



Carr Infant School

Confidence - Communication - Creativity

Attendance Policy

2024

Approved by	SDC
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ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Legislation

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

2. Aims

Carr Infant School is committed to providing a broad, balanced and effective education for all the children who attend the school. We believe that regular attendance is of the greatest importance because children:

- Have full access to the curriculum and are more likely to achieve their potential,
- Are able to build relationships and develop social skills,
- Are able to broaden their experiences,
- Are able to develop self-esteem,
- Are able to develop a positive attitude to school and the world of work,
- Are able to understand how important it is to be punctual, reliable and honest,
- Are able to develop a feeling of belonging,

Carr Infant School do everything possible to ensure that children attend regularly and that any barriers to learning and full attendance are identified and acted on quickly. We do work with Carr Junior School together on matters of attendance and may work jointly with a family if appropriate.

This policy outlines the underlying philosophy, purpose, nature, organisation and management of attendance at Carr Infant School. It is a working document designed to promote positive attendance and reduce absence and persistent absence.

The policy reflects current practice within the school. Its fair and consistent implementation is the responsibility of all staff.

2. Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification that they accept as legitimate from a

parent/carer. (E.g. if a child is unwell and school receives a telephone call, or the school has given advance permission to the parent or carer for their child to miss school.)

2.2 Unauthorised absence

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised. Examples include:

- A child taken out of school to go shopping,
- A child taken out of school for family holiday in term time that is not for exceptional reasons.
- When a child has had repeated periods of absence the school has the discretion to decide whether further absence be authorised or unauthorised. The school may request supporting evidence.

2.3 Total absence

Total absence represents all the time children are absent from school, regardless of whether this is authorised or unauthorised. Each school day counts as two sessions: am and pm. So each day a child is absent is recorded as two sessions of absence.

2.4 Persistent absence (PA)

From September 2015, the Department for Education defines a Persistent Absentee (PA) as any child who has missed 10% or more of possible sessions (one session = half a day in school) during an academic year, of a possible 390 sessions, so therefore, where a child's attendance is 90% or lower. The table below illustrates how this relates to a typical academic year.

School Term	10% absence threshold (cumulative)
Half-term 1	7 or more sessions
Half-term 1-2 (autumn term)	14 or more sessions
Half-term 1-3	20 or more sessions
Half-term 1-4 (autumn term and spring term combined)	25 or more sessions
Half-term 1-5	31 or more sessions
Half-term 1-6 (full academic year)	38 or more sessions

During the academic year, school monitors the attendance of all children and identifies those who are at risk of becoming a PA. Letters are sent to parents of children at risk of becoming a PA on a monthly basis. The purpose of this is to ensure that parents are promptly aware of their children's level of attendance and to offer proactive support and advice to help them improve their child's level of attendance where possible.

3. Registration

3.1 Codes

There are a series of codes which are used to denote authorised and unauthorised absence (Working together to improve school attendance - 2024). It is the school's responsibility to ensure the correct codes are recorded and that patterns and trends in children's absence are analysed.

3.2 Punctuality and the close of registers

Children need to arrive at school punctually so that they can access all learning opportunities. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class

teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arrivals also disrupt lessons and it can be embarrassing for the child, which may encourage further absence. We encourage all children to arrive at school on time.

At the Infant School, the school day starts 8:40 for KS1 and 8:45 for EYFS. The register is taken at 8.55. Children arriving after the register has been taken will be marked as an 'L' (Late) in the register. Children who arrive after 9.30 will be marked as a 'U' in the register, which counts as an absence.

Children who arrive late

Parents of children who arrive late in school more than three times in a month, where there is a pattern of 'lates' spread out over a longer period or regularly on a certain day, will be contacted by the Welfare and Attendance Officer. Where children are persistently late, arrival after the registers close may be marked as 'U' (unauthorised) rather than 'L' (late).

Children who are absent

All parents of absent children should contact school daily with an update as to the reason. The answerphone is on 24/7 so messages can be left at any time, along with messages being able to be sent via Class Dojo. It is at the discretion of the school, in line with guidance from the local authority, as to whether an absence is counted as authorised or unauthorised. Information regarding reasons for absence will be recorded securely.

School will attempt to contact parents where there has been no contact regarding an absent child. If school is unable to make contact, a welfare check may be made to the family home to ascertain that the child/ family are safe. The police may be contacted if there is a continuing concern.

In some circumstances, if school has a concern regarding a child's absence, a welfare check may be conducted, even where parents have made contact.

It is vital that school have more than one up to date contacts and emergency contact details for safeguarding purposes. If a child has an accident or becomes ill at school, school needs to be able to contact an appropriate adult as soon as possible.

This procedure will be followed for children below the age of compulsory school attendance on safeguarding grounds.

A child going missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and, as such, these children are increasingly at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation. Staff will monitor pupils that go missing from the school, particularly on repeat occasions, and report them to the Designated Safeguarding Lead following normal safeguarding procedures. The school will inform the LA with any concerns regarding attendance.

