



**CRIGGLESTONE ST. JAMES CE  
PRIMARY ACADEMY**

# **Attendance Policy**



**November 2023**

*Ready For The Future*



## Our vision:

### 'Ready for the Future'

We provide a **happy and safe** environment for everyone, opportunities to **take responsibility and lead**, promote **curiosity and engagement with the world** around us and to be **kind and respectful to all**. We are **resilient** and **not afraid** to make mistakes. We are ready for the future.

Our key Christian values that arise from our vision are:

- Trust
- Hope
- Peace
- Forgiveness
- Koinonia
- Thankfulness

Our vision is rooted in the parable of the 'The Good Samaritan' which helps us to understand that help may come from those we least expect. It teaches us to have hope, have trust in others and to be kind to all. It demonstrates how we can use our skills and knowledge to serve others and shows our collective readiness for the future. This is what you will find across our academy.

Crigglestone St James CE Primary Academy is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents/carers and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities. We recognise that it is unlawful to take into account anyone's gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age, or sexual orientation.

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At St James, we believe good attendance is essential in order to facilitate teaching and learning. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. Any absence leads to missed learning and may cause difficulties with social relationships. These, in turn, can encourage an increased pattern of non- attendance.

Encouraging good attendance and punctual arrival is the shared responsibility of the academy and parents. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that child/ren, of compulsory school age, receive the appropriate education by regular attendance and it is the responsibility of the academy to ensure that this happens. We will support parents to perform this legal duty and will promote and support punctuality in lessons too.

Since school attendance has dropped locally and nationally post-pandemic,

the DfE guidance, '*Working Together to Improve School Attendance*', was produced in the wake of the pandemic and sets out a vision for effective school level policy and practice which



incorporates partnership working with the Local Authority and other partners, where necessary.

## **Aims**

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance through our whole school ethos that values good attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

## **Legislation and Guidance**

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:



- Education Act 1996 which expects all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act states that if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence. Parents, therefore have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's attendance at school. Failure to do this can lead to legal action being taken by the Local Authority in the Magistrates Court, or the need to issue Penalty Fines. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence, Section 444 (1A) where a parent knowingly allows their child to be absent from school. This offence can carry a custodial sentence.

- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education 2023'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

A child is compulsory school age at the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> term after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday, therefore:

- Children who turn 5 between 1<sup>st</sup> January and 31<sup>st</sup> March will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term after 31<sup>st</sup> March;
- Children who turn 5 between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 31<sup>st</sup> August will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term 31<sup>st</sup> August;
- Children who turn 5 between 1<sup>st</sup> September and 31<sup>st</sup> December will be of compulsory school age at the beginning of the school term after 31<sup>st</sup> December.

Where parent/carers are not fulfilling this responsibility, school and the Local Authority has a statutory duty to uphold the rights of children and young people to education. Where necessary, this includes taking legal action.

In order to fulfil our duty to improve children and young people's regular attendance at school, Wakefield Education Welfare Service will continue to issue penalty notices, on our behalf, in respect of holidays/leave of absence in term time, in line with the DfE Pupil Registration (England) Regulations 2006. Penalty Notices give parents an opportunity to avoid prosecution. If a Penalty Notice is paid parent/carer's will not be prosecuted.

Section 576 Education 1996 defines a 'parent' to include:

- A biological parent of the child (even if they do not have Parental Responsibility and even if the child does not reside with that parent);
- Any person who is not a parent but has Parental Responsibility for the child (for example through a Residence Order, Adoption Order or Care Order);
- Someone who has care for the child.

Therefore, all of these people have the duty to ensure a child of compulsory school age receives a suitable education. It is possible for this duty to be fulfilled by home educating a child; please see information on "Elected Home Education".



The Education must be:

- Full time
- Efficient – the education must achieve what it is set out to achieve;
- Suitable – to their age, ability and aptitude and any special education needs they may have. The education must equip the child for the life within the community and must not limit a child's options in later life.

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

### **Roles and responsibilities**

#### **The governing board has overall responsibility for:**

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review and challenge 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.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

#### **The headteacher is responsible for:**

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Leading attendance across school.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues when support and interventions provided through the Attendance Officer haven't worked.
- Monitor 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.

### **The attendance officer is responsible for:**

- Helping the headteacher to develop a clear vision for improving attendance and punctuality.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data and the impact of interventions, alongside the headteacher, as well as identifying further interventions and areas of improvement.
- Communicating with parents and pupils regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Working with the school's named Education Welfare Officer, following up on incidents of persistent absence.
- Working with parents/carers on removing barriers and improving attendance and punctuality where necessary. At any stage in the academic year, contacting parents by phone call, letters or an invitation to a more formal meeting.
- Working with the headteacher on issuing fixed penalty notices.

The school's attendance officer Mrs Lloyd, and can be contacted via telephone on 01924251048 or email at [admin@stjamesacademy.co.uk](mailto:admin@stjamesacademy.co.uk)

### **Teaching staff are responsible for:**

- Following this policy, ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Recording attendance, at the start of the school day and after lunch, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Attendance and punctuality records will also be shared by class teachers on pupil reports and at Parents Evening.

### **Office Staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls/e-mails from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record this on the school system.
- Contact parents who fail to advise us why their child/ren are absent from school.

### **Parents/carers are responsible for:**

- Making sure their child attends, on time, every day.
- Providing the school with more than one, up-to-date, emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their contact details change.
- Calling school, before 9.30am, on the first day of any absence.
- Ensuring that, wherever possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.



## **Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time.

## **Recording Attendance**

At 8.45am, the school gates will be opened. Morning registration opens at 8:45am and closes at 8:55am. If children arrive after this time, they are marked as late.

Registration for the afternoon session is at 1pm for Reception and 1.15pm for the children in Years 1 to 6.

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils on this. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and immediately after lunch. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

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.

The law states that children should arrive at school on time, every day. For example, if School doors open at 8.45am it is expected that pupils should be there ready to learn from the time when the first register is taken. A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late; using the appropriate code (L).

Poor punctuality is unacceptable and persistent lateness, i.e. after the close of registration could result in a penalty notice. A pupil who arrives after the close of register will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U). If children are late on a regular basis then the school may meet parents to discuss what measures may be required to ensure that child/ren arrive at school by the appropriate time.

## **Absence procedures**

Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone (or by e-mail on Parentmail) before 9.30am on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by 9.30am to report the absence, a member of the office staff will contact the parent by phone as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.



The school will always follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken, which may include home visits.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

On the third day of absence when no contact has been established by the parents and school, therefore the child hasn't been seen, school is required to start child missing from education procedures as set down in the school safeguarding guidance. School and relevant agencies will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquires to known friends and wider family. If it is deemed relevant a police welfare check may be relevant. In the case of a child in care, the social worker must also be informed and invited in their capacity of holding parental responsibility (PR).

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness e.g., a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. If 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.

Useful guidance regarding absences can be found on the NHS website:

[Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

### **Persistent Absence**

In the case of **Persistent Absence** (under 90%), the attendance officer and school's named Education Welfare Officer will discuss these monthly. Each child's individual circumstances and vulnerability will be considered and, in consultation with parents, school will look to provide access to wider support services to remove barriers to attendance. Then, if deemed necessary, letters will be sent to parents of children with attendance of less than 90%.

Attendance is monitored daily, weekly and monthly by the Attendance Officer and letters can be distributed at any stage because of this. Education Welfare will support the academy in this process and decisions will be made as to whether the families need to enter a 'Fast Track' process to rapidly improve attendance.

Should the targets for improvement fail to be met then the academy will work with the Education Welfare team to accelerate this to the next level. We will work jointly with the Local Authority Education Welfare Service to put formal support options in place. These include parenting contracts, education supervision orders, the involvement of Social Services or legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).

### **Attendance register**

The school uses Integris to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.



Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

### **Authorised absence**

- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- B = Off-site educational activity (approved by school)
- D = Dual registered – at another educational establishment
- J = Interview (with prospective educational establishment)
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- V = Educational visit or trip
- C = Authorised leave of absence (granted in exceptional circumstances)
- E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
- H = Authorised holiday
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- R = Religious observance
- T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

### **Unauthorised absence**

- G = Unauthorised holiday
- N = Reason not yet provided
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- X = Not required to be in school -non-compulsory school age
- Y = Exceptional circumstances (school site is closed)
- Z = Pupil not on admission register (register is set up but pupil has not yet joined school)
- # = Planned school closure (half-term/bank holiday/INSET day)

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.



All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

### **Authorising parental absence requests**

Parents will be required to request certain types of absence in advance and evidence to support this may be required. All requests for absence will be handled by the governors and headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at their discretion, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. This decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents, and will not deny any request without good reason.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- 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.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes, this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and had agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a term period.
- 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.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996 Section 444 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004, Wakefield Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:



- non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence that has been taken without permission for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) the unauthorised absence (coded O)
- If a child has 10 or more other types of unauthorised absence (coded O and U) within a 12 week period and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued
- persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed

Unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

### **Planned Illness and healthcare appointments**

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses the minimum time necessary to attend the appointment..

### **SEND and health related absences**

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.



The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

## **Truancy**

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

All pupils are expected to be in their classes by 8:55am and by 1:00pm for children in Reception and 1:15pm for children in Years 1-6, where the teacher will record the attendance electronically. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.



The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### **Missing children**

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - Changing rooms
  - The library
  - Any outbuildings
  - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 15 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.



## **Legal Sanctions**

The school (and Local Authority) can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. Our policy is NOT to authorise holidays in term time and a leave of absence request may only be granted in the rare instance that we (Governors and the Headteacher) agree an exceptional circumstance applies.

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 the Headteacher, Local Authority 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 year.
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.

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

In line with the Local Authority guidance, parents may receive two penalty notices in an academic year, after which the Local Authority may decide to prosecute parents.

## **Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

We use the following strategies to promote attendance:

- Weekly attendance (using a colour coded system) for every class is published in the Weekly Newsletter for parents/carers. We also publish the whole school target for attendance (97.3%) and the actual figure.
- Any class with 100% attendance in the week will qualify for a non-uniform day in the following week.
- Each week, any class with attendance over the school target receives a token on their class tally so the whole school can see which class are the highest attenders.
- On a weekly basis, the class with the highest attendance figure takes the school 'Attendance Owl' to their classroom where they keep it for the week.
- Termly, pupils with perfect attendance will earn a 100% badge and certificate. There will be three available (bronze, silver and gold), one earned per full term.
- Throughout the year, there will be attendance 'hotspot' weeks when all children with 100% attendance in these weeks, or 100% attendance overall at this point in the year, will be entered in to a raffle. The winners will receive a prize provided by school's Parent Partnership.

## **Working with parents to improve attendance**

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The



school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

In school, we will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil, wherever possible, to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

School will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the attendance officer will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

### **Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)**

The post-pandemic rise in school absence includes a significant number of cases where reasons for not attending include those linked to emotionally based factors, particularly anxiety. 'Emotionally Based School Avoidance' is not a diagnosis, but an umbrella term for this issue, which can be attributed to a multitude of factors and barriers.

The Wakefield approach to attendance difficulties including EBSA aims to enable schools/settings and/or services to identify the underlying needs and barriers in each case, so that any which include elements of anxiety can be provided with appropriate support and intervention following an evidence-based framework of support.

Wakefield's Educational Psychology Service has produced the following 2 key documents, reviewed and updated for September 2023, to support schools who believe a pupil may be experiencing EBSA.

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools – GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupils-attendance-guidance-for-schools)  
([www.gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))



## Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor and analyse attendance and absence data weekly, monthly and yearly across school and at an individual pupil level.
- Identify whether or not there are any particular individuals or 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 Body.

The school collects and stores attendance data as a requirement set out by the Local Authority and in line with our GDPR policy. The data collected will be used to internally track individual and groups of pupils.

## 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.

## Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to the class teachers and other school leaders, 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.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

## Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **97.3%** – full details of the school's attendance levels can be found on the **weekly Newsletter**.

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2024**.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholder.