



# Attendance Policy



**Review frequency:** Annually

**Approval by:** Governing Body

**Policy Date:** September 2023

**Review Date:** September 2024

**Lead Personnel :** Assistant Headteacher

**Version:** 4

The School is adopting guidance from Wakefield Local Authority from the model attendance guidance document. The school has included information specific to the school within this policy document.

### Aims which guide our policies and practice

*As a school, we seek to promote shared moral and ethical values to unite both local and global interests which enable children to become global citizens. Our agreed school aims are:*

- To create a happy and stimulating learning environment, in which each child will develop to their full potential, thereby achieving high educational standards.*
- To develop self-awareness, self-respect and tolerance of others by developing an understanding of the world in which they live.*
- To appreciate human achievements and aspirations; develop aesthetic sensitivity and appreciation; physical ability and co-ordination and a concern for the safety of themselves and others.*
- To prepare children to live and work with others, enabling them to be responsible and caring members of the community.*
- To give children, at the end of their period of primary education, an appetite for acquiring further knowledge, experience and skills, so ensuring they are prepared for the challenges of the next stage in their education.*

*We ensure that all of our policies and practices are guided by these aims and we seek to ensure that they are at the forefront of all that we do.*

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

If you wish to discuss this policy then please contact the school office to speak to Mr Davison.

Name of School/Education Establishment: Dane Royd School / Wakefield Council

Guidance approved and adopted: September 2023

Person(s) responsible for implementing and monitoring the guidance : Education Welfare Service and Mr J Davison Attendance Lead

Due for review: September 2024

#### Foreword:

The Wakefield Council Attendance 2023 guidance document is intended to support schools, academies, the public and other educational institutes with regard to school attendance. This document should support you with any questions you may have in relation to school attendance and the active legislation that has contributed to how Wakefield Council Education Welfare Services operates.

This document was undertaken to aid schools, academies and other educational institutes to compose their own attendance policy and practice that aligns with current legislations and guidance. It also demonstrates how Education Welfare Service can support you to achieve this. It may also answer any questions that you may have in relation to school attendance.

Since the release of the Department for Education guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' in May 2022, the focus changed to ensure pupils who are facing barriers to achieving good attendance or who are not in school, receive the right support, in the right place, at the right time. The government aim for the guidance to be statutory by September 2023.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the **Wakefield Attendance Strategy 2023-2026** - *A Graduated, Responsive, Partnership Approach to Improving Attendance*

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## Guidance

The guidance is for:

- Headteachers
- School governors
- All school staff
- Wakefield Council staff
- Providers of alternative provision (for children who can't attend mainstream school).

The information applies to:

- Schools maintained by the local authority
- Academies and free schools
- Pupil referral units (for pupils who can't attend mainstream school).
- Non-maintained special schools (schools for children with special education needs that the Secretary of State has approved under section 342 of the Education Act 1996)

The guidance should help you and the local authority to maintain a high level of school attendance and plan school hours, terms and holiday dates. It provides information about interventions and addresses pupil's poor attendance.

You should use the guidance alongside the statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental measures.

This guidance also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which relates to the persistent absence threshold. Schools are judged against a persistent

absence rate of 10 per cent and pupils are identified as persistently absent based upon their individual absence level.

## Section 1

### 1.1 Statement of intent

The Local Authority, School/Academy seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which enables them to maximise opportunities for each child to reach his or her full potential. Reducing absence from school continues to be a priority both nationally and locally in the Wakefield district.

Research shows there is evidence of a strong link between good attendance and increased attainment. Pupils who regularly attend school progress both socially and academically ahead of pupils who don't attend regularly. Regular attendance enables pupils to adapt better to routines, school work and friendship groups. As a consequence those pupils will have a positive experience of learning have a successful transition from primary to secondary and beyond to further education and training.

However, 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.

We have worked in consultation with our local partners and families, using recent research and evidence, to support the creation of our ambitious attendance strategy for all schools, academies, families, children and young people across Wakefield.



