



# Wavell Community Primary School

Headteacher: Mrs Gillian Crouch

## Attendance Policy

<b>Attendance Policy</b>	Wavell Community Primary School
<b>Date of next review</b>	November 2026
<b>Date of Policy Creation</b>	November 2024
<b>Date of Policy Adoption by Governing Body</b>	November 2024
<b>Method of Communication (e.g. Website, etc.)</b>	Paper copies / website / email

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance provided by the Department for Education and North Yorkshire Council. The attendance policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- Admissions;
- Anti-bullying;
- Behaviour and rewards;
- Child protection;
- Children missing in education;
- Exclusion;
- Mental health and wellbeing;
- Non-collection of child;
- Safeguarding;
- Special educational needs;
- Teaching and learning.

The level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our children is included in our school's Home School Agreement, which parents sign following their child's admission to our school. It is very important, therefore, that you encourage your child to attend school regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### 1. Policy Statement

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. At Wavell Community Primary School we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our children and endeavour to provide an environment where all children feel valued and welcome. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.



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It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance. Every opportunity will be used to convey to children, and their families, the importance of regular and punctual attendance. This will include discussing attendance with children during assembly on Fridays and celebrating improved attendance in our newsletters.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Good attendance is important because:

- National statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and attendance below 95%;
- Regular attenders make better progress both socially and academically;
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with;
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying;
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school and higher education, employment or training;

Punctuality at school is essential for children to achieve their full educational potential. At our school children undertake a daily learning task as soon as they arrive at school and lessons begin at 08:45. Studies have shown that primary school children learn better when they study in the morning and therefore lessons such as phonics, maths and English fill our school mornings. Being late for school means a child misses essential input from their class teacher, making it difficult for them to understand what is expected of them. If a child in our Reception class is 5 minutes late every day for a week they miss the equivalent of a whole phonics session.

We understand that circumstances are different for every family and therefore we will endeavour to work together with families to promote and encourage good attendance and punctuality.

## 2. Scope

This policy document describes the school's approach to attendance and promoting regular attendance and punctuality for all pupils. This policy is intended as guidance for parents and carers of our school children, all staff including non-teaching staff and governors.

The foundation of good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. Our Home School Agreement contains details of how we will work with parents and families and our expectations of what parents need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our newsletters and on our website;
- Report to you how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment;
- Set targets for the whole school and individual classes for attendance and celebrate class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance.



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## 3. Lead Members of Staff

Whilst all staff have a responsibility to promote good attendance and punctuality in school, staff with a specific, relevant remit include:

Mrs Crouch - Headteacher  
Mrs Fitzell – School Business Manager

who can be contacted by calling 01748832298 or emailing [admin@wavellschools.co.uk](mailto:admin@wavellschools.co.uk)

Mrs Crouch will oversee, direct and coordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The SLT will ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed, ensuring that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers and the child the need and reasons for the child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

Responsibilities of classroom staff:

- Ensure that all children are registered accurately;
- Promote good attendance with children at all appropriate opportunities;
- Liaise with the SLT on matters of attendance and punctuality;
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence;
- Support children to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

Responsibilities of children:

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence;
- Arrive in school on time.

Responsibilities of parents / carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents should:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence;
- Discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance;
- Support their child in aiming for 100% attendance every year;
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone or text on the first and subsequent days of any absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable;
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments;



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- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- Ensure that children arrive at school on time, every day

## 4. Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day at 8:45am, and again for the afternoon session at 12.30 for EYFS and 13:00 for KS1 and KS2.

### What to do if my child is absent?

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required.

If your child is absent you must contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence. You can contact us by:

1. Phoning 01748 832298. If your call is before 8.00am you can leave a message on the answer phone. After 8.00am Mrs Fitzell or Mrs Waring will be available to take a message.
2. Send a message through the School Gateway App, this can be done at any time. You can access the School Gateway App through your phone's App Store or directly from the School Gateway website: [www.schoolgateway.com](http://www.schoolgateway.com).

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance.
- if absences persist we will invite you in to discuss the situation with our Headteacher, Mrs Crouch.
- If, after these steps have been followed, absences persist we must refer the matter to North Yorkshire Council.

Please ensure we always have up-to-date contact numbers. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

### Third Day Absence

If, after three days of absence, your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers we will make all reasonable effort to establish contact including making enquiries to known friends, wider family and visiting the family home.

### Ten Days Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents / carers, then school will notify the Children Missing Education (CME) Coordinator at North Yorkshire Council. Working with the school and other agencies, the CME Coordinator will make reasonable enquiries as to the whereabouts of the child. If, at any time during this process, significant concerns are raised about the child, the police and NYCC Children and Families will be notified.



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## Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks / sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as *persistent absentees*. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. We monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If your child has been absent and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and may consider implementing an Attendance Plan.

