% attenders medals)
- Sharing the attendance policy and 'Encouraging Good Attendance' flow chart with all parents whenever it is updated (see appendix 3)
- Sharing the attendance policy and 'Encouraging Good Attendance' flow chart with new starters (see appendix 3)
- Aspiring to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn
- By accurate and punctual completion of registers and rigorous use of attendance data and by publishing attendance statistics
- Identifying patterns of poor attendance and working with families to resolve them.
- Listening to parents and pupils to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them
- Helping pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school e.g. wider support services
- Informing parents/carers, both verbally and in writing of irregular attendance, including lateness. Where necessary formalising support through a parenting contract or engaging with the Local Authority
- By referring the families to Kirklees attendance and pupil support team if irregular attendance continues

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Invite parents/carers to discuss any barriers to regular attendance.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Senior Leadership Team and Safeguarding Team to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Refer the case to Kirklees Education Safeguarding for further guidance if necessary.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Medical Needs Policy
- Children with Health Needs who Cannot Attend School Policy
- Remote Learning Policy
- Parents' Code of Conduct
- Antibullying Policy

This policy links to the following DfE policies:

- Working together to improve school attendance
- Parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour
- Children missing education
- Keeping children safe in education
- Working together to safeguard children
- Elective home education
- Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities
- Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges
- Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| J | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| P | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| W | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Authorised absence | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| Unauthorised absence | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-------------|---|--|
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |

Appendix 2: first day calling procedures

'First Day Calling' is important because school absence and safeguarding are closely linked. This practice not only encourages good attendance it also helps to monitor a pupil's well-being and is an alert to their safety even though the child may not be considered as 'vulnerable'. Fixby J&I School adopt the Kirklees Policy of First Day Calling Procedures published in March 2018.

Pupils that are Dual registered

Schools must consider what arrangements have been made to record attendance, follow Emergency First-Day Calling Procedures and keep up-to-date Emergency Contacts with the alternative provision.

If a child is dual registered, educated off-site and absent without contact from a parent, please consider the following:

- Who is responsible for First Day Calling?
- Have all the emergency contacts been shared?
- How do the school accurately record the attendance of children in Alternative Provisions?

Additional Police guidance

This procedure **must** be used alongside the following Police guidance:

- West Yorkshire police truant policy partner expectations and recording document.
- West Yorkshire police truant policy letter.
- When to call the police guidance for schools and colleges.

All documents and guidance can be found at <https://kirkleesbusinesssolutions.uk/Page/14663>

First Day Calling Procedures for All Schools

