



# Netherton C of E Primary School

## Attendance policy

RESPONSIBILITY: Headteacher

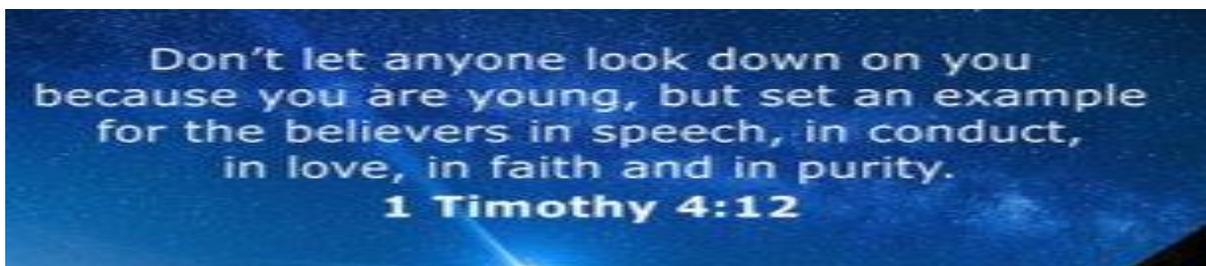
Governor: Mr Luke Hamblett

Last reviewed on:	February 2026
Next review due by:	September 2027 (subject to any statutory changes)

**“Where dreams are made, and futures created.”**



# Netherton C of E Primary School Attendance Policy



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The Governors and staff at Netherton C of E Primary School are united in their belief that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them; helping them to become emotionally resilient, confident, and competent young people who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Netherton CofE Primary School values all children. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the barriers to achieving and maintaining excellent attendance and offer the right service at the right time to try to resolve any difficulties.

The Attendance Leader (Wendy Rickers) and Attendance Officer (Tracey Parton) will monitor attendance and use attendance data to identify any patterns of concern, whilst also celebrating success!

## 1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- › Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- › Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- › Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- › Maintained schools: Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- › The [Equality Act 2010](#)

It also refers to:

- › [School census guidance](#)
- › [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- › [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- › [Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- › Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
  - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
  - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Mr Luke Hamblett is the link governor for attendance.

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the assistant headteacher to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:

- Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the senior attendance champion) is responsible for:

- › Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- › Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- › Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- › Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- › Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- › Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs W. Rickers and can be contacted via school phone 01384 431810 or the school email, [info@netherton.dowmat.education](mailto:info@netherton.dowmat.education)

### 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher/assistant headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs T. Parton and can be contacted via via school phone 01384 431810 or the school email, [info@netherton.dowmat.education](mailto:info@netherton.dowmat.education)

### 3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

### 3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- › Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Attendance Officer or Senior Lead where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### 3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult which the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- › All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- › All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- › Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day, on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:50am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child. For a child in the Early Years Foundation Stage, provide more than 2 emergency contact numbers, where possible.
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- › Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Mrs T. Parton, Attendance Officer & Family Liaison Officer or Mrs W. Rickers, Assistant Head and Senior Attendance Leader, who can be contacted via 01384 431810 and/or [info@netherton.dowmat.education](mailto:info@netherton.dowmat.education)

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- › Attend school every day, on time

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register and place all pupils on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day (8:50 – 8:55am) and once during each afternoon session (1:00 – 1:05pm). We will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- › Present
- › Attending a place other than school
- › Absent
- › Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

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.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not

- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8:50 am and ends at 3:15pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 8:55am. Pupils arriving after 8:55am but before 9:25am will be marked as late (L). Pupils arriving after 9:25am will be marked as unauthorised late (U).

The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:05pm. Pupils arriving after 105pm but before 1:30pm will be marked as late (L). Pupils arriving after 1:30pm will be ,arked as unauthorised late (U).

