

Whole School Attendance Policy



Policy Consultation and Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. All parents are informed about the policy when their children join the school and on a regular basis through the newsletter and letters home where relevant.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body on at least an annual basis. This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body on 10th December 2025. It is due for review on 10th December 2026.

Signature *D. Ellison*

Headteacher

Date: 10-12-25

Signature *K. Mullis*

Chair of Governors

Date: 10-12-25

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1. Introduction and Aim

The importance of the 'Whitnash Family' is at the heart of everything we do because Whitnash Primary cares deeply for our pupils, staff and community. We want our children to thrive. We have high aspirations for all our pupils, and we nurture their achievement and progress through relentless positivity. We care about our children's future and because of this, we are committed to ensuring that all children achieve highly, regardless of their starting point, through our enriched and inclusive curriculum. We instil the values of caring, empathy and kindness and are a consistent model of 'unconditional positive regard' for all. We teach our children the importance of relationships and these essential life skills and promote everybody's right to learn, to be respected and listened to, and to feel safe and be safe. These values and ambitions are embedded in our culture and ethos at Whitnash Primary School. We are proud of our school, what we have achieved, and our ambition for the future.

At Whitnash Primary School we value the attendance of all pupils. There is a strong relationship between good school attendance and achieving positive outcomes for children. It is recognised that attending school regularly can be a protective factor for children and young people. It is important that as a school we offer a safe environment, positive relationships, high quality teaching and learning opportunities to develop social and emotional skills.

Ensuring that children attend school every day will help achieve this ambition by maximising their education and social achievements as well as developing self-discipline, organisation and preparedness for the work environment. Improving attendance and reducing absence, especially persistent absence is a priority for our school and Warwickshire County Council.

[Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.

Our attendance policy aims to give clear guidance to staff, parents, pupils, and governors to:

- Support pupil's achievement by establishing the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.
- Provide a clear framework for monitoring and responding to pupil absences.
- Make parents / carers aware of their legal responsibilities and ensure their children have access to the education to which they are entitled.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning.

2. Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

A "Parent" is defined 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.

3. Attendance Objectives

Our primary aim is for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with families.

Our school attendance policy:

- Is easy to understand by pupils, parents and staff.
- Is clear and consistently applied, transparent and fair.
- Considers the individual needs of pupils and their families.
- Is easy to find so that the whole school community is aware of our attendance expectations.
- Includes the contact details of key staff to make it easy for parents to get in touch.
- Is reviewed by staff regularly and involves pupils and parents because school attendance matters to everyone.
- Is followed in accordance with the procedures in the flowchart below.

All partners should work together to:

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early support or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include

formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

At Whitnash Primary School, we believe that school attendance matters to everyone. School attendance is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community.

Role	Name	Contact details
Headteacher	Donna Ellison	Ellison.d@welearn365.com 01926 426773
Deputy Headteacher	David Hitchins	Hitchins.d@welearn365.com 01926426773
Senior Attendance Lead	Emma Lindon	Lindon.e@welearn365.com 01926 426773
Local Authority Attendance Officer	Lois Ingle	01926 413777
Named Governor for Attendance	Kevin Mullis	Mullis.k@welearn365.com

The Local Governing Board of Whitnash Primary School recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Supporting the school to prioritise attendance and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensuring school staff receive training on school attendance.
- Use data to understand patterns of attendance, identifying areas of progress and where greater focus is needed.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
- Designating a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the education achievement of looked after and previously looked after pupils.
 - Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.

Whitnash Primary School will:

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils, and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.

- Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support access to any required services where out of school barriers are identified and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or threshold for formal early support is not met.
- Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners and if the case meets threshold for formal early support/family support, including conducting an early support assessment and acting as lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.
- Put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers where absence becomes persistent.
- Hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future where there is a lack of engagement.
- Work with the local authority on legal intervention where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate.
- Intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the appropriate local authority teams and services.
- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.
- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils with SEND and/or medical conditions and their parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals for children with SEND and medical conditions.
- Regularly monitor data for children with SEND and medical conditions, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.
- Know who the pupils who have, or who have had a social worker are.
- Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues these pupils are experience, or have experience, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration.
- Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help pupils who have a social worker, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes.
- Informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences.
- Work in partnership with local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked after children that support good attendance.

- Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance including discussion on the use of Pupil Premium Plus for previously looked after pupils.

