



Starbeck Primary Academy Policy for Attendance

Policy completed: February 2022

Co-ordinator responsible: Sally Pitts

Date of next review: October 2022

This policy takes full account of the school's legal obligations, noted in DfE and other materials. It has been updated reflecting the government guidance '**School attendance: guidance for schools**', updated January 2022 and '**Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year**', updated 6 January 2022.

School attendance: improving consistency of support is currently under Government consultation, with the outcomes of this consultation to be added to the next year's policy. Practices in school are continually updated and amended in light of ongoing new government and Northern Star Academies policies and guidance.

School Context

Starbeck is an average sized primary school. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (36%) is above national averages (20%). The number of children from ethnic minority groups (12%) is lower than national averages (33%). The percentage of children on school support on the SEND register (13%) is slightly higher than national averages (12.2%) with a further 4.6% with an Education Health Care Plan (national average is 3.7%).

Rationale

Starbeck Primary School and North Yorkshire Education Authority believe that attendance and punctuality at school are important and that absence can lead to poor progress and poor attainment. Regular and full-time attendance is essential if children are to benefit fully from their school life. It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life.

Aims

- To encourage prompt arrival at school.
- To encourage regular attendance.
- To ensure that routines are in place for monitoring attendance and for early identification of any difficulties.
- To work together with parents to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality.

ATTENDANCE PLAN FOLLOWING FULL OPENING OF SCHOOLS

Plan

Attendance is mandatory for all children except where statutory exemptions apply. [Latest Government Guidance](#) can be found here.

School will continually review absence, for example when a self-isolation period should come to an end. During covid related absences, pupils have access to education, either remotely or paper-based learning, and engagement is monitored.

Registers will be taken as normal and attendance codes used consistently, in conjunction with published guidance.

It is expected that parents will let the school know if a child is unable to attend and the reason. A pupil's parent or carer will be contacted on the first day of absence where this does not happen. It is recognised that new or more prevalent causes of absence (for example, anxiety) due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak will occur. School will address each case individually, balancing support for pupils and families and sanctions appropriately.

Communicate

All staff, governors and trustees understand the importance of good attendance through this policy. The governing body will provide additional visibility, support and challenge.

The policy will be communicated to staff, pupils and parents as soon as possible to ensure expectations are clearly understood. Attendance expectations will be included in induction sessions with pupils and parents, newsletters and through the website.

An open dialogue will be kept with parents who need further information or reassurance on the importance and/or safety of returning to school.

Support

School have and continue to engage with pupils and parents and carers to set expectations on attendance, understand concerns and build confidence. This is achieved through informal discussions, phone calls, home visits and meetings in school..

School staff will be vigilant in identifying changes in behaviour (for example being fearful or withdrawn, aggressive or oppositional, or excessively clingy) which may be an indication of an underlying issue.

If further support is needed, staff should consider what additional support or reasonable adjustments are needed and put a plan in place to deliver it, with regular points to review.

Where children have special educational needs and disabilities, work with local services (health and the local authority) to ensure the services and support are in place that will ensure good attendance for pupils.

For children who have a social worker or who are otherwise vulnerable, work with social workers and other relevant services will continue to ensure the right services and support are in place. Social workers will be informed if the child does not attend school.

Monitor and improve

Attendance data will be reviewed regularly, every 2 weeks for all children and more regularly for those causing a concern. This will inform early interventions.

Feedback from staff and pupils, as well as the use of data will be used to assess the effectiveness of the attendance policy and adjust provision in what is likely to be a changing context.

Roles & responsibilities

The School will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority.
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and their presence is valued.
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality using newsletters and other communications to parents.
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education.
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored and absences are followed up promptly.
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Early Help Service, Healthy child Team etc.).
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence.

- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents.
- Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs.
- Develop incentives for good attendance and punctuality.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up after actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation (but not necessarily taking this any further – responsibility of office staff).
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings.

Administration staff are responsible for:

- Following up specific requests from the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher for information about individuals.
- Contacting the child's home on the first day of absence if the parent has not contacted the school.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence.
- Monitoring individual attendance on a daily basis where concerns have been raised.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the families and the Early Help service.
- Including information about attendance trends and class percentages in the newsletter.
- Informing the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher on a formal and an informal basis of patterns of attendance noted.
- Promptly issuing registers and processing on a weekly basis.
- Collating attendance percentages.
- Processing and following up holiday forms.
- Providing weekly class attendance reports for use in awards assembly.

The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Acting as a point of contact for staff where concerns need to be raised or advice sought.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Ensuring that the attendance policy is followed and that the actions from external meetings are carried out.
- Liaising with and discussing with parents issues relating to attendance.
- Feedback and discussions with the class teacher over individual cases
- Promotion of attendance issues during assemblies.
- Promoting attendance so that it has a high profile in school.
- Recording attendance concerns/ support, including formal procedures, on the school CPOMS system.

We expect the parent/carer to:

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address.
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, **as soon as possible on the first day of the absence.**

- Telephone the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing.
- In cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed so that work can be sent home in certain cases and for the school to be prepared for the child's return.
- Provide a note indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician **before** the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made.
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child.

Strategies to Promote and Maintain High Standards of Attendance and Punctuality

- All new parents are given information on attendance as their child joins the school.
- Newsletters are used to promote this aspect of school life and serve as a reminder.
- Informal and formal meetings arranged for individual parents where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Protocols to tackle poor attendance are followed in line with LA and NSAT guidance

It is important to remember that the vast majority of children at Starbeck Primary Academy arrive on time every day. An important part of our attendance policy is that this good practice is commended and celebrated. In order to do this we will begin to reintroduce the following at appropriate timings and when attendance begins to become more stable post lockdown:

- Publicise class attendance figures and award an attendance certificate for the class with best attendance on a weekly basis.
- Promote good attendance by displaying the attendance figures, weekly certificates and photographs of 100% attendance winners (including on the school website)
- Award button badges for each half term to full attenders.
- Award certificates and metal badges for each term to full attenders, culminating in an end of full school year 100% attendance award and medal.
- Award certificates for 99% attendance for a full school year.

Registers

The method of maintaining the class registers is through SIMS. Class teachers complete a register twice daily and return it to the office. Weekly absence reports are printed and reasons for absence recorded using the relevant codes. (*Appendix A - Staff Guidelines for Register Codes*).

Registers close at 8:50 a.m. Lateness after the start time is classed as 'late after the register has closed' unless it is for a medical appointment or a reason is provided which can be authorised by the Headteacher.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Absences can be authorised if they are for certain reasons e.g. sickness, religious observance, absence following the death of a close member of the family. The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

An absence will be classified as unauthorised when:

- A child is kept off school because a parent or sibling is ill.
- The parent cannot get the child to school.
- The child is taken on a shopping trip.
- The child is absent due to a birthday treat/family treat.
- A child is absent due to family work patterns.
- The child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home.
- A child arrives after 9:20 a.m. without a satisfactory explanation.

Each child's unauthorised absences (including unauthorised holiday absences) will be noted and recorded on an annual report to parents.

It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents in the annual Governors Report and to the DfES.

Parents have a responsibility to telephone the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence if their child is ill. If a child needs to be absent for a medical appointment a note must be received by the class teacher before the appointment.

If the parent has not contacted the school once the morning registers have been sent to the office on the first day of absence, then the school will telephone the child's home to enquire about the absence.

If a child has been absent for 3 days without an explanation, parents will be sent a letter. If no satisfactory response is received, a follow up reminder will be sent. Should this still result in a nil response, the Headteacher will write informing the parent of the Policy and the school's duty to inform the local authority about the child's lack of attendance.

Where there is cause for concern the family will be contacted.

- When attendance is below 90% in any term or half term, a letter will be given to families with an acknowledgement slip to be acknowledged and returned.
- When attendance continues to be below 90%, a letter will be sent to families inviting them to make an appointment with school to discuss the causes of absence and plan any strategies to help increase attendance.

Leave of Absence

No parent/carers can demand leave of absence as of right. Applications must be made in advance by a parent/carers with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each leave application is considered individually by the school taking into account any factors presented by the family. Application forms are available from the school office.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment.
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company.
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school. The decision of the Headteacher is, however, final.

Please note that the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without the permission of the school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the Headteacher. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

The local council can give each parent a fine of £60, which rises to £120 each if it is not paid within 21 days. If the fine is not paid after 28 days, parents may be prosecuted for their child's absence from school.

Medical Appointments

- Parents should inform the class teacher or office in writing indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen.
- Children should be collected from and returned to the school office to be signed in or out when attending medical appointments during the school day. If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Headteacher.

Public Performances

On occasions children become involved in public performances for dance groups, theatres, modelling agencies etc.

- The Headteacher has the discretion to grant authorised absence for these events.
- The Headteacher will take into account individual circumstances such as the attendance record of the child, whether the child would miss exams or any exceptional circumstances. If any child has an attendance record of less than 90% then authorisation will not be given. Permission is at the discretion of the Headteacher and may not always be granted.
- Parents must obtain a licence to perform from the employing agency. This must be submitted to the Headteacher for completion.
- A letter must also accompany the licence indicating the time out of school that the child will require to participate in the performances including time required for rehearsals.
- Parents are asked to reflect upon the affect performances would have upon their child as any absence because a child is tired after a performance will be recorded as unauthorised.

Punctuality

The doors of school open at 8:40am and children are expected to arrive at school no later than 8:50am.

- A member of staff is on duty on the playground from 8.35 a.m. Prior to that time children are not supervised and remain the responsibility of parents. Children should not arrive before 8.35 a.m. This is especially important in cold and wet weather.
- Doors open at 8:40 a.m. Children will enter the school building through their designated entrances.
- The outer doors are locked at 8:50am. Children arriving after 8.50 a.m. should report to the school office.
- Children arriving after 8.50 a.m. will be recorded as 'late.'
- The school gates are locked at 9:00 a.m.
- Parents of children who persistently arrive late will be approached and reminded of these times and their obligation to comply. It will be explained that the lateness not only interrupts their child's education but also that of others in the class. (*Appendix C - Letters*).
- If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know.
- If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a note will be sent home asking the parent to explain the lateness or to ensure that punctuality is maintained.
- Repeated, unexplained lateness or persistent lateness without an acceptable reason will be referred to the Prevention Service where relevant.

Monitoring

- The Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher will keep the Governors informed about attendance matters.
- All staff will be expected to comply with the policy and any issues will be discussed at staff meetings.

Appendices:

Appendix A Register Codes – Guidelines for Staff

[Attendance codes 2021 - 2022](#)

Appendix B North Yorkshire Holiday in Term Time Guidance

<https://www.northyorks.gov.uk/school-term-and-holiday-dates>

Appendix C Up-to-date letters to send to poor attenders/Fast track can be found at

<https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/school-attendance>

Appendix B

Holidays in Term Time

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