3.3 Medical appointments/children with long-term medical conditions

We encourage families to book medical appointments outside of the school day, when possible. Where possible children should attend school for their registration before going to medical appointments.

We acknowledge that some children with chronic, long-term medical conditions may have regular illness related absences. In these circumstances, the class teacher and head teacher will keep in touch with parents/carers to offer support and to plan for the child's return to school.

Parents of children whose attendance is a cause for concern will be encouraged to provide evidence of any illness, such as hospital or doctor appointments. In some circumstances,

reported illness may not be authorised, for example patterns in absence, broken weeks, or where school has reason to believe an absence may not be through illness. When a fast track letter has been issued, then absence, including illness, is usually unauthorised during the twenty day period.

3.4 Requests for leave of absence

Children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. If parents/carers want to take their child out of school during term time they can only do this if:

- ☐ An application is made to the headteacher in advance,
- ☐ There are exceptional circumstances.

The DFE have instructed all head teachers that they should not authorise leave of absence (including holidays) in term time. Absence can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. It is for the head teacher to decide what constitutes exceptional circumstances. The head teacher has the discretion to decide how many days absence will be authorised.

Following guidance from the City of York Council, the following examples may be regarded as exceptional circumstances:

- Service personnel on active service who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time, if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education,
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other where there is a life-limiting illness or a recent family bereavement,
- In the case of a funeral of a close family member or a parental wedding, a day's compassionate absence may be allowed, increasing as appropriate if significant travel time is required.
- Any other circumstances the head teacher considers to be exceptional.

Any other holidays or requests for absence will be unauthorised. Parents will be given written confirmation if their request for absence is authorised. If the absence is unauthorised, parents will be notified that holidays will lead to a fixed term penalty notice.

The Local Authority has the power to issue Fixed Penalty Notices under Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 in all cases of unauthorised absence, including holidays or leave taken without authorisation. This means that the parents/carers of any pupils with unauthorised absence from school (i.e. any absence that the school has not given permission for) may be subject to a prompt fine of either £80 per parent per child (if paid within 21 days) or £160 (if paid within 28 days). Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty Notice is likely to lead to prosecution.

4. Roles and responsibilities

All members of our school community have roles and responsibilities in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality.

4.1 Role of parents/carers

Parents and carers have an essential role in ensuring their child's good attendance.

We ask parents to:

- Ensure their children attend school regularly
- Talk regularly with their child about school and how they feel about it, encouraging a positive attitude to school. Children are more likely to want to attend and learn if they feel supported and listened to when sharing any anxieties they have.
- Help to develop children's resilience, supporting them to overcome any difficulties they might be having at school and developing valuable life skills.

- Know routines of the school day to avoid issues e.g. ensuring children have their PE kits on the right days.
- Establish a good bedtime routine, so that their child can sleep well, get enough sleep and make mornings less of a struggle.
- Contact the school whenever their child is unable to attend and provide an accurate and truthful explanation for their absence. We ask parents/carers to contact the school on each day of absence.
- **Ensure their children are well enough to attend school. If suffering from sickness and/or diarrhea a child should be kept at home for 48 hours following the last bout of symptoms. We encourage parents to bring their child to school with minor ailments such as sore throats or headaches. If necessary school will ring the parent to provide guidance or to come and collect.**
- Ensure their children arrive at school punctually and well prepared for the day ahead.
- Ensure that children are not taken out of school for holidays during term time.
- Ensure that wherever possible, medical appointments are made outside of the school day or do not require a full day of absence.

Parents/carers and children can expect the following from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a child fails to attend without a reason being given. The school staff will contact parents each day this is the case as this is primarily about safeguarding of children.
- Immediate and confidential action to address any problem of attendance.
- Encouragement of good attendance with a variety of appropriate rewards.
- Support for families to improve punctuality and attendance.
- A quality education for their children.

4.2 Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- Oversee the whole policy,
- Be aware of all initiatives in school.
- Report on attendance to the Governors termly.

4.3 Role of the Class Teacher and support staff

We ask teachers and support staff to:

- Ensure that registers are correctly and promptly marked, and that children are marked late in accordance with the criteria set out in this document.
- Inform the Head teacher or Welfare Officer if they have any concerns regarding a child.
- Provide a safe and secure environment in which pupils can learn.
- Make attendance and punctuality a high priority and convey to their pupils the importance of the education being provided.
- Save letters explaining absences.
- Provide engaging and worthwhile learning experiences that encourage pupils to regularly attend lessons.
- Listen to and value pupils' views.
- Update parents about their child's level of attendance throughout the year, particularly at Parents' Evenings

4.4 Role of the Welfare Officer

The Welfare Officer will:

- Produce, implement, monitor and review the attendance policy
- Maintain attendance as a high priority and oversee attendance figures,

- Monitor and analyse the information from attendance database
- Prioritise families requiring support and identify general trends and improvements,
- Liaise with class teachers, outside agencies, parents/carers and children
- Co-ordinate initiatives to improve attendance and punctuality
- Organise rewards for good attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents/carers of children with unexplained absences
- Display information on attendance across the school
- Support the headteacher in their report to staff and governors on attendance issues
- Attend appropriate courses and feedback information to staff

The Welfare officer can be contacted on Dojo or by calling 01904 565140 to make an appointment.