If your child is reluctant to come to school please contact their class teacher or Mrs Crouch to discuss your concerns.

## Lateness

It is important to arrive at school on time. The start of the school day is used to give out instructions, organise work and, when the first learning task of the day happens. If your child is late they miss work time with their class teacher which is noticeable in their attainment levels. It can be embarrassing for your child to have to enter the classroom late and it causes disruption to the class. This may discourage your child from wanting to attend school.

- The school day begins at 8.45am and **all children are expected to be in school at this time**. The school gates and classroom doors are open from 8.35am. The school day finishes at 3.15pm. Please ensure you collect your child promptly at the end of the day **or** that they are aware what their after-school arrangements are.
- Registers are closed at 9.00am. Arrival between 8.45am and 9.00am will be marked in the register as late and coded **L**. Arrival after the close of registration at 9.00am, will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded **U** in line with North Yorkshire Council and Department for Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a child is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded **M**. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentist appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- We record the amount of time your child is late from 8.45am. This information is required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action (see Section 6 of this policy for further detail).

Parents, guardians or carers of children who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good timekeeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents, guardians and carers will be invited to attend the school to discuss the problem and support offered, including a referral to North Yorkshire's Early Help or Healthy Child teams. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10-week period, the school are statutorily required by the Government to issue parents with a Penalty Notice (see Section 6 of this policy for further detail).

## Section 4



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## Request for leave of absence (Holidays)

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2016: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining *exceptional* are rare, significant or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. The 'Working together to improve school attendance' statutory guidance from the Government states 'the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday to be an exceptional circumstance' therefore, in the majority of cases, holiday will not be authorised. Parents / carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from the school office) in advance and before making travel arrangements.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and parents/carers will be issued with a fixed penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code (see Section 6 for detail).

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

## Section 5

### Understanding types of absence

Children are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- **Unauthorised absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for the absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
  - o Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings;
  - o Truancy;
  - o Absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

## Section 6

If a child is persistently absent or late to school we will work with the child and their family to try to identify and understand any barriers to attending school and support where we can. If support from the school is not useful or effective, we may refer the child and their family to external agencies such as Early Help for additional support.



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Support from the school will initially be offered by class teachers who will contact families to discuss barriers and offer support **and** will speak to the child to find out what they believe the barriers are.

The class teacher will report any support measures offered to Mrs Fitzell and the Headteacher. Absence and lateness will continue to be monitored to ensure effectiveness of the support offered. If support from the school is not effective in improving attendance a referral to external agencies will be considered.

In school we monitor absence and lateness and will celebrate improved attendance on a whole school, class and individual basis.

## **My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, please do not give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

## **What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child that you are interested in, and value, their education. You could ask them:

'what made you smile today?'

'who did you sit with for lunch?'

'what was the best thing that happened today?'

For many parents, school may be the first experience of being separated from their child. This can seem daunting at first for both of you, but consistency and a caring, supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

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

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

## **Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness**

North Yorkshire schools and North Yorkshire Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:



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1. The child or family do not require support from any agency to improve the attendance;
2. The child has 10 or more sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions. These do not need to be consecutive
3. The child is persistently late (coded *U*) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed.
4. The child is persistently late before the close of the register (coded *L*) but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised absence any further lateness (code *O*), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met.
5. The child is absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance.
6. The child is absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance.

Where a child has unauthorised absence, the school must enforce North Yorkshire Council's *School Attendance Support Pathway* and follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The *School Attendance Support Pathway* is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all school and their families within the authority. A copy is available from: [School Attendance | CYPSinfo \(northyorks.gov.uk\)](http://SchoolAttendance|CYPSinfo(northyorks.gov.uk)). The North Yorkshire Council's *School Attendance Pathway* outlines the following actions:

**Stage 1 – Contact** with the child and their family as described above.

**Stage 2 – Initial Warning Letter** issued by the school with Flowchart and Information for Parents enclosed.

**Stage 3 – Attendance Panel Meeting** held by the school with Support Plan / Parenting Contract, attendance targets and recommendations agreed as an outcome.

**Stage 4 – PACE Formal Caution Interview / LA Panel meeting** arranged by the Local Authority's Attendance and Enforcement officer following consultation with relevant parties. The parent and a senior member of school staff will be present and the interview and subsequent Panel Meeting will be chaired by the Attendance and Enforcement Officer for the area.

The NYCC Code of Conduct states that schools or North Yorkshire Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency or support to improve the attendance, the school and North Yorkshire Council will consider the following legal disposals:

- NFA / Review Meeting to be arranged;
- 15-day Penalty Notice Warning Letter (*a Penalty Notice will be issued if any further unauthorised absence occurs within the time scale of 15 school days*)
- Education Supervision Order
- Prosecution under the Education Act Section 444 (1) or (1A)

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





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unauthorised absence, the school or North Yorkshire Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to **one or more parents/carers** for each child. This could mean **four** Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday, i.e. one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

Each Penalty Notice carries a charge of £80 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted, if the charge is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £160 if paid within 28 days. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child is charged at £160 with no scope for reduction. If a child meets the absence threshold three times in three years, alternative action, including prosecution, will be considered. This could result in fines of up to £2,500.

If the fine remains unpaid North Yorkshire Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to North Yorkshire Council and revenue resulting from the payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

**Please note:** if you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any further unauthorised leave this will result in a further legal action for you.

## Section 7

### 7.1 Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to secondary school) please will you give the office comprehensive, written information about your plans, including date of move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and their intended start date.

If you are a military family and have been posted out of the area, please give us as much warning as possible so we can liaise with the new school and work with your child to ensure their transition is as smooth as possible.

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information they will be considered a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to carry out investigations to try and locate the child, which include liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

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

The regulations related to children participating in public performances are separate to those around authorising leave of absence. Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance which can be authorised by the Headteacher. Parents/carers 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 further leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss



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with you 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.

## 7.3 Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of able athletes 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 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. 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.

## 7.4 Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposed only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. 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.

## Section 8

### Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies.

### Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years as a minimum. The next review date is: **November 2025**



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## Appendix 1: Strategy for using data to target attendance.

Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. As a school we highlight and foster this team approach to attendance through the Home School Agreement which details the actions the school, the family and the child should take to promote good attendance and behaviour in order to develop and maintain a positive school environment enabling children to learn to the best of their ability.

All schools must keep an attendance register in accordance with regulation 6 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended. Schools must take the attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Attending an approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend school due to exceptional circumstances.

Schools must record whether the absence of a child is authorised or not. Schools must record the nature of the circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Codes used in the school register are national codes which enable schools to monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way and are used to collect statistics through the School Census system. The data helps schools, local authorities and the government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and reason for, absence and the delivery of education.

Registers in our school are closed at 9.00am. Arrival between 8.45 am and 9.00am will be marked in the register as late and coded **L**. Arrival after the close of registration at 9.00am, will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded **U** in line with North Yorkshire Council and Department for Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site but is legally recorded as an absence.

If a child is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded **M**.

If a child is on a family holiday and leave of absence was not granted by the Headteacher they will be coded **G**.

If a child is absent from school and a reason for their absence has not been provided they will be coded **N**.

If a child is absent from school and no reason is given or the school is not satisfied with the reason they will be coded **O**.

If children are on an off-site educational activity they will be coded **B**.

If children are participating in a supervised, off site, sporting activity they will be coded **P**.

If children are attending an organised visit or trip they will be coded **V**.



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At our school we record the amount of time your child is late from 8.45am. This information is required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

## Using Data: Attendance

Attendance data is reviewed weekly by the Headteacher and the School Business Manager and improvements are celebrated in our newsletters. Each week the class with the most improved attendance is celebrated in our Celebration Assembly. At the end of each term the class with the most improved attendance receives a whole class treat.

Attendance data is also reviewed and monitored weekly and a report is produced detailing children who have attendance below 96%. This report will also consider whether any patterns in absence are evident. If a child has attendance below 96% we will:

- Speak to the child (in an age appropriate manner) to discuss barriers to attending school and offer support in school;
- Discuss any barriers with the class teacher and SLT to consider what further support can be offered in school;
- Contact the family to discuss barriers to attending school and offer support;
- Consider a family referral to external agencies such as Early Help for additional support.

## Using Data: Punctuality

Punctuality at school is essential for children to achieve their full educational potential. At our school children undertake a daily learning task as soon as they arrive at school and lessons begin at 8.45am. Studies have shown that primary school children learn better when they study in the morning and therefore lessons such as phonics, maths and English fill our school mornings. Being late for school means a child misses essential input from their class teacher, making it difficult for them to understand what is expected of them. If a child in our Reception class is 5 minutes late every day for a week they miss the equivalent of a whole phonics session.

Class teachers take the register daily in the morning between 8.45am and 9.00am. If a child arrives at school after 8.45am the gates and class doors will be closed and they will need to come into school through the main entrance. When a child comes in through the main entrance, Mrs Fitzell or Mrs Waring will ask why they are late. This information, along with the time of arrival will be noted and added to the register. This data is collated and monitored weekly by Mrs Fitzell and Mrs Crouch. If a child is persistently late both they and their family will be contacted and the barriers to attending school on time will be discussed. Mrs Crouch will offer support in school and, if that is not effective in improving the child's punctuality, will consider referring to external agencies in order to support the family.

All absence data will be reported to, and discussed with, the school's Governing Body.

Annually the SLT will consider our school's absence and punctuality data against the data from our local school network, data from the whole of North Yorkshire and from the rest of England. This benchmarking will enable us to consider whether further plans and support to improve attendance may be required.



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