Whitnash Primary School requests that parents:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including attendance contract or voluntary early support to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Pupils will:

- Understand the school's expectations around attendance and know when and where they are required to attend, as communicated by school staff, parents and the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher, tutor, or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may affect their attendance.
- Attend all lessons prepared to learn, bringing the appropriate equipment and arriving on time.
- Provide a note from parents or carers explaining any absence, whether it has already occurred or is anticipated.
- Follow the school's procedure if they arrive late, helping the school maintain accurate attendance records and ensuring health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.
- Work with a trusted adult who will help them improve their attendance at school.
- Have regular opportunities to share their views and ensure their voice is heard within the school community.

5. Absence and Attendance Recording, Including Leave of Absence

When marking our registers, we will apply the national codes as outlined and regulated by the Department of Education guidance to accurately record and report attendance.

5.1 Leave of absence

The headteacher can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. The headteacher will restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstance set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances*

The headteacher can also allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities or to attend other schools or settings.

*The law states that a leave of absence may only be granted by a school if an application is made in advance and if the school considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. Permission may only be given by a person authorised by the school's proprietor to do so. Each application must be judged individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant background context behind each request.

In general, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation does not constitute an exceptional circumstance. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil may be absent.

The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Parents making an application for Leave of Absence are advised to provide sufficient information and notice to allow the Headteacher to consider all exceptional circumstances and notify the parents of their decision. The school may request further information or supporting documentation where appropriate.

If parents have not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is their responsibility to confirm whether the leave is authorised prior to the start of the absence.

Where applications for Leave of Absence are made in advance and refused, the child is expected to attend school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, the absence will be recorded as an **"unauthorised"**. If additional days are taken either before or after the requested period, they may also be considered as part of the leave of absence.

Applications for Leave of Absence that are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation, and any such absence will be recorded as 'unauthorised'.

Where possible 3 weeks advance notice is expected. A Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances form must be completed and returned to the office and supported by any relevant supporting documents.

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence may be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council. Penalty notices are issued in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices and in the first instance, as an alternative to prosecution proceedings.

When absence is granted by the head teacher, the parent will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in a possible children missing from education procedure being instigated.

5.2 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, the school must be informed beforehand stating the time or the appointment in order that the absence/duration can be authorised.

All children must be signed out before they leave school to attend the appointment and signed in when they return. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation, and medical evidence where applicable or requested.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

48 Hour Sickness Rule

From time to time children are sick (vomit) either at home or at school. Unfortunately it is not possible to distinguish between the causes, and therefore it is essential that the same rule of exclusion applies in all cases of vomiting or diarrhoea.

Diarrhoea and Vomiting exclusion

Diarrhoea and/or vomiting commonly affects children and staff and can be caused by a number of different germs, including viruses, parasites and bacteria. Infections can be easily spread from person to person (by unwashed hands), especially in children. In general, it is recommended that any staff member or child with diarrhoea and/or vomiting symptoms must stay away or be excluded from the school or early years setting until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours (the '48 hour rule') and feel well. Personal hygiene whilst ill must be very strict.

If your child is sick at school, we will ask you or your emergency contact to take your child home. They should not return for 48 hours to the school premises (this includes being in and around the swimming pool). We appreciate that this is inconvenient in many cases, and you may not believe your child is ill, but you will appreciate that we do this in all cases and it should reduce the risk of infection for all children in school. As an example, if your child is sick at lunchtime on a Tuesday, they should not return to school until after lunch on Thursday, provided there have not been any further episodes of vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

Further guidance on infection control may be found on the UK Health Security Agency and Office for Health Improvement and Disparities website.

5.3 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Whitnash Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

5.4 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation, and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the headteacher.

6. Our Procedures

6.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, require schools to take an attendance register at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session.

On each occasion the register is taken the appropriate national attendance and absence code must be entered for every pupil (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) whose name is listed on the admission register at the time.

6.2 Late Arrival at School

At Whitnash Primary School all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 8:55 am. The school gates open from 8:45 am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this. The school register will be taken at 9:00 am. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to sign their child in using the Entry Sign system and provide a reason for their absence. If their arrival is after 9:00 am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9:30 am. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register), unless an acceptable reason for arriving late has been provided. This is categorised as an '**unauthorised**' absence for the session. Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in appropriate interventions being instigated and may also result in a penalty notice being issued or prosecution.