This does not apply if the pupil is returning from a medical appointment. (see 4.31 below)

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:50am, or as soon as practically possible, by

1. calling the school absence line which can be reached via the school number 01384 431810; option 2
2. emailing the school at [absences@netherton.dowmat.education](mailto:absences@netherton.dowmat.education)
3. using the Report an absence link via our school website, [www.netherton.dudley.sch.uk](http://www.netherton.dudley.sch.uk)

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

## 4.3 Planned absence

### 4.31 Medical Appointments

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

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 – either attending before or returning after their appointment depending on the time.

### 4.32 Leave of absence

The pupil's parent must apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Parents wanting to request a leave of absence for their child should put the request in writing prior to the date of leave. Requests will be considered on an individual basis but it should be known that requests will not be granted for holidays and absence for this will be unauthorised (G).

## 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

When your child arrives late at school, they miss important things – chatting with friends before settling for the school day, an overview of the day, assembly/collective worship, or the start of lessons which is when the teacher

input happens. Many children feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late and if the lesson is already underway it can be hard to join in or catch up.

Frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage your child and disrupt the learning of others. Please help your child to be punctual.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (9:25) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L)
- After the register has closed (9:25) will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U). Please be aware that U codes contribute to the number of unauthorised sessions for which a pupil has been absent.

We will monitor the punctuality of our pupils and write to parents whose punctuality is a concern.

## 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach the parents, school will try all of their emergency contacts. If no contact can be made, the school may make a home visit, and in some cases ask the police to make a safe and well visit.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with we may issue a Joint Early Warning Notice, a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 7 below)

## 4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see the definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels.

A parent will be informed of their child's attendance & absence

- on the Arbor Parent Portal, any time
- by email at the end of each half term
- in the end of year report

## 5. Authorised or Unauthorised Absence

### Authorised Absence

#### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad (C1)
- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (J1)
- Study leave (S)

- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable (C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (C)

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare and unexpected circumstances which are unlikely to reoccur. Examples include:

- Medical emergencies
- Family emergencies (e.g. death of a relative)

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted in writing as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

## 5.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (I) (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (M) (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance (R) – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance. Only 1 day will be authorised.
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes (T) – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made (E)

## 5.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity (B), sporting activity (P) or visit or trip arranged by the school (V)
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration) (D)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority (K)
- Attending work experience (W)
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed (Y)

## 5.4 Unauthorised Absence

Absence can only be authorised by the school; parents do not have this authority. All absences will be treated as unauthorised until a satisfactory reason for a child's absence has been received. In the first instance contact from the parent will be accepted as evidence. However, if a child's attendance continues to cause concern, parents may be asked to provide evidence.

Unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation, and it has been accepted by the school, absence will not be authorised.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A child's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniform.
- Having their hair cut.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes.
- "Couldn't get up".
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school without medical authority and in the absence of a communicable disease.
- Leave during term time taken without authorisation of the school
- Head lice – let the school know and letters will then be sent to all parents in a confidential manner.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed – to learn and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons and days of school as much as possible. As a school, we want to reward high attendance and not just penalise pupils for poor attendance.

At Netherton, we feel it is important to reward children who have achieved good or improved attendance.

Daily - each pupil is rewarded with 1 Dojo point for every day that they attend school. Dojos count towards reward targets so good attendance helps pupils reach the rewards quicker.

Weekly - each pupil who has attended each day that week receives an attendance sticker. Class teachers also share their class's weekly attendance on Friday afternoon

Half termly - each pupil who has achieved 97% + or 100% attendance will receive a certificate and a reward such as a movie afternoon.

For those pupils for whom attendance is/has been an issue, improvements will be recognised and celebrated – this may be through certificates, phone calls home and bespoke individual rewards such as extra play.

We will promote good attendance and remind parents of the expectations through an annual reminder letter at the start of each academic year, the monthly newsletter, reminders on class dojo.

Netherton CofE Primary School will always challenge falling attendance and reward improvements. We are committed to the future of all children that attend Netherton CofE Primary School, and by working in partnership with the school community we believe that together we can achieve more!

## 7. Supporting pupils with poor attendance

Netherton Primary School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life and their lived experience. This may be related to problems at home or in school. Parents should inform the 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, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school to identify any additional early help that may be required.