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School Attendance Str

As part of a strategic approach to tackling poor attendance, the DfE has also released guidance on responsibilities for attendance on parents, schools, Governing Boards and Multi Academy Trusts and Local Authorities



Working Together  
to Improve School A



Summary Table of  
Responsibilities for

### 1.2 The Law

The 1996 Education Act, 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.

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.

A child remains of compulsory school age until the last Friday in June the school year that they turn 16. From September 2013 all 16 year olds must remain in education or training until the end of the academic year and from September 2015 they will be required to continue until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in some form of education, employment or training.

Where parent/carers are not fulfilling this responsibility, 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 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/carers 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.

## Section 2 Promoting good attendance and punctuality

### 2.1 How Education Welfare Service will support.

In Wakefield, local data shows that vulnerable children and young people, such as those with SEND, with Social Care intervention, those who have been permanently excluded, and/or are from disadvantaged backgrounds, are more likely to be persistently or severely absent, with the consequent further negative impact on outcomes.

The Education Welfare Service works in partnership with schools, education establishments and parents to promote and facilitate improved attendance. They will follow the DfE guidance on the core offer that they will provide all schools in the Local Authority.

As a Local Authority we will provide the following Core Offer to all local schools where there are pupils of statutory school age, including independent schools. <sup>1</sup> :		We will do this via:
<p><b>Communication and advice:</b> Regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.</p>	<p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Guidance on how partners will work together</li> <li>✓ Named point of contact for each school</li> <li>✓ Answering queries from school-based staff:</li> <li>✓ Bringing schools together to share best practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Strategy and Policy, Website and Traded Services free information including on attendance law and Emotionally Based School Avoidance</li> <li>✓ Named Education Welfare Officers (EWOs) for each cluster</li> <li>✓ EWS Telephone &amp; Email Advice line</li> <li>✓ Half-Termly Attendance Forum</li> </ul>
<p><b>Targeting Support Meetings:</b> hold termly conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.</p>	<p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Meeting at least termly with each school in the local authority area:</li> <li>✓ Signposting schools to relevant services and voluntary sector partners:</li> <li>✓ Agreeing joint action plans for severely absent pupils (where there are out of school barriers)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Via Team Around the School for cases with additional familial factors</li> <li>✓ Individually via EWO where attendance is the only issue</li> <li>✓ Refer to Education Welfare Service for legal action</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Agreeing joint actions for persistently absent pupils (where necessary)</li> <li>✓ Agreeing any legal action to be taken forward</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Multi-disciplinary support for families:</b> provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.</p>	<p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Providing access to existing support systems where appropriate – including early help, social care, SEND etc</li> <li>✓ Advising the family’s lead practitioner on any attendance elements of the family’s plan</li> <li>✓ Acting as lead professional in a family plan where an LA team is the most appropriate to do so (e.g. a housing issue)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Via Team Around the School</li> <li>✓ Via named EWO</li> <li>✓ Via Attendance Duty Helpline</li> <li>✓ Via EHCP SEND Officer</li> <li>✓ Via Social Worker</li> <li>✓ Via Virtual School for CiC</li> </ul>
<p><b>Legal intervention:</b> take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.</p>	<p>Including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Parenting contracts</li> <li>✓ Education Supervision Orders</li> <li>✓ Building attendance into child in need or child protection plans where relevant</li> <li>✓ Issuing fixed penalty notices</li> <li>✓ Parenting Orders</li> <li>✓ Taking forward attendance prosecutions</li> </ul> <p>(including for persistently breaching any Education Supervision Order or Parenting Order in place)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Information on website</li> <li>✓ Via Educational Welfare Service Duty Helpline</li> <li>✓ Via named EWO</li> <li>✓ For severely absent cases where multi-agency approach is required but parents will not give consent, refer to named EWO or advice line.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples of areas of practice that we may trade beyond the core offer where capacity allows , for schools who choose to subscribe:</b></p>		
<p><b>School processes:</b> acting on behalf of the school to fulfil their day to day expectations as set</p>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ First day calling</li> <li>✓ Home visits, calls and/or sending out letters from the school</li> <li>✓ Late gates</li> <li>✓ Parent drop ins or attendance services</li> </ul>	