The school register will be taken each afternoon at and will officially close at 1:30 pm. Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session unless an acceptable reason is provided.

6.3 Expected absence procedure for parents

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

- The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after the official close of register at 9:30 am and where no reason for absence is known.
- If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned, emails and text messages are also sent.
- If school cannot contact a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out.
- School will telephone home if a pupil leaves the school without permission.

In certain circumstances the school may also:

- Visit the home of the pupil.
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues.
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement.
- Discuss the pupil at the Targeted Support Meetings with the Local Authority to seek advice and guidance on additional support strategies.
- Invite parents to complete an Attendance Improvement Action Plan.
- Offer Early Support and/or other external agencies to offer support, guidance, and advice.
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures.
- Complete a Notification for Attendance Intervention to the Local Authority to put in place a monitoring period and consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed.
- Where an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken consider requesting the Local Authority give regard to the issuing of a penalty notice/prosecution.

6.4 Formalising support and Interventions

Use of data

The Attendance target for our school is 95-97%. This target is monitored weekly. For individual children who's attendance falls below 90%, the school track and monitor attendance daily through the use of a spreadsheet and the school SIMS system reporting.

Attendance data is also shared weekly with parents through the school newsletter and website. The weekly Achievement Assemblies with children and parents also provide weekly attendance data per class.

Through letters, meetings and other communication methods, the school share attendance data with individual parents to support parents with improving their children's attendance.

The school uses local and national attendance data to inform areas for development and improvement.

Celebration Systems

Attendance is celebrated weekly through the school website, newsletter and pupil assemblies. Termly Achievement Assemblies also recognise and praise children for 100% attendance and 100% attendance with no lateness through the use of certificates.

Through letters, the website, Whole-Class Council meetings, PSHE lessons and assemblies, children are taught the importance of school attendance. Children and families are also recognised through certificates and letters of praise home.

How will attendance concerns be addressed with parents?

Our school rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

When a pattern is spotted, we discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

We seek to facilitate support to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early support or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, the school work with partners and parents to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond, escalating this support and intervention as required and where necessary.

The Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) delivery model provides a structured, staged approach to managing school attendance concerns. It ensures that interventions are timely, proportionate, and evidence-based, supporting children and families while meeting statutory responsibilities.

Process Overview:

- i. School Initiated Attendance Process*
 - Schools issue attendance concern letters and initiate internal support.
 - If concerns persist, schools submit a formal Notification of Attendance Intervention to WAS.
- ii. WAS Triage and Decision*
 - Attendance Advisers assess the notification and determine the appropriate pathway.
 - Notifications may be returned to school for further action or accepted for monitoring.
- iii. 10-Week Monitoring Pathway*
 - WAS issues monitoring letters and tracks attendance at regular intervals.
 - Midway reviews identify whether further intervention is needed.
- iv. Attendance Contract Pathway*
 - If attendance does not improve, a formal contract is initiated with the family.
 - If the family does not engage, an Attendance Action Plans will be implemented with the school.
 - Attendance Contracts/Action Plans will be reviewed collaboratively.
- v. Enforcement Pathway*
 - Continued poor attendance, where there is clear evidence that support has been offered but not engaged with, may lead to legal escalation.
 - WAS issues formal notices and prepares for potential prosecution.
 - Before any prosecution, consideration of an Education Supervision Order (ESO) is required. Where appropriate, this is done in collaboration with Children's Social Care, as ESO applications proceed through the Family Court.
- vi. Legal Process*
 - Legal bundles and statements are prepared.
 - Cases are reviewed for public interest and statutory thresholds before proceeding.
- vii. Closure and Review*
 - Cases may close due to improved attendance, referral to other services, or legal withdrawal.
 - Attendance continues to be monitored where legal action has been initiated.

Please view the Warwickshire County Council code of conduct for penalty notices for non-school attendance and penalty notices [WCC PN code of conduct](#)

6.5 Deletions from register

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

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

7. Support

At Whitnash Primary School we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- The Attendance Lead will monitor all pupil's attendance and when attendance is in danger of becoming persistent (below 90% over an academic year) they will contact the parent/carer to invite them in to school to discuss attendance barriers.
- Schools and the local authority will work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage pupils.
- In all cases, the school and local authority will make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of their regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Both persistent and severe absence will be central to school, and Local Authority level strategies for improving attendance.
- The school is committed to supporting families with access wider support services, e.g., the 'the right support at the right time' offers of Early Support which is offered to parents through attendance monitoring meetings.
- The school's offer also includes the use of the EBSNA graduated approach and use of the ATTEND Framework where considered by the school as applicable.