Safeguarding is a priority, concerns for any child at any time will be reported to the Designated Senior Lead for Child Protection, Kathryn Harvey/Wendy Rickers. We will always follow Keeping Children Safe in Education and our Child Protection Policy.

Some children may require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, children who are vulnerable; or have a medical need; or EHCP plan will be monitored and supported in school.

Positive health and emotional well-being are key factors in improving social development, school attendance and educational achievement. We promote and support a whole school approach to mental health and emotional well-being; ensuring SEMH support remains a key driver in improving attendance for all children.

At Netherton, we will proactively identify and follow up on a child's non-attendance and gather information about the child. This will result in taking early action to prevent non-attendance developing and monitoring the impact of targeted support.

## **Informal Interventions**

### **7.1 Informal chats / meeting with the class teacher**

Often, a child's class teacher is the best person to address any worries or concerns. They see your child every day and so get to know them very well, building a good relationship with them. They will be one of the first people to notice if a pupil's attendance starts to fall and may speak to you to find out why. Equally, we would encourage you to speak to the class teacher if anything is happening outside of school or if your child has told you about something which is worrying them in school. We can often sort out issues quickly or provide support for your child, but only if we know!

### **7.2 Letters**

#### **Letter 1**

If your child's attendance falls to 95%, we will send you a letter alerting you to this and that it will be monitored moving forward. 95% attendance over the whole academic year (190 days) equates to 9 days of absence; however, please be aware that a child's attendance can fall to 95% in fewer days earlier in the school year eg if Autumn 1 is 40 days, 2 days absence will equate to 95% absence. If a child is genuinely unwell, they can quickly hit this percentage. This is why it is important to communicate with school and report the reason for your child's absence so that it can be authorised and coded correctly.

#### **Letter 2**

If attendance drops to 90%, Letter 2 will be sent to parents/carers to express concern that attendance has not improved, and to invite parents to an Attendance Support Meeting (ASM). A date and time will be given in the letter – if this is not convenient parents should contact school to re-arrange – please do not ignore the meeting.

### **7.3 Attendance Support Meeting**

An attendance support meeting is a supportive meeting to discuss and identify barriers, and to implement an action plan for school and parents/carers to work together to improve attendance and punctuality. This may include planning in school support such as soft starts, joining a nurture group, identifying a chosen adult to check in on the child or it may include referrals to the School Nurse or Early Help. Any support suggested will only be implemented with parental agreement.

An attendance Support Plan will be written at this meeting which both school and parent(s) will sign and have a copy of.

### **7.4 Attendance Support Review**

Following the Attendance Support Meeting, an Attendance Support Plan Review meeting will be scheduled 4 - 6 weeks later to recognise improvement or identify additional barriers that need addressing or further monitoring.

If attendance has improved beyond 90%+ at the ASP Review, no further review meetings will be scheduled. Attendance will continue to be monitored and the process will begin again if issues reoccur.

If there is no improvement evident following the ASP review, or attendance is still below 90% threshold, and parents/carers are not willing to engage with the process by attending further review meetings, a final letter will be sent to parents/carers to give notice of intention to refer to ESS for further investigation.

## **Formal & Legal Interventions**

Our school wants to work with families to improve attendance however, if attendance does not improve or parents do not engage with support offered, we will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### **7.5 Joint Early Warning Notice**

If attendance does not improve following the Attendance Support Meeting or parents do not attend the Attendance Support Meetings offered, the school and authority may issue a Joint Early Warning Notice (JEWN).

## 7.6 Notice to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

A notice to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

It will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered, if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

## 7.7 Attendance contract

If insufficient improvement has been made following the Notice to Improve being issued, but a parent is engaging with support, an Attendance Contract may be issued, this is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school or Local Authority to address irregular attendance at school.

- Are not legally binding but allow a more formal route to secure engagement with support where voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate.
- Are not a punitive tool, they are intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution.
- Parents cannot be compelled to enter a contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's absence.
- Aim for the parent(s), and the pupil where they are old enough, the school and the Local Authority to work in partnership.