<p>out in section 1 of <i>Working together to improve attendance.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Providing advice and support on attendance at parents' evenings</li> <li>✓ Running attendance reward and recognition systems</li> <li>✓ Attendance assemblies</li> <li>✓ Analysing the school's data</li> </ul>
<p><b>Casework on behalf of the school:</b> delivering the attendance work with individual pupils and families that is expected of the school (rather than of the local authority and other partners as defined in section 4).</p>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Contacting families and understanding what the barriers to attendance are</li> <li>✓ Setting up and leading attendance meetings with families</li> <li>✓ Developing in school reasonable adjustments and initial attendance action plans</li> <li>✓ Completion of referrals to other services, including early help assessments</li> </ul>
<p><b>Training:</b> one off or ongoing training delivered to school staff on attendance.</p>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Training for school-based staff on attendance law, casework or application of guidance</li> <li>✓ Training for governors on their responsibilities</li> <li>✓ Training on how to analyse data and make use of attendance data in day to day practices</li> <li>✓ Professional supervision of attendance staff employed by the school or trust</li> </ul>
<p><b>Audits and attendance management support:</b> ad hoc work with schools to support development of new systems, policies and processes</p>	<p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Intensive work with a school to develop a whole school strategy</li> <li>✓ Help developing an attendance policy</li> <li>✓ Policy reviews</li> <li>✓ Support with developing day to day processes, eg Register Audits</li> </ul>



DfE fact sheet - trading attendance se

In addition to this, The Education Welfare Service will

- work with children and families to ensure their school attendance and safeguarding is maintained
- work in partnership with other agencies and will offer advice and signposting for referrals to appropriate organisations
- provide guidance with regards to Children Missing Education and Elective Home Education
- undertake statutory legal action on behalf of the school.
- support schools with networking and training events.

- Provide a daily telephone and email duty service for all schools to access

## **2.2 Persistent Absence**

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee if he/she has missed 10% or more of school for any reason and has an attendance of below 90%.

Schools are encouraged to invite parents/carers into school to discuss the situation, In some cases partnership working will result in a range of strategies being deployed to improve attendance; including participation in the FastTrack Attendance Programme, Parenting Contracts, Education Plan development, referral to School Health where relevant and Penalty Fines, parental prosecution and Education Supervision Orders

The most vital part of encouraging good attendance is to ensure that school is a place where:

- children want to come;
- children are treated with respect and feel valued;
- needs are recognised and addressed;
- all children can experience success within an enriched, relevant and diverse curriculum.

Schools should be committed to promoting good attendance to give its pupils the best start in life. To encourage this it is advised that each school has their own structured reward system to promote good attendance.

## **2.3 Roles and responsibilities**

### **2.3.1 Education Welfare Service:**

The statutory service which Education Welfare Service provide to all schools and academies within the Wakefield District is with regard to the issue of Penalty Notices or seeking Parental Prosecutions, on the behalf of schools and Educational Establishments.

Traded Services allows schools to purchase different levels of service packages from the Local Authority to support schools attendance. Therefore the role of Education Welfare Services may vary depending on the package that the school or academy is receiving. Depending on the service level of agreement The Local Authority Education Welfare Officer may:

- Meet with the schools attendance lead to oversee the schools attendance on a termly basis
- Advise school of the appropriate action to promote overall good attendance within the whole school/academy.
- Write to parents/ carers if Local Authority action is required.
- Meet with parents/ carers to discuss their child's irregular attendance particularly those that are severely absent
- Support measures to ensure appropriate action is taken by all professionals involved with the family to promote positive school attendance.

- Issue Warnings to parents/ carers.
- Chair Educational Legal Planning meetings in regard to school attendance.
- Attend core group, and child protection meetings, with other agencies when invited to participate and deemed appropriate.
- Seek legal action on schools behalf. This may be in the form of a Penalty Notice, a School Attendance Order or a Parental Prosecution.

### **2.3.2 The Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school, on at least a termly basis. The Governing Body holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of the Schools Attendance Policy and promoting positive attendance strategies.

### **2.3.3 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the Attendance Policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting to Governors.