4.5 Role of Administration Staff

Administration Staff will:

- Record information regarding absences received from parents/carers in a secure place.
- Ensure class teachers are informed about the absence of a child.
- Ensure census attendance figures are accurate.
- Consult with the Welfare officer or SLT regarding any concerns or queries about a child's absence.
- Follow LA procedures when children are added to, or removed, from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points.

5. Promoting positive good attendance and punctuality at Carr Infant School

The school uses a range of positive strategies to promote and reward punctuality and good attendance:

- The school will set an aspirational whole school target for the year. This will be communicated to both parents and pupils.
- Regular attendance figures at a whole school level will be shared with parents.
- School will actively promote attendance by sharing local authority campaigns and publicity.
- Minimise the numbers of pupils who are persistent absentees and ensure parents are aware if their child is at risk if their child is at risk of being a persistent absentee.
- Encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- Close monitoring of attendance figures by the welfare officer so that swift action can be taken and patterns identified.
- Registers are completed accurately at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions, children are marked as late if appropriate.
- Individual letters are sent to parents, if required, to report on increased attendance and concerns.
- Specific families and children are targeted to support, monitor and encourage as necessary.
- Parents/carers are invited to informal meetings at school.
- Parents/carers are invited, when appropriate, to more formal meetings with Head and Welfare Officer.
- Parents/ carers are invited, when appropriate, to School Attendance Panels with a Local Authority representative.
- Parents are contacted to ensure they supply reasons for the child's absence.

Recording

Whole school attendance is checked weekly. Class attendance is also monitored weekly. Individual attendance is monitored daily.

6. Systems for responding to non-attendance

If no explanation is forthcoming regarding a child's absence the parents/carers will be contacted by the Welfare Officer. When there is evidence of consistent non-attendance or a pattern is identified in attendance statistics, concerns will be discussed with the Local Authority and further action planned.

If a child becomes anxious about attending school, a programme will be planned with the Welfare Officer and parents/carers to re-integrate the child.

Thresholds and action

All pupils will have their attendance tracked.

Parents of children with attendance below 95% will be notified once this threshold has been reached with a generic information leaflet reminding of the importance of attending every day.

Parents of children with attendance below 93% will be notified once this threshold has been reached and an attendance summary sent with the letter.

A further warning letter is also sent if a child's attendance is approaching 90%.

If attendance is 90% or below, a Fast Track letter is sent out, indicating that attendance will be monitored very closely over the next four weeks, and that in this time period no absences will be authorised.

If no improvement is seen in the child's attendance, a panel meeting is arranged with parents, the welfare lead, headteacher and in some cases a representative from the local authority. The panel meeting is to look at ways of supporting the family to improve attendance. Following this, attendance is monitored for a four week period.

If there is still a concern, a request will be made for a penalty notice to be served in accordance with local authority procedures.

Where an improvement is made, attendance will still be monitored. If attendance becomes a concern again, a letter will be issued advising parents that attendance will be monitored closely. If there is no improvement then a penalty notice will be issued.

For unauthorised leave of absence (for example holidays), 10 unauthorised sessions (equivalent to 5 days) will trigger school to issue a request for a penalty notice to be served in accordance with local authority procedures.

7. Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under section 7 of the Education Act 1996
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with

- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

8. Children Missing in Education

We have a duty to notify the Local Authority when we remove a pupil's name from the school admission register. This does not apply when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by the school. When removing a pupil's name, the notification to the local authority must include:

- full name
- address
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- at least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- if applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil will start living there;
- if applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school
- the reason for which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register.

When pupils leave and parents have not provided the school with the above information, and the school cannot contact the parents, then the child is considered to be a 'Child Missing Education'. This means that the school and Local Authority have a legal duty to carry out investigations, which may include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies, to try to track and locate the child.

Excerpt from Safeguarding & Child protection 2024-25 Policy:

"Admin colleagues within school will liaise regularly with Stephanie Keenan-Logue at City of York Council regarding children who move to different schools or move internationally. All cases will be monitored in line with CYC policy and guidance. A 'Missing Children in Education' register is kept by the admin team."

8. Equal Opportunities

At Carr Infant School, we believe that every child has a right to a broad, balanced and effective education regardless of ethnicity, gender and special need. Where attendance and punctuality are poor, this is not always possible, as the children do not have full access to the National Curriculum and opportunities available in school. To ensure equal opportunities for all, it is essential that the importance of consistent good attendance is made a high priority through example, encouragement, close monitoring and support.

9. Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of the attendance policy is monitored by the Headteacher and Welfare Officer through regular analysis of information from the attendance database.

The governing body reviews this policy every two years. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.