



West Tyne Church Schools Federation

Attendance Policy

Signed: M Glenton Date: May 2023

Date Reviewed by Governing Body (Strategic committee): May 2023 Review Date: Summer 2025

At The West Tyne Church Schools Federation, we believe that good attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning and is the responsibility of the whole school community. We will encourage and assist all students to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality so that they are able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Good attendance at school is linked to achievement, progress and attainment academically.

If your child's attendance falls below 94% it is of great concern to us and we may discuss the issue with our Educational Welfare Officer. We will not authorise absence under this level. If the absence is due to an illness/medical issue then we will request you obtain a medical note from a GP/hospital.

Research suggests that children who are absent from school may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results. When children are absent from school, they miss not only the teaching provided on the days when they are away, but are also less prepared for the lessons that follow which build on prior knowledge and teaching. As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

There is a clear link between a child's poor attendance at school and resulting underachievement across the curriculum.

Out of pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of their primary school education, only 35% achieve 5 A* to C at GCSE.

A two week period of absence is over 5% of a child's school year.

A child's absence from school is seen as significant if they are absent for more than 6.4% (12 days) of the school year and persistent if they are absent for more than 15% (24 days) of the school year

Aims

1. To improve the overall percentage of student attendance at school to 96% to improve learning and increase achievement.
2. To reduce unauthorised absence figures and habitual lateness.
3. To create a school culture where good attendance is valued.
4. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
5. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
6. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.
7. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
8. To implement a system of rewards and sanctions to support the school's procedures.
9. To develop effective communication between home and school and promote effective partnerships with the Attendance and Pupil Support Team and other agencies.

Practice

The school is obliged by law to distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter or message will the absence be authorised. Please see Appendix 3 for further details of absence coding. This school sets a target for school attendance and for each school year. Between 2022-2026 the target for the number of absences from school will be no higher than 5% per year. We will focus on reducing overall absence, particularly unauthorised absence and persistent absence.

Roles and Responsibilities

Improving attendance at The Henshaw and Greenhead Primary Schools is the responsibility of everyone in the school community: students, parents and staff.

Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance, that they are properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is unable to attend school for any reason, or is late, parents will notify the school as soon as possible, by phone call or in writing. A student's absence from school is considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent. Parents can expect to be informed promptly if the school is concerned about a child's attendance. Parents should avoid making medical or dental appointments for their child during school hours and ensure that they do not book holidays in term time. They will advise school of any changes in contact details and work in partnership with school. This includes impressing on their child the importance of good attendance and the need for their children to follow the school's Home/school agreement.

The School

Staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff. The school will use a range of strategies (see Appendix 2) to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. Staff will respond to absenteeism firmly and consistently. The Headteacher may decide to issue a Penalty Notice, where unacceptable levels of absence persist.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Student attendance will be reviewed each half term by the office manager and senior leadership team. Parents will be advised of concerns (through three tiers of letters) so that they may be involved in monitoring their child's attendance. The Attendance Policy will be reviewed every 2 years at the Curriculum/strategic Sub Committee. Governors will regularly review attendance at their termly meetings.

Dissemination

This policy is made available on the school website for all of our community. It is discussed with relevant staff during their induction.

Date of Next Review: Summer 2023

Appendix 1

Registration (including lateness)

Registers are taken at 9:00am. **The register must be taken by the member of staff responsible and not by a student.** Any student arriving after 9:30am should be marked as late. If a child arrives after 9:30am, as per county guidance, an absence code will be used. A child will be marked as ill in a register

if a parent has telephoned the school or has passed a message to the class teacher/office. A message from a friend/other relative but the parent will not be permitted as a valid reason.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Henshaw and Greenhead Primary Schools will record absence in accordance with "School Attendance" DfE 2018 (see Appendix 3)

Truancy

The West Tyne Church Schools Federation works with parents, students and staff to reduce truancy. If students truant lessons or days where they should be in school, there may be cause for a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to be made.

Term Time Holidays

The Headteacher is unable to authorise family holidays during term time except for exceptional circumstances. Should there be an exceptional circumstance, we ask that parents complete a request form which is available from the School Reception and website so that this may be considered. It may be worth adding in that it's the parent responsibility to provide evidence of the exceptional circumstance along with the request form, this must also be made in advance of the holiday. If a child's attendance is below 90%, any holiday request will not be granted by default.

Letters home

- If we feel attendance is becoming a concern, we will issue a first letter to advise you of this. This is just so parents are made aware of their child going into an absence category that is below what is expected.
- If your child's attendance does not improve and/or continues to fall after we have issued our 1st letter a 2nd letter could be issued, setting out possible next steps and meetings.
- If attendance does not improve, or your child falls below 90% attendance, then they are known as persistently absent under the governments attendance definitions and county involvement will be sought.

Penalty Notices

Parents are made aware that holidays which have not been agreed in advance may lead to the student being marked with unauthorised absence.

Unauthorised absence may be referred to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice or other action.

Procedures for following up Absence or Lateness

If a student is absent and no notice is received, The Office Manager will contact parents by telephone to confirm the reason for absence on the first morning of non-attendance. If the absentee is a student about whom there are already concerns, The Office Manager will make every effort to ensure that the parents are contacted immediately. The Head Teacher will also be notified.

If a student continues to be persistently absent or late, parents/carers will be invited to meet with the Head Teacher and Class Teacher to implement an Action Plan. Should there be further unauthorised absences, the letters listed above will be utilised. Any further unauthorised absences may result in parents/carers being issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Appendix 2

Strategies for promoting Attendance and Punctuality

- The West Tyne Church Schools Federation will offer an environment in which students feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos will demonstrate that students feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent or late and that follow up action will be taken.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all students. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to students' needs.
- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy and practice.
- Parents will be informed promptly of all concerns about attendance and punctuality.
- The Headteacher will report on attendance to the school's full governing body on attendance matters.
- Students who have been absent for any extended period of time will be integrated back into school through a structured individual programme.
- Class Teachers will liaise with other agencies as appropriate when this may serve to support and assist students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Office Manager/Head Teacher will meet with the Attendance Improvement Officer in order to identify and support those students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Good attendance awards (certificates) will be presented at the end of each school year.

Appendix 3

It is vital that all staff use the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. The West Tyne Church Schools Federation will decide how an absence is to be recorded according to guidance contained in "School Attendance (DfE 2018)". Only the school can authorise an absence.

This states that: Students will be marked as present when attending school or other Approved Educational Activity or receiving special off-site tuition. This category includes attendance on a school journey or visit or if they are taking part in a school sporting event. Approved Educational Activity also includes a student attending an look around for a place at another school or the student is attending an approved event.

Absence will be unauthorised if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the student stays at home to mind the house or to look after siblings (except in very exceptional circumstances.)
- the student is shopping during school hours
- the student is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday)
- the student is away from school on a family holiday