



# Whitecross Nursery School

## Attendance Policy

Reviewed by	Claire FitzPatrick
Date of last review	November 2023
Date of next review	November 2024
Ratified by the Governing Body	November 2023

This policy will be reviewed sooner if there is a change to legislation or guidance which may affect it. Any changes will be communicated to all stakeholders.

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### Statement of intent

Whitecross Nursery School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring our attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff and parents.

#### 1. Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'
- The Statutory Framework for the early years foundation stage, September 2023

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

## **2. Roles and responsibilities**

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to KCSIE when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to nursery education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.

- Promoting good attendance with their children.

### **3. Definitions**

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

#### **Absence:**

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered nursery school for any reason

#### **Authorised absence:**

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency
- Any other absence which has a reason

#### **Unauthorised absence:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed

#### **Persistent absence (PA):**

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

#### **Children Missing Education**

- All children are entitled to education, regardless of their circumstances. Unfortunately children missing education (CME) risk underachieving, being victims of abuse, and not being in education, employment or training (NEET) in later life.
- At Whitecross Nursery School we monitor absences and record information regarding children's attendance, even though nursery education is non-statutory education.
- If a child fails to attend our nursery and after the absence procedures have been followed, (including contacting the school which an older sibling may attend) the child's whereabouts is still not known, a referral will be made to Health and Social Care.
- All Nursery School leavers have documents which are transferred to their new school. This ensures that each child has been registered at a school.

### **4. Attendance expectations**

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full session.

Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by 9:20am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark
- The afternoon register will be marked by 1:15pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time

### **5. Absence procedures**

Parents will be required to contact the school office before 9:15am on the first day of their child's absence by either email or telephone. Families will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by the close of the morning register to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

## **6. Attendance register**

The school uses Integris to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

## **7. Authorising parental absence requests**

### **Illness and healthcare appointments**

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

### **Religious observance**

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance in advance.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

### **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence**

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child in advance of travelling.

## **8. SEND and/or health-related absences**

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

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans that have been implemented.

## **9. Absent pupils**

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. They must be collected by a known adult or an adult who has the relevant password if the known family are unable to collect.

Please see the 'Lost Child Policy' for a list of procedures if a child goes missing from school during the day.

## **10. Working with parents to improve attendance**

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that where possible there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The Headteacher will remind parent of absence procedure and the importance of good attendance regularly on nursery school newsletters as well as in person.

If the pupil's absence drops below 85% then the Headteacher will discuss the situation with parents or carers.

## **11. Training of staff**

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will be made aware of and support identifying potentially at-risk pupils.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. 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

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.

## **12. Monitoring and Review**

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96%.

The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.

Where necessary specific targets may be set for children e.g. children in receipt of pupil premium

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.