The Department for Education (DfE) is collecting automatic daily attendance data from schools that agree to share their data. Getting daily attendance data:

- gives schools, local authorities and academy trusts access to more up-to-date pupil-level attendance data
- helps schools meet the new expectations set out in [working together to improve school attendance](#)
- will not add to your school's workload

Pupil-level absence data is collected 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 local authority and schools analysis attendance against the national, and local average. Schools collect and store attendance data as a requirement, in line with GDPR policy.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and instructs the Local Authority to issue penalty notices, where necessary and appropriate. As part of Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2023, it is a requirement that there should be a named member of the school (Senior Leadership Team) SLT responsible for attendance

### **2.3.4 The School Attendance Officer**

The School Attendance Officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis to which the data collected is used internally tracking individual and groups of pupils. This should then allow schools to support children who are fundamentally becoming persistent absent pupils allowing supportive measures to be developed and implemented.

School staff such as class teachers and teaching assistants record, promote and support positive attendance.

Mr Davison AHT for Inclusion is the SLT member who leads on attendance. Mrs Marriott the senior administrator monitors attendance and responds to any absence. In conjunction with the named member of SLT responsible for attendance, the Attendance Officer should also be a designated member of staff with focus on attendance.

### **2.3.5 The Virtual School Head (VSH)**

Statutory duties require systems to be in place between the Virtual School and a school to monitor the attendance of children in care (CiC). In Wakefield this is outsourced to a provider of the attendance monitoring system who will make daily contact with school for this information. The attendance data per pupil is also captured on a termly basis on their PEP (Personal Education Plan) and this is recorded on the LA social care database.

## **Section 3 Recording**

### **3.1 Recording attendance**

All schools, including independent schools, must maintain an Admission Register and all schools except boarding schools are required to have an Attendance Register. The registration (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 require a school to put the child's name on the Admissions Register on the first day that the child is expected to attend school. If the pupil does not attend, they will be recorded as absent – this can be authorised or unauthorised.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day (8.55am) and once during the second session (1:05 p.m.). 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

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

## **Section 4**

### **4.1 Lateness/punctuality**

The law states that children should arrive at school on time, every day. At Dane Royd School doors open at 8.40am and registration is taken at 8.50am, 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).

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55 and will be kept open until 9:05. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:05 and will be kept open until 1:10.

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.

The Department for Education guidance suggests all official registers should be closed a maximum of 30 minutes after the start of school, but schools can choose to use a shorter period. Dane Royd close the register at 9:30am.

The register for the second session will be taken at in the afternoon and will be kept open until for a shorter period of time (10 minutes).

## **Section 5**

### **5.1 What should schools and parents do if a child is absent from school?**

Parents must notify the school office via the main contact number 01924 242917 on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). If parents/guardians fail to contact school then the school will endeavor to contact parents as part of the 'first day response' measures.

Absence due to illness will be 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 parents 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 will be notified of this in advance.

The school should follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

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

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

Wakefield's Universal Attendance Flowchart provides a useful process map for non-attendance, for schools' and professionals' use only. This is embedded below.



Final Universal  
Attendance Flowchart

## **5.2 First day of absence**

The school will endeavour to contact parents via a telephone call as a method of first response. When no contact is made for vulnerable children it is good practice to carry out a home visit, or contact the relevant services involved supporting the family where appropriate. When carrying out a home visit, calling cards could be left to identify when and why the caller has visited the property.

When no information has been provided, schools may wish to write to the parents to inform them that the non-attendance will remain unauthorised until an appropriate response has been provided by parents, also potentially invite the parents for a school meeting to ascertain where support can be offered ensuring that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation. 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).

## **5.3 Third day absence**

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).

## **Section 6 – Absence from school**

### **6.1 Request for leave of absence**

Due to the amount of absences from school that were a direct result of term time holidays and leave of absences, the national government felt it important that the legislation was changed. This became effective as of September 2013. This means that schools across England are no longer permitted to authorise any requests for term time holidays/leave of absences during term time unless it was deemed an exceptional circumstance by the schools Headteacher, which will be considered on their own merits on a case by case basis.



In line with DfE guidance, it is good practice to respond to all requests for holiday/leave of absence in writing, giving parents the reasons for the decision. Schools should consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

It is particularly important that letters approving a request clearly state:

- The expected date of return;
- That the parents are expected to contact the school if anything delays in the pupil returning to school when expected;
- The action that will be taken if the pupil fails to return when expected.

Similarly, a letter refusing a request should explain the reasons for the refusal and what action will be taken if the parents ignore the refusal and keep their child away from school. In the case of a child in care, a letter must also be submitted by the social worker in their capacity of holding parental responsibility (PR) and agreeing to the request, in exceptional circumstances

Although the school recognizes the many benefits of holidays for children and the challenges parents/guardians face when taking out of term holidays, we will not authorise term-time holidays as we believe it is essential that children attend school if they are healthy enough to do so. Any holiday requests should be made using the school specific form which can be found in appendix 2. Holiday request forms will be shared electronically with both parents who have parental responsibility.

## 6.2 Children Missing Education (CME)

When a child goes missing from education, which includes within the school day, unauthorised absences will be monitored and followed up in line with procedures, particularly where children go missing on repeated occasions. In the case of a child in care, the social worker must be informed in line with safeguarding. Should the parent remove the child from school for a period of absence without prior permission, the school should also put this in writing, explaining the consequences for doing so.

Pupils will be removed from admission and attendance registers as required by law, after confirmation from Wakefield Council. For further advice please consult with CME guidance and the CME Team; email [educationcme@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:educationcme@wakefield.gov.uk)



children-missing-education-guidance-for-s

## Section 7 – Understanding types of absence – authorised and unauthorised

School will authorise absence if:

- The child is too ill to attend and the school accepts this as a valid reason. Schools may authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. When children are absent from school owing to illness, schools may request a letter from a parent or guardian. When a child suffers from a long-term condition which necessitates absence of 15 school days or more in an academic year, certification may be requested from the parents by the school. For example, evidence from the responsible specialist or other suitably qualified and recognised registered medical authority. This will help the school to establish the anticipated length of the absence and/or to determine appropriate support for the child
- The child has got a medical or dental appointment. Missing school for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, parents are encouraged 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 parent has got the advance permission of the school e.g. for a holiday, or religious observation.
- The child has study leave.
- The child is being educated off site;
- The child has been excluded

Schools have to a duty, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate any unexplained absences.

### **How we monitor Attendance at Dane Royd**

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

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.

## 8. How to encourage a child to attend school

Parents are encouraged to talk about the positive aspects and benefits of attending school regularly and should let the school know at their earliest opportunity of any potential issues that may prevent a child from attending school. Some children may mask problems which they are experiencing in school as illness.

Ideally school will schedule a meeting with parents to try and identify any issues and offer support where feasible. Other agencies may be required to be contacted to seek additional support for the young person and/or the family. This includes actions such as a Team Around the School referral.

More information regarding strategies to support children and families with school attendance issues can be found in a range of DfE and LA documents, including the document and links below. Attendance is everyone's business, including the wider community. The key to unlocking the majority of complex barriers to attendance is to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are engaged, but the essential at the centre of this is that the school works hard to ensure and maintain a trusting relationship with all of its parents and families.



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School Attendance Str

At Dane Royd J & I we believe the best way to get children to want to attend school is to enjoy their education. To this end, we seek to implement a diverse and varied curriculum that offers challenge and interest to all learners.

As part of our positive approach to behaviour and attendance we will reward children with half-termly certificates for 100% attendance or those who are significantly improving their attendance. Children with 100% attendance each term will automatically get entered into the raffle to win one of 5 prizes worth £20. The class with the highest % attendance each term will also get £10 from Vision for Education and £10 from the PTA in order to throw a party at the end of term to celebrate their collective effort.

Parents/guardians are actively encouraged to talk to their children about the benefits of attending school regularly and should let the school know at their earliest convenience of any potential issues that may prevent a child from attending and vice versa. It is also important that contact details are kept up to date in order for the school to follow up on any attendance issues that may arise.

