



STRATFORD RURAL SCHOOLS FEDERATION

LOXLEY C OF E COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

SNITTERFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

WILMCOTE C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Small schools, big ambitions...

FEDERATION POLICY FOR PUPIL ATTENDANCE

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1. Introduction and Aims

KEY MESSAGE:

Regular attendance at school means that children are more likely to achieve well and make good progress. Children cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

Our schools have high expectations for excellent attendance from all our pupils and are committed to our ethos which values attendance. We aim to provide a safe and supportive environment at school and we believe that working in a positive partnership with parents is key to achieving this aim.

Our aims:

- Promoting and celebrating excellent attendance and its benefits
- Ensuring that our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by everyone
- Reducing all absence, including persistent and severe absence through early intervention and supporting families
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

**The school's Senior Attendance Champion is the Headteacher.
Contact can be made through the Office Manager at the school.**

2. Legislation and Guidance

Legal Framework

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude; to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

Parents/carers and guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.

Section 576 Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not;
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to regularly attend the school which he/she is registered at, then the parent/guardian is guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Schools must take the attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- present;
- absent;
- attending an approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will record absences in line with the DfE Attendance coding guidance.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

KEY MESSAGE:

Promoting excellent attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Parents and Families are responsible for:

- Promoting good attendance by helping children to arrive on time at school every day, ready to learn, and with the right equipment
- Ensuring that children attend school every day unless they are too ill
- Talking to the school if there are barriers to good attendance and working with the school to make improvements
- Providing accurate and up to date contact details
- Proactively informing the school if their child is not attending
- Requesting leave of absence ONLY in exceptional circumstances and in advance.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Registering pupils accurately at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- Encouraging and incentivising good attendance within their class

- Reporting any issues which may affect a pupil's attendance to the Headteacher
- Speaking informally with parents if attendance is affecting pupil performance.

The Office Manager is responsible for:

- Ensuring that the school's data management system is kept up to date and accurate
- Contacting families on the first day where no reason for absence has been given
- Recording reasons given for pupil absence and punctuality
- Contributing to attendance monitoring activities as requested by senior leaders
- Providing annual registration certificates for parents.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Ensuring that recording and reporting procedures are followed
- Ensuring that school attendance statistics are reported regularly to the Governing Body and the Department for Education
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Working with families in which there is an attendance concern to receive the support they need to improve attendance, and monitor the impact of any intervention
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Considering data on pupil attendance. The data may be analysed by groups (e.g. gender, year group, ethnicity) as appropriate
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Appointing a named Attendance Governor whose role includes: to gain a detailed understanding of attendance issues affecting the schools in the federation, to offer support to staff when dealing with attendance issues, to keep the governing body informed of attendance issues and to ensure that the Governing Body carries out its statutory duties related to attendance
- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals
- Ensuring that attendance targets and persistent absence targets are reviewed and set annually
- Evaluating attendance data and decide if any further action is required
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education process in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

Our named Governor with responsibility for Attendance is Jenny Brown. She can be contacted through the school's Office Manager.

4. Daily Routines

KEY MESSAGE:

Being on time for school and being ready to learn is really important.

Our schools concentrate on the key skills such as literacy and numeracy at the beginning of the school day and children who arrive late can miss important learning. They might also miss out on important information about what

is happening during the school day, which might make them confused and upset. Late arrivals cause disruption for the rest of the class and embarrassment for the child.

The register at Snitterfield School is taken at 8.45am and school finishes at 3.15pm.

Lateness is arriving anytime after the time that the register is taken. In accordance with DfE guidance, pupils arriving late:

- Before the register has closed, the pupil will be marked as late
- After the register has closed (30 minutes after the time that the register is taken), the pupil will be marked as absent.

Registers will be marked by the school with the register coding that they believe is accurate. Please see Appendix 1 for codes used from the school year 24/25.

Recording Attendance and Absence

KEY MESSAGE:

***By law we have to record all pupil absences and the reasons for absence.
This includes whether any absences are authorised or unauthorised.***

We keep an electronic attendance register which is taken at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions by classteachers. The Office Manager follows up on all absences by checking for any messages or emails. If no message has been received a phone call is made to parents to ascertain the reason for the pupil's absence. This is in line with our safeguarding procedures.

Schools encourage and promote good attendance as well as celebrating improved attendance. This could be through various ways such as personal praise from staff, positive postcards, certificates in assembly and mentions in newsletters.

We also record whether the absence is authorised by the school, the nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity, or the circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

KEY MESSAGE:

Only the Headteacher can authorise or unauthorise a child's absence from school on the school register.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for an acceptable reason, such as illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies, or other unavoidable causes.

Where possible we ask that medical appointments be made outside of school time, during school holidays or at a time to minimise absence from school. However, we understand some medical appointments cannot be changed, please liaise with the Headteacher if this is the case.

Unauthorised absences are when a pupil is absent without prior authorisation from the school and/or when no justifiable reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer or guardian (including when parents have failed to provide a reason despite attempts to establish a reason by the school).

This type of absence could lead to the school referring to the Local Authority and/or increasing the level of support offered to improve attendance.

Authorised absences

Illness

- If a child is too unwell to come to school we ask that parents contact the school by 9am. This could be by phone, using the app or by email to the school office.
- Our schools operate a policy of first day absence calling – this means that, if we have not heard from a parent regarding their child’s absence, we will contact parents by phone or email.
- Once a child is better it is important that they come back to school as soon as possible, even if it is at the end of the week.
- In certain circumstances we are able to administer medication during school hours, especially if this enables the child to come back to school after illness. Please discuss the protocol for this with the Headteacher or Office Manager. Our Medications Policy is available on the schools’ websites for reference, or parents can request a copy from the Office Managers. Parents will need to complete a form giving the school permission to administer medications.
- If a child has a recognised contagious illness the school office will be able to advise how long a child should be kept off school.
- If a child has a chronic, persistent or recurrent health issue, this should be discussed with the Headteacher to ensure that we are doing all we can to support the child with their learning. A Healthcare Plan should be completed with the Headteacher and updated if and when things change. This will also be taken into account when the school monitors attendance records.
- If a child’s health related absences mean that their attendance is causing concern, the school may ask the parent to provide evidence from medical professionals – this could be appointment cards, prescriptions or a doctor’s note.

Medical/Dental Appointments During the School Day

We expect parents to make *routine* appointments outside of school hours. If this is not possible then please inform the school as soon as possible. We always expect children to attend school before and after appointments.

Children should be collected from the office and signed out by a member of staff.

Performances, including paid work

Parents will need to obtain and provide a licence from the local authority if their child will be involved in performances during the school day. The licence will specify dates which will therefore be authorised by the school.

Religious Observance

Parents should request a Leave of Absence for religious observance in advance. Authorisation will only be given for a day that is set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs.

Persistent Absence and Severe Absence

Persistent Absence

A pupil is defined by the Government as a ‘**persistent absentee**’ when they miss 10% of their possible attendance (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year).

Severe Absence

A pupil is defined as a ‘severe absentee’ when they miss 50% of their possible attendance for any reason.

The schools have defined escalation procedures when absence is causing concern. See section 6 below.

5. Leave of Absence

KEY MESSAGE:

Any absences on school days which are not due to illness are a Leave of Absence and should be applied for at least 2 weeks in advance.

- Heads **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application. The latest DfE guidance states that, 'Generally, the DfE does not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.'
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- The Headteacher will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence should be made at least 2 weeks in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised".
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised".

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits. Parents should submit all Leave of Absence requests via the school office for the attention of the Headteacher. Requests for leave will not be granted if the pupil is involved in statutory assessments, if the pupil has any unauthorised absence in the previous 12 months or if the pupil's attendance is below 90%.

Absences not requested in advance will always be unauthorised.

6. Monitoring Absence and Support for Families

KEY MESSAGE:

We expect all our children to have good or outstanding attendance across the school year.

The federation considers excellent attendance to be 98% or above and good attendance to be 95% or above.

The Office Managers are able to produce attendance statistics from our data management systems and these are monitored half termly and termly by the Headteacher. Reports on attendance are regularly provided for and discussed by the Governing Body.

Pupil-level attendance data will be collected daily by the DfE. Data is 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. Schools can compare attendance data to the national average, and with data from other Warwickshire schools and this is shared with the governing body each term.

Where a child's attendance or punctuality starts to cause concern, we will instigate the following escalation procedures:

Universal Support

This is the first stage of support which is open to all families to support attendance at the earliest opportunity – this would typically be a verbal informal approach. This is applicable even when a pupil's attendance is excellent or good as detailed in the below graphic.

- Schools aim to support families by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance
- Where barriers are out of school's control, schools will discuss with families and signpost to support.

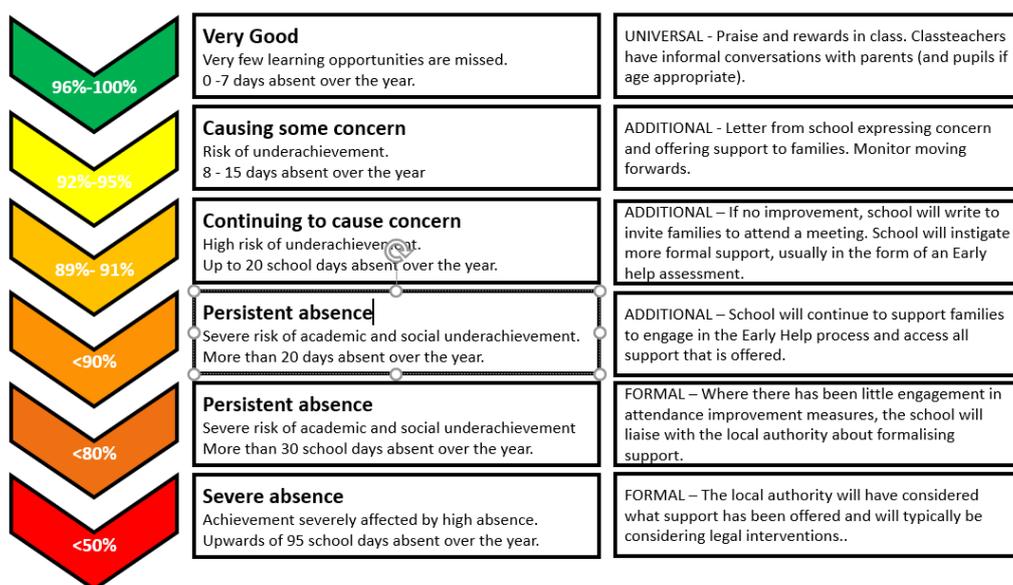
Additional Support

This is offered when monitoring shows that absence is starting to cause concern. Schools appreciate that some pupils find it hard to attend school and we aim to put in the right support at the right time. We recognise that there is a rise nationally in pupils who are experiencing emotional challenges in attending school.

The Headteacher will write to alert to parents to their concerns and invite them into school to discuss how the school might support. This may be in the form of an individual plan or it could take the form of an Early Help assessment. This provides a framework for support and may involve other agencies and partners to support.

Formalising support

Schools will liaise with The Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) when absence rates show little improvement or when there is little engagement from the family. WAS are able to use legal interventions/formalised support such as Attendance Contracts, Notices to Improve, Penalty Notices, Education Supervision Orders and Attendance Prosecution.



Legal Intervention

Schools will always allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect, the Headteacher may consider implementing an Attendance Contract with parents. Guidance and more information about this can be found in Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE 2024).

In the event of non-compliance with an Attendance Contract, the LA and school may decide to escalate to a legal remedy. This could be in the form of an Education Supervision Order (ESO) which can provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. This gives the LA a formal role in supporting the pupil and parents to improve their attendance.

7. SEND and Health Related Absences

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

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy (DfE 2017), the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any Education Health and Care Plans or Individual Healthcare Plans that have been implemented.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance.

Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

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

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

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

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

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments
- Instigating a pastoral support plan where appropriate
- Using an external specialist
- Enabling a pupil to have a part-time timetable
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes if desired
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request time out
- Temporary late starts or early finishes
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence
- Tailored support to meet their specific needs.

8. Child Missing Education

In response to the guidance in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) leaders have ensured that:

- Staff understand what to do when children do not attend regularly.
- Appropriate policies, procedures and responses for students who go missing from education (especially on repeat occasions) are in place.
- Staff know that travelling to conflict zones could be an indicator of FGM and forced marriage.

Procedures are in place to ensure that the local authority is always informed if pupils:

- leave the school to be home educated
- move away from the school location
- remain medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
- are permanently excluded

- Schools will ensure that pupils who are expected to attend the school but fail to take up the place will be referred to the local authority.

- When a student leaves, schools will record the name of the student's new school and their expected start date.

Deletions from the register

The school will only delete a pupil from their register in accordance with The School Attendance (Pupil registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the local Authority will be notified of this removal.

Our school will inform Children's Service when a child with safeguarding concerns is due to be removed from the school register.

9. Staff Training

Schools recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils regularly.

The governing body and Headteacher will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. To this end a Policy on a Page has been produced for staff awareness. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it

The governing board will provide dedicated and enhanced attendance training to the attendance officer and other staff with specific attendance functions in their role – this will include training regarding interpreting and analysing attendance data and supporting pupils to overcome barriers to attendance.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Appendix 1

DfE Register Codes – from August 2024

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
#	Not collected for data purposes	Planned whole school closure – e.g. school holidays, Teacher Days, Bank Holidays
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late but before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
C	Authorised absence	Leave granted for exceptional circumstances
C1	Authorised absence	Leave granted for participating in performances where a licence has been granted by the LA
C2	Authorised absence	Leave granted for pupils on a part-time timetable
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
E	Excluded	Suspended or excluded and no alternative provision made
G	Unauthorised holiday	
I	Illness	Pupil unable to attend due to illness and parent has informed school
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
K	Attending off site provision	Attending provision arranged by the LA

M	Medical/Dental	Pupil is attending a medical or dental appointment and parent has informed school
N	Unauthorised	No reason provided for absence at time of registration. Over write when reason is provided or code as O if no reason is given in a reasonable timeframe (see below)
O	Unauthorised	Reason not provided or not accepted by the school
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
Q	No access arrangements in place	No suitable access arrangements in place – does not count as a possible attendance
R	Authorised	Religious observance which has been applied for in advance
T	Authorised	Traveller absence – for ‘mobile’ pupils travelling for parental occupation purposes only – see Appendix 2 for more details
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
X	Not required to be in school	Used for pupils not yet of compulsory school age
Y1	Authorised	Absent due to their regular transport not being available
Y2	Authorised	Absent due to travel disruption
Y3	Authorised	Absent due to part of the school premises being closed

Y4	Authorised	Absent due to the school site being closed
Y5	Authorised	Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
Y6	Authorised	Absent due to public health guidance or law
Y7	Authorised	Absent due to any other unavoidable cause
Z	Code not collected for data purposes	Prospective pupil not yet on register