To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. This may include a referral to Early Support or an attendance action plan.

8. Persistent and Severe Absence and the use of legal interventions

We take attendance seriously because every day in school matters. When a pupil's absence reaches 10% or more for any reason, this is an early warning sign that they may be at risk of becoming a persistent absentee (PA). Over a full academic year, 10% absence equates to around 40 sessions (20 days) of missed learning, which can have a significant impact on a child's progress and wellbeing. If attendance falls further, reaching 50% or below, this is considered severe absence (SA).

Our approach is always support first. The attendance of all pupils at our school are monitored closely to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in the section above. Where needed, we will also involve external agencies to provide targeted support.

If, despite this support, parents fail to engage and attendance or punctuality remains unsatisfactory the school may ask the Local Authority to consider pursuing legal proceedings either through a penalty notice or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

8.1 Penalty Notices

Penalty notices will be issued by the Local Authority on request of the Head teacher to parents or carers if your child(ren) are absent from school. Penalty notices will be issued in line with the National Framework for Penalty Notices. Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Warwickshire County Council's Code of Conduct [WCC PN code of conduct](#).

The national threshold set out in the statutory guidance states that a penalty notice must be considered for 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10-week period may span different terms or school years.

The school will prioritise a 'support first' approach offering support to families in cases where it is appropriate. Penalty notices can still be issued where support is not appropriate, such as leave of absence in term time or when support has not been engaged with.

If the Local Authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate in an individual case, the Authority shall retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. An example of this is where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below threshold, or for repeated absences for birthdays or other family events.

Penalty Notices will be issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices – 4 in total).

- First penalty notice: The amount of £160 to be paid within 28 days, this is reduced to £80 each child if paid within 21 days.
- Second penalty notice within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): The amount of £160 paid within 28 days. No reduced amount.

A national limit of 2 penalty notices that can be issued to a parent of the same child within a rolling 3-year period has been set within the National Framework, so at the 3rd (or subsequent) offence(s) a Penalty Notice will not be issued. The matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996 or alternative action may be considered including other legal interventions.

9. Children Missing Education

At Whitnash Primary School we recognise that regular attendance is a safeguarding priority. In line with *Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025)*, we have clear procedures to ensure that pupils who do not attend regularly or who go missing from education are identified and supported promptly.

Our staff are trained to understand what action to take when attendance concerns arise and to recognise indicators of wider safeguarding risks, such as travel to conflict zones which may signal risks of forced marriage or FGM.

The school works closely with the local authority to ensure compliance with statutory duties. We will notify the local authority whenever a pupil:

- Leaves the school to be home educated
- Moves away from the local area
- Remains medically unfit beyond compulsory school age
- Is in custody for four months or more and will not return
- Is permanently excluded

We also ensure that pupils expected to attend but who fail to take up their place are referred to the local authority without delay. When a pupil leaves our school, we record the name of their new school and the expected start date to maintain continuity of education and safeguarding oversight.

10. Part-time timetables

All children of compulsory school age have a legal right to receive a suitable full-time education and the school and local authority have a statutory duty to ensure that all children in the area receive such an education. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs and only where it is safe to do so and in agreement with all parties.

We will not use a part-time timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision where applicable.

We will never put a part-time timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family.

We will notify the Warwickshire Attendance, CME and EHE Service of all part-time timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed and use the appropriate attendance code to record this within our admission register.

11. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding including child protection.
- medical needs
- admissions
- anti-bullying
- exclusion
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- behaviour

12. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#)
- [Children missing education \(updated September 2025\)](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education 2025](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children \(December 2023\)](#)

Warwickshire County Council has created this model attendance policy to assist schools and academies in developing their own attendance policy. It has been written in accordance with the Department for Education's (DfE) Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance (2024). Schools and Academies should adapt this model to ensure it meets their individual circumstances and specific operational needs.

Disclaimer

This model policy is provided as a template and does not constitute legal advice. Warwickshire County Council accepts no liability for any loss of damage arising from this document.

It is the responsibility of each school or academy to ensure that their final attendance policy complies with current legislation, statutory guidance, and reflects their own procedures and context.