

NETHERTON JUNIOR AND INFANT SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

2025/26

Aims

1. We want children to make the best possible progress with their education and we believe that to do this they need to attend school regularly.
2. We also regard punctuality as of very important in order that there may be continuity of learning and to assist in the prompt and accurate process of registration and orders for catering.
3. We want to encourage good attendance. To this end staff try to foster good relationships with children, promoting a positive atmosphere for learning and helping children to grow in confidence and independence.
4. We aim for attendance of 97% or higher for all whole school figures.

Implementation: Registration (see appendices for detailed procedures)

- Electronic registration of pupils is carried out twice daily, on entering school in the morning and after the lunch break. The register is taken at between 8.50 am when pupil arrive to 9.00 am. Registration will end when the last name has been called.
- A record of children who arrive or leave school during a session will be kept in the main office. This will be used as an added check on numbers in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Recording and Monitoring

- Attendance for groups and individuals will be analysed by admin and the Head Teacher on a half termly basis.
- When a pupils attendance falls below 90% and there is not a reasonable reason then they will be added to the schools attendance tracking for monitoring.
- The EWO also tracks all children's attendance falling below 90% and discusses each child with the Headteacher on a monthly basis.

Parental Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of parents to inform school of the reason for a child's absence. We expect this to be done on the first day of absence. It may be done in person, by telephone or by email to admin@netherton.wakefield.sch.uk The person receiving the message should note briefly the details supplied on the pupil absence book kept in the office. Office staff will then update the pupil's attendance record on integris after registration has closed.
- Where no message has been received administration staff will make enquiries on the first morning to check reasons for absence.
- For absences of a sustained period of time then the class teacher may consider setting some form of catch up homework, where this is appropriate.
- New parents will be informed about attendance/absence procedures through a standard letter, a section on the school website and introductory talks. Periodic reminders about the aspects of attendance policy will be issued through the weekly newsletter.
- Parents are asked to report to the office before collecting and on returning children who attend appointments during the school day. A record of ins and outs during the day is kept for evacuation purposes.

Categorising Absence

- Absences will be categorised according to DFE codings. Where unauthorised absences occur these are brought to the Head Teacher's attention.
- All leave of absence requests should be made by completion of a leave of absence form available from the Office, addressed to the Head Teacher. DFE and LA guidance will be used as a basis for decisions of this nature.
- Holidays in term time are not authorised, (see separate policy)
- Where authorisation is not given subsequent absence will be reported as a matter of course to the Education Welfare Service. A note to this effect will be included on the letter to parents explaining why leave of absence is not granted.
- Where no reasons for absence are supplied enquiries will be made by administration staff on the Head Teacher's behalf. Where reasons are considered invalid, the absence will be counted as unauthorised.

Identifying Poor Attendance

- Attendance is monitored on a day to day basis by administration staff and class teachers. Any absence causing concern is brought to the attention of the Head Teacher or Education Welfare Officer to follow up. Where there is a safeguarding concern school/EWO may conduct a home visit.
- Pupils whose attendance falls below 90% in any half term and over a year will be monitored on a weekly period until secure improvement is apparent. Parents of these pupils may also receive invitations to come into school to discuss attendance e.g. at face to face meetings with the Education Welfare Service.
- Random checks on punctuality will be carried out and parents of regular latecomers will be notified about the late arrival of their children. We are concerned when a pupil is late on 5 or more occasions per half term.
- **Pupils who have attendance below 90%, irregular absence patterns, absence without parental notification or excessive time away from school where reasons are not wholly accepted may be at risk; this is a safeguarding issue**

Promoting Good Attendance

- Children who achieve 100% attendance each half term will receive an award (badges, sticker, pencils).
- Good attendance will be celebrated in the weekly Friday assembly and through the weekly newsletter to parents.

Actions to address poor attendance

We have a duty of care, shared with the Local Authority, to challenge poor attendance. We will work to identify:

- where attendance levels are low and where there are invalid reasons (judged by the Education Welfare Service, not the parent) for a pupil's frequent absence

- where parents condone absence (e.g. by taking children out of school on unauthorised holidays)
- where there are patterns of absence that give rise for concern – e.g. Fridays and Mondays off
- where absence is tied closely to that of siblings
- The school and Education Welfare Service will take legal action against parents if there is clear evidence of condoned absence and attendance does not improve after advice and support is offered.
- Formal procedures may involve a Penalty Notice This can be doubled if the fine is unpaid within a set timescale (now 21 days) and can ultimately lead to a criminal conviction. Of course, no one wants this to happen but we need to be very clear about the issue.

Reporting on Attendance

- Attendance matters will be included in periodic newsletters to parents. The Governing Body will receive reports from the Head Teacher on attendance as part of the normal cycle of reporting at meetings. Where attendance has improved for individual pupils, parents will be notified by letter.

Appendix 1: Key Information

Types of Absence

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

Unauthorised absences where necessary will be referred to the Wakefield Education Welfare Service.

Illness and First Day Call

If your child is unable to attend school through illness you should inform us by telephone on the first day of absence before 9.00am. Alternatively you can email us at admin@netherton.wakefield.sch.uk or call in in person at the Office. It is useful to know the expected day of return. If you do not supply us with this information we have a duty to contact you for so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure.

Where the child is absent through illness or medical appointments this will normally be counted as authorised. Where we have concerns over excessive absence patterns through illness we will need to discuss this with parents in order to gain a better understanding of the problems and to offer support – for example by involving the School Health Service.

Medical/Dental Appointments

It is generally better if these can be arranged outside school hours, but we know this is not always possible. Where children need to attend such appointments during the school day it is important that parents come first to the Office before collecting children. Please bring your child to the office on returning from the appointment. Please indicate whether s/he will be returning for the midday meal. Medical and dental appointments count as authorised absences.

Emergency Occasions

There are some occasions e.g. bereavements, family problems, etc where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs.

Lateness

Please try to ensure that your child arrives at school when doors open at 8.50 so that they are present for registration at 9.00 am each day. If a child is arriving after 9am they will receive a late mark and this will become an unauthorised absence after 9.10am.

However where there is a genuine reason for lateness exists this will be recorded as an authorised absence.

Leave of Absence:

What we are aiming for

We aim for attendance of 97% or higher for all classes.

What is considered as poor attendance

Anything below 95% is weak, under 90% is poor and if attendance dips below 85% we will have serious concerns. Below 90% is regarded as persistent absence by the DFE. We monitor attendance and provide termly reports on each pupil's attendance.

At the end of each term we identify all those pupils whose attendance is below 90% and issue a courtesy letter informing parents where required. We then monitor the pupils' attendance on a weekly basis and hope to see a pattern of unbroken weeks developing.

Our duty of care in responding to unauthorised and persistent absence – possible consequences

We have a duty of care, shared with the Local Authority, to challenge poor attendance. Where attendance levels are low and where there are invalid reasons (judged by the Education Welfare Service, not the parent) for a pupil's frequent absence or where parents condone absence (e.g. by taking children out of school on unauthorised holidays) then parents render themselves liable to a penalty fine.

Appendix 2: Registration Procedures

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

Daily procedures - teachers

1. Registers will be taken electronically at 9.00 am and as soon as all children are in from the playgrounds after lunch break ends, using the Integris system. This allows us to read attendance data in 'real time' and act quickly if need be.

If a child arrives after 9.00 am the child should be directed to the Office to be marked in. After 9am the child will be classed as late. Office staff will check on school meals as part of this procedure. Office staff will note the absence; staff in classrooms do not need to worry about this.

Daily procedures - Office

1. Once registration has closed at 9.10 am the office staff will update individual pupil records where telephone calls have been received during the morning. If a child arrives after 9.10 they will receive an unauthorised mark.
2. When this has been completed Office staff will then contact the appropriate year group about any pupils left on the list to check that the teacher is not aware of the reason for the child's absence or to make sure they have not arrived late.
3. Once it has been clarified that the reason is still not known, staff will telephone or text parents the parent to make contact and ask the whereabouts of the child. The reason will then be recorded if known.

Procedures for monitoring

Daily

1. Head Teachers meet and greet pupils and parents at the school gates from 8.45 am.
2. Office staff check registers, make first day calls or text.

Weekly

1. On Fridays, Office staff provide the Head Teacher with the attendance data for the current week so far.

Half termly

1. Run off attendance data reports for whole school and groups for the Head Teacher.
2. Identify on going individual concerns and brief the Head Teacher in readiness for EWO meeting
3. Prepare data half termly to inform Head teacher reports for full Governors.

Termly

1. Run off attendance data reports for whole school and groups for the head teacher.
2. Print off lists of pupils with 97% plus and 100% attendance for the term and issue certificates.
3. Identify individual concerns and brief the Head Teacher in readiness for EWO meeting

Annually

1. Prepare certificates for those receiving 100% and attendance medal

