Shelf Junior and Infant School

Everyone can shine

Attendance Policy

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SHELF JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY

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SHELF JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Aims

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

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent 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.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Working Together to improve school attendance 2022

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. 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

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:55 on each school day.

The register for the first session will open at 08:45 and will be kept open until 08:55. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 12:30 in KS1 and EYFS and at 13:00 in KS2. Both will be kept open for 5 minutes.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 09:30 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents/carers should ring the school office on 01274 676782 and leave a message on the attendance line number or by speaking to a member of the Administration Team in person. If school is not notified, then a member of staff will try to contact the family.

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.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Parents may notify school in advance of a medical or dental appointment and should ring the school office on 01274 676782 and leave a message on the attendance line number or by speaking to a member of the Administration Team in person.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will 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.

3.6 Reporting to parents

We report to parents on their child's attendance record annually in the written end-of-year report. Parents of children who are 'persistently absent' are also given half termly updates on their child's attendance. Class teachers will also make parents aware of any child who is at risk of becoming 'persistently absent'.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers 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.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Other exceptional circumstances may be considered eg taking a musical examination, the marriage of a parent or sibling, approved sporting activities.
- Term-time holidays will not be approved and may be referred to the local Authority.
- School monitors attendance and where attendance is identified as poor, parents will be contacted, meetings sought and – if there is no improvement - referral to the Local Authority is considered.

4.2 Legal sanctions

School refers to the Local Authority which can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to refer to Local Authority rests with the headteacher. The Local Authority may

issue a penalty notice ultimately, 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 rolling academic year
- 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

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

See Appendix 2 for more details on penalty notice fines.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

School encourages regular attendance and keeps parents, carers and children advised of progress through parent's evening and end of year reports.

School works with parents and carers to support regular attendance eg communicating early about issues, acknowledging positive improvements, indicating a named contact in school with whom to discuss any problems.

6. Attendance monitoring

The Administrative assistant monitors pupil absence on a daily basis, advising the Headteacher/Deputy headteacher of any concerns. The Deputy Headteacher monitors attendance at least half-termly.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If no message regarding absence is received, school will contact the family and, if unable to do so, may need to contact the police for a welfare check.

If a pupil's absence (of which school has initially been made aware) goes above 5 days, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this unless school has been made aware of a specific relevant issue.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continues 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 information with governors.

School monitors absence, tracking the attendance of individual pupil and any specific groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern; school monitors and evaluates those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

The Deputy Headteacher works with the Local Authority Attendance Officer to monitor the attendance of children who are persistently absent to discuss strategy and support for parents.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing body

The governing body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. This may be delegated to a member of the SLT.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The deputy headteacher and school administrator

The deputy headteacher and school administrator:

- Monitor attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Report concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Work with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advise the headteacher when to refer to the LA to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every two years. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Last review: November 2026
Next review due: November 2028

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
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
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
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
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	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

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

Appendix 2: Penalty Notice Information

Calderdale Council

PENALTY NOTICE FINES FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ARE CHANGING

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following changes will come into force for Penalty Notice fines issued after 19th August 2024.

Per parent, per child

Penalty Notices fines will now be issued to each parent, for each child that was absent.

For example, 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

Penalty Notices can be issued to any adult who has a duty of care and can therefore include stepparents or partners irrespective of whether they have parental responsibility or appear on the birth certificate.

For an unauthorised leave of absence (holiday) they will usually be issued to the adults involved in the absence.

For a pattern of poor attendance, they will usually be issued to both parents even if they do not reside together.

5 consecutive days of term time-time leave.

Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term-time leave of 5 or more consecutive days. Inset training days are school days and can be included in the 5 or more consecutive days where there was intent to be absent for term time leave. No warning will be issued prior to a penalty notice being issued in this respect.

10 sessions of unauthorised leave in a 10-week period.

Penalty notice fines will be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. A Notice to Improve warning will be issued prior to any Penalty Notice issued in this respect and will be considered when there have been 8 sessions of unauthorised in a preceding 8-week period. This warning will give parents/carers 6 weeks to improve their child's school attendance.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty notice is issued for leave in term time or irregular unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.

Reduced to **£80** if paid within 21 days of issue.

Second Offence

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular unauthorised absence the amount will be:

£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. There is no reduction for early payment.

Third Offence and any further offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed for term time leave or regular unauthorised absences by the same parent and the same child a Penalty Notice **will not** be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Under these circumstances each parent can receive a fine of up to **£1000** per child.

Cases found guilty in the Magistrates' Court can on a parent's future DBS certificate due 'a failure to safeguard a child's right to education'.