## Section 9

### Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

All parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their children receive a suitable education either by regular attendance at school or through other appropriate arrangements. Where parent/carers are not fulfilling their responsibility, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to uphold the rights of children and young people to education. Where necessary, this may include taking legal action. In order to fulfil our duty to improve children and young people's regular attendance at school, Wakefield's Education Welfare Services will continue to issue Penalty Notices 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. However, if a penalty notice goes unpaid the Local Authority will seek to invoke a parental prosecution.

Headteachers will only authorise holidays during term-time in exceptional circumstances. School's Headteacher decide if they wish to fine unauthorised absence from school by issuing a Penalty Notice notification. The Headteacher then requests by a referral to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice on his or her behalf.

There is no right to appeal against a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid the Local Authority can proceed to prosecution. The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Penalty Notice. Only the Local Authority can prosecute, and investigate in line with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).

The offences are;

1. Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996 – if the child is absent without authorisation then the parent is guilty of an offence. This is a liable offence in regard to lack of regular attendance. Sanction can include a fine up to £1,000.
2. Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 – an aggravated offence. If the child is absent without authorisation and the parent knew about the child's absence and failed to act then the parent is guilty of an offence. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £2,500 and a prison sentence of up to 3 months.

Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
2. The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures will be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Education Plan; these documents are usually developed and agreed at an Education Legal Planning Meetings which identifies how and what each party will do to support the young person's attendance.
- Penalty Notices (see section 10.)
- Education Supervision Orders; the Local Authority can apply for an Education Supervision Order via the Court, who will direct a young person to attend school.

- Prosecution (see section 10.)

Where a child has unauthorised absence the school must follow Wakefield Council's Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The Code of conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority.

Education Legal Planning Meetings are chaired by either a Senior Education Welfare Officer or an Education Welfare Officer, in attendance is a Legal Officer from Wakefield Council, a school representative, parents, potentially the young person and other relevant parties e.g. a Family Worker from the Children First Hub.

## **10. Penalty Notices for non-attendance – Wakefield Council's Code of conduct**

Wakefield Council's Code of conduct states that:

School will always endeavour to work with parents/guardians to improve attendance and punctuality but as a last resort parents/guardians should be aware that the school can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Parents and carers will be warned by school of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, or through the leave of absence request form.

The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Wakefield Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to one or more parents/carers for each child. NB: This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence, i.e. one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

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.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120. If the fine remains unpaid Wakefield Council will consider whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice if not deemed to be in the public interest.

If the schools seeks the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice on their behalf the local authority will not withdraw the Penalty Notice without the schools request. This means that if you believe to have been issued a fine wrongfully you must speak to the school about withdrawal. Education Welfare Services will not withdraw a Penalty Notice without schools permission unless it has been deemed that it is in breach of Wakefield Councils "Penalty Notice Code of Conduct".

Penalties are to be paid to Wakefield Council to which the payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves.

However, Education Welfare Services may seek to invoke a parental prosecution instead, if it is deemed that a Penalty Notice will not prevent further unnecessary absences from school or that the reason that the pupil has irregular absences is due to complex issues.

If this is your first offence in regards to school attendance it will be under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (Section 1)

- Penalty – Fine not exceeding Level 3 on the Standard Scale (£1,000)
- If you have previously been prosecuted under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (Section 1) you will likely be taken to court under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 (Section 1A)
- Penalty – Fine not exceeding Level 4 on the Standard Scale (£2,500) OR Imprisonment for a term not exceeding Three Months OR both.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Wakefield Council's website.

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### **11. Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling**

Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Performance licences are applied for from Education Welfare Service by the appropriate agency/company.

### **12. Absence through competing at Sporting events**

Parents of young people who are engaged in recognised sporting activities can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs.

Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

### **13. Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Fairground and Circus Families**

Traveller pupils include Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, fairground and circus families, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

Absence of a child from a Traveller community family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. Ideally this would be agreed with the school prior to the departure to travel for work purposes.

To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is encouraged. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

For further advice and guidance on attendance see Wakefield Council Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Attendance Guidance document



Wakefield Traveller  
Guidance September

## 14. Specialist Support

There are situations where support may be required from specialist services and extra consideration must be given to ensuring the best outcome for a child or young person. For pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) follow the SEND Graduated Approach.

For pupils who may potentially be absent for a long period of time due to health needs, schools must follow the relevant government guidance: A flowchart for our local response to extended absences has been developed to assist this, and is the third flowchart below. This is for use by schools and professionals only.



Supporting pupils  
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Final Extended  
Absence Flowchart Se

The local authority will perform its statutory duty and progress to enforcement through the Magistrates' Court for cases where all other avenues are exhausted, and it is the best interest for the child's educational outcomes.

## 15. 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.



Wakefield EPS  
Maximising School At



Wakefield EBSA  
Appendix & Resource



The DfE also published guidance recently regarding mental health issues affecting school attendance:

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

## 16. Record Retention

School registers are legal documents. To ensure compliance with attendance regulations schools/education establishments should keep attendance records for at least three years.

Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies (if schools are not SIMS centrally hosted and do not have secure electronic server back-up they must print hard copies of the official registers and bind into annual volumes).

## 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

Wakefield Council Model Guidance - Attendance Policy 2023

<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		

<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to halfterm/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Request for holiday in term time form

**Request for Holiday during school term time**

Child's Name:	Child's Class Teacher:
Parent's Name: Address:	Parent's Name: Address:
Destination:  Absence request: (Please complete <b><i>in specific detail</i></b> your reason for requesting time off during the school term)	
Continue overleaf if necessary	
Date of first day of absence:	Date of return to school:
Before a school can use its limited discretionary power to authorise leave in <b><u>exceptional circumstances</u></b> , we must take into account:	
1. The effect the absence will have on his/her education and ability to achieve; 2. Your child's previous attendance record, previous holidays taken during term time;	
If a period of leave is granted and your child is not be able to return on the date agreed, it is important that you contact us and tell us why. A decision will then be made whether to authorise any further days absence. If your child does not return to School on the dates above, without good reason, any subsequent absence will be unauthorised absences.	
Holiday request forms will be shared electronically with both parents who have parental responsibility.	
Parent Signature:	
Office use % attendance to date % authorised attendance % unauthorised attendance	
Decision with regards to absence request:	

Wakefield Council Model Guidance - Attendance Policy 2023

Authorised:	Unauthorised:
Signed: Headteacher/Attendance Officer	Date:

## Appendices

### 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
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
B	Off-site educational activity (not dual registered)	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
C	Other authorised circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
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
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
L	Late arrival	Pupils arrives late before register has closed
M	Medical/Dental appointment	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
N	No reason of absence yet 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 the reason for pupil's absence.
P	Sporting Activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
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	Traveller Absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
U	Late (after registration has closed)	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
X	Not compulsory	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
W	Work Experience	Year 10 pupil experiencing working environment.
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
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
Z	Pupil not on roll	
-	All pupils should attend	

## Document links and acknowledgements

The policy was drawn up using a range of national documents and legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Children's Act 1989 – section 36

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/section/36>

The Education Act 1996

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>

Education Act 1996 – section 7

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/7>

Education Act 1996 - 342

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/342>

Education Act 1996 - 437(3)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/437>

Education Act 1996- 444, 444(i) & 444(1A)

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/444>

Education Act 1996-576

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/574>

The Education Act 2011

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/21/contents/enacted>

Safeguarding Duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/section/175>

Education and Inspections Act 2006

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>

Education and Inspections Act 2006, section 103

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/section/103>

Education - The Registration (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 – Regulations 8

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2006/1751/made>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2010/1725/contents/made>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2011/1625/contents/made>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/756/contents/made>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/792/contents/made>

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/contents/made>

Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1984/60/contents>

[Working together to improve school attendance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) May 2022

School Attendance parental responsibility measures – January 2015. Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/581539/School\\_attendance\\_parental\\_responsibility\\_measures\\_statutory\\_guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/581539/School_attendance_parental_responsibility_measures_statutory_guidance.pdf)

School census 2017 to 2018: guide for schools and LAs

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-census-2017-to-2018-guide-for-schools-and-las>

[Designated Teacher for Looked after and Previously Looked After Children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

[Promoting the Education of Looked After and previously Looked After Children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

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