If an attendance contract is not effective at improving a child's attendance, or is deemed not appropriate, the Local Authority has the option to progress as far as needed through the following, hierarchical legal interventions;

Education Supervision Orders (ESO) - non compliance can lead to prosecution  
and a fine of up to £1000

Attendance prosecutions - if found guilty, depending on the circumstances parents  
can be sentenced to a community order, a parenting order, a fine of up to £2500 or  
imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Parenting orders - breaches can lead to a fine of up to £1000

## 7.8 Education supervision order

In cases where other support has been unsuccessful, we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and will set up a meeting.

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but **not** criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 upon conviction.

## 7.9 Penalty notices

The headteacher (or a deputy or assistant headteacher, authorised by the headteacher), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, we will check with the local authority before doing so and send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

## 8. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Netherton CofE's vision is that their children will know they are loved. Therefore, pupils who have been absent or are returning to school will always be welcomed back.

This may include pupils who have been absent due to

- complex barriers to attendance
- mental or physical ill health
- other barriers to attendance such as having SEND, being disadvantaged, being known (or previously known) to children's social care, other barriers to attendance (e.g. young carers)

We will be sensitive to the reason for their absence and how they might be feeling. We will consult relevant guidance, and we will meet with the child and parents prior to their return, in order to discuss ways in which we can help the child back into school. Adjustments will be considered on an individual basis and will be timely and appropriate, well-chosen and targeted.

Where a pupil has an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, the school will inform the local authority.

## 8.1 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

During any long-term absence, Netherton CofE Primary School will maintain contact with the child, through welfare calls, home visits and provision of work, if appropriate.

When the child is ready to return to school, we will

- Meet with parents & child to discuss the return to school and appropriate adjustments that might be needed
- Carefully plan the transition back to school, ensuring your child feels welcome and regains a sense of belonging.
- Ensure the child once again feels safe in school and if they experience any concerns, they will have an appointed member of staff to work with.
- The Class Teacher and Teaching Assistant will support the child when returning to class and help them with any work they may have missed.

## 8.2 Prolonged absence for children in the EYFS

In cases of prolonged absence, or when a child is absent without notification, we will attempt to contact the child's parents and alternative emergency contacts.

When deciding whether a child's absence should be considered prolonged, we will consider the:

- Patterns and trends in the child's absences and their personal circumstances
- Vulnerability of the child and their parents, as well as the circumstances of their home life

We will also implement our safeguarding procedures (see our child protection/safeguarding policy) and refer any concerns to local children's social care and/or request a police welfare check.

## 8.3 Children at risk of Missing in Education (CME)

All agencies who work with children have a duty under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to ensure all children are safe and looked after appropriately and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.

If a child is absent and contact cannot be made with parents directly (by phone or home visit), and their whereabouts cannot be confirmed by any of the additional named contacts held by school, then the Local Authority's CME team is notified immediately, and police are asked to carry out a safe and well check at the home address.

The CME team is also notified if a child is known to have moved out of the area so is no longer attending, or if a parent enquiring about a school place states that their child is not currently attending a school.

CME includes those children who are missing (family whereabouts unknown) and are children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address and either

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or
- has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or
- left school suddenly and the destination is unknown

## 9. Attendance monitoring

### 9.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely.

Data will be 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.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board.

## 9.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

## 9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including the special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium lead).
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

## 9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
  - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
  - Explain the help that is available
  - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
  - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant

- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 7 Formal & Legal Interventions, above)

## **10. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum bi-annually by Mrs W. Rickers, Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **11. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions
- Pupil Mental Health & Well-being
- EYFS Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy.
- SEND Offer
- Pupil Premium Statement.

## 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>Attending a place other than the school</b>		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>Absent – leave of absence</b>		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable

<b>C</b>	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>Absent – other authorised reasons</b>		
<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>I</b>	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
<b>E</b>	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
<b>Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In police detention</li> <li>• Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or</li> <li>• Detained under a sentence of detention</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Absent – unauthorised absence</b>		

<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays