



WINDHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

FLYING HIGH FOR EXCELLENCE



Attendance Policy



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**City of
Doncaster
Council**

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Introduction and Background

Windhill Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an 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 a school or by education otherwise than at a 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, on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#) and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school.
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance being everyone's responsibility. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

In addition, all schools follow the DfE's statutory safeguarding guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, which emphasises the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing or absent from education.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and it is the headteacher/principal, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.

This policy meets the requirements of the government guidance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's 2015 statutory guidance on School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures. These documents are drawn from legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance including:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 1989
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Sentencing Act 2020
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendments) Regulations 2024

Part A

Aims and Ethos

Our school aims to meet its statutory obligations regarding school attendance by ensuring that every pupil has access to a full-time, efficient education to which they are entitled. Windhill Primary School acts early to address patterns of irregular attendance, with the aim of creating a culture where good attendance is understood, valued and actively supported by all.

By providing a calm, orderly, safe and inclusive environment where pupils want to be and are ready to learn, we lay the foundations for securing good attendance. Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, school staff, parents/carers, pupils and partners can collectively remove barriers affecting attendance.

This policy sets out the school's position on attendance and the procedures parents must follow to report absence, alongside reminding them of their legal duty to ensure regular school attendance. The policy is applied fairly, consistently and sensitively, taking account of individual circumstances, and reflects our duties under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Promoting Belongingness

Improving attendance is inseparable from ensuring pupils experience a strong sense of belonging. At Windhill Primary School, we understand that feelings of connection, trust and inclusion are critical protective factors, particularly for pupils with SEND, mental health needs or other vulnerabilities.

Our approach prioritises:

- Positive, respectful relationships between pupils and adults
- Inclusive practice that recognises and responds to individual needs
- Early identification of anxiety, disengagement or school avoidance
- Supportive transitions and reintegration following absence

This aligns with Doncaster Council's emphasis on belongingness as a key driver of attendance improvement and pupil resilience.

It is our school's intent that we will be effective for safeguarding and children/young people will feel a sense of belonging, part of their school community, safe, and valued. We believe that an inclusive culture plays a vital role in our priority to nurture a child and family friendly borough. We adhere to the University of Cambridge "Belonging in School" inclusive policy as outlined in: [Inclusion – Belonging in School – a school-level resource for developing inclusive policies](https://youtu.be/AHY_S8fFC3E?si=6rD4-jdQRmiWMYIm)
https://youtu.be/AHY_S8fFC3E?si=6rD4-jdQRmiWMYIm

Safeguarding and Attendance

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare.

Why attending school matters

Recent research from the Department for Education (March 2025) highlights a crucial link between school attendance and academic achievement. The findings confirm that regular attendance is essential for primary school children to succeed and develop key life skills.

Why Attendance Matters

- Higher Achievement – Pupils who attend school regularly perform better academically, particularly in subjects like English and Maths.
- Social & Cognitive Development – Attending school every day helps children build friendships, develop social skills, and grow in confidence.
- Long-Term Benefits – Good attendance lays the foundation for future success in education and career opportunities.

The Impact of Poor Attendance

Unfortunately, missing school can have a significant negative effect on a child's education and overall well-being:

- Lower Achievement – Children with high absence rates often struggle with tests, fall behind their peers, and find it harder to catch up.
- Social & Emotional Struggles – Absence can lead to feelings of isolation, lower self-esteem, and difficulty forming friendships.
- Future Challenges – Poor attendance can affect long-term prospects, including access to higher education and career opportunities.

The DfE have produced a guide for school on communication with parents about the importance of attendance together with a suite of practical resources. These can be accessed at: [A guide for schools on communicating with parents about attendance \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK](#)

Using data to support improvements in attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence may seriously affect their learning. The Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. For pupils who miss more than 50% of possible sessions they are defined as 'severely absent'. The school will ensure that data, including the DfE's View Your Education Data platform, is routinely monitored to identify emerging attendance issues and will seek to prevent any pupil becoming persistently or severely absent. This will include:

- identifying the individual needs of pupils;
- working closely with families and wider support services to remove barriers to attendance;
- and where a formalised approach in conjunction with the local authority is required in line with the DfE guidance. [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#)

Understanding Barriers to Attendance

In relation to understanding barriers to attendance, we will ensure all pupils and parents are treated with dignity and staff will model respectful relationships to build a positive understanding between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, we will highlight the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing and enhance their understanding of what good attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance we will identify who is best placed to work with them to address issues.

We will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily.

Where absence intensifies, so should the support provided, which will require the school to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. In

working with parents to improve attendance, we are mindful of the barriers these pupils face and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

Reduced timetables will only be used in exceptional circumstances, for a limited period and to support pupils to reintegrate back into education to access fulltime provision. The school is committed to share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe
[A guide for schools on communicating with parents about attendance \(accessible version\) - GOV.UK](#)

Staff Training on Attendance

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. The school, therefore, will facilitate training for all staff to understand:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances,
- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers
- the school strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance,
- the processes for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it. For staff with specialist attendance responsibilities, they will receive training to include the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data,
- and any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

PART B

What the Law Says and Our School Procedures Contents of the Admissions Register

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. The school will enter pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed with, or been notified by the parent, that the pupil will attend.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies.

It is vital that the admission register is kept up to date. Therefore, we encourage parents to inform the school of any changes whenever they occur and ensure the admission register is amended as soon as possible.

Contents of Attendance Register

In addition to the admissions register the law makes it clear that schools must take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second (afternoon) session. On each occasion the school must record whether each pupil is:

- Present;
 - Absent;
 - Attending an approved educational activity;
- or,
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance and is supported by the use of our Management Information System to record attendance information.

Present at School (and Lateness)

Pupils are marked present if they are in school when the register is taken. If a pupil leaves the school premises after registration, they are still counted as present for statistical purposes.

Late Arrivals

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school on time. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

A member of the Attendance Team will meet with parents of those children who are frequently late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable more punctual attendance.

Our pupils must arrive by 8:45am on each school day.

Our morning register is taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:15am

Our afternoon register is taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:10pm

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (L), which counts as present.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed 9:15am they will be marked with the unauthorised absence code "Late after registers close" (U) which is an unauthorised absence mark. However, if the pupil is late arriving due to a valid reason such as an unavoidable medical appointment, the absence will be authorised and coded accordingly. (See DfE guidance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#) for codes.)

Effects of Late Arrival at School

When a pupil arrives late to school, they miss important events such as assembly, teacher instructions, introductions and interventions. Children can often feel embarrassed having to enter a classroom late.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others:

Minutes late per day...	Equates to days of teaching lost in one year...	Which means this number of lessons have been missed...
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons
20 mins	12 days	60 Lessons
30 mins	18 days	90 Lessons

Authorised Absence

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:

Illness

The NHS has produced a helpful guide for parents regarding childhood illness and school: Public Health have also produced clear guidance on managing infection and isolation periods: [Health protection in children and young people's settings, including education - GOV.UK](#)

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by parents/carers following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#) which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some exceptional circumstances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order best support the child or young person and to be able

to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised.

If your child is too ill to attend, then please ring the school office to notify school of any absence by 9:30am by telephone – Option 1 to report pupil absence. Please ensure that your child returns to the school as soon as possible.

If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school on each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Our school supports pupil mental health and wellbeing following DfE guidance [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupil-s-attendance)

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Mental Health Practitioner (Mrs Julia Neesome) or Learning Mentors (Mrs Angela Grayson/ Miss Hannah Clayton) for further information on the support available.

Online Mental health support and advice can be accessed: [Children's mental health - Every Mind Matters - NHS](https://www.nhs.uk/childrens-mental-health/)

Parents can also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by telephoning 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

Emotionally-based school non-attendance (EBSNA)

EBSNA is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who experience significant and enduring challenges in attending school due to emotional factors; mainly feelings of fear and anxiety.

Pupils with EBSNA may display a range of behaviours such as:

- Complete non-attendance (chronic and persistent)
- Frequent non-attendance
- Inconsistent non-attendance
- Occasional non-attendance/full attendance

Whilst there are different models of understanding the presentation of EBSNA, best practice is identifying on an individual basis the push and pull factors. In order to overcome barriers, the most common features of successful planning to support pupils include:

- Coproduction of plan with everyone involved
- Personalisation
- Focus on reintegration as early as possible
- Identification of a key adult
- Identification of a safe place

- Realistic and achievable outcomes and steps
- Gradual and graded steps
- Direct and regular phone contact between school, parents and carers
- Recognition that full integration may not happen quickly
- Early home visits if appropriate
- Holistic consideration of the needs of the family

We will endeavour to take appropriate steps to support a child with EBSNA and where relevant co-construct a EBSNA support plan to meet individual needs.

Pupils taken ill during the school day

If a pupil needs to be sent home due to illness, this should be by agreement with an appropriately authorised member of school staff. In such circumstances, the pupil must be collected from the school office by a parent or another authorised adult and signed out using Inventory system in the Main Office. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Parents should always try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are urgent or unavoidable, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. It is not acceptable for a child to miss a whole day of schooling for an appointment, unless absolutely necessary, in which case the school will need an explanation as to why this is.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out using Inventory system in the Main Office. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

Advance notice is required for medical or dental appointments and must be supported by providing the school with sight of, or a copy of, the appointment card or letter – only then will the absence be authorised.

Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Traveller Absence

The school will authorise the absence of a Traveller pupil of no fixed abode who is unable to attend school because they are travelling with their parent who is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. This is subject to certain limits, depending on the child's age and number of sessions absent. The school will discuss cases individually with

Traveller parents as necessary. Parents should let the school know of their plans as far in advance as possible. Authorised Traveller absence will be recorded appropriately in the register.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, wherever possible, the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling for occupational purposes. In such situations the child will be dual registered at that school and this school will remain their 'main' school.

Children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities whose families do not travel for occupational purposes are expected to register at school and attend as all other peers. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly.

Suspensions

If the school decides to send a pupil home due to their behaviour, this will be recorded as an Exclusion. The school will follow the current [DfE's statutory guidance on exclusions](#).

Any exclusion **must** be agreed by the headteacher.

The school will notify the parent of the exclusion in writing. If the pupil is a Child in Care, the school will notify the pupil's carer, social worker and the Virtual School. In other instances, where a pupil is open to Children's Social Care for any reason, the school will also inform their allocated social worker.

The pupil must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult and signed out using Inventory system in the Main Office. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

First Day of Absence Response

Parents/ carers should contact school the morning of the first day of any absence. This should be done by telephone (option 1) or via the Class Dojo Attendance messaging system. A reason for the child's absence should be given.

If school have not had contact from a parent/ carer about a child's absence by 10.15am on the first day, a member of the office team will attempt to make contact via telephone. The following pupils will be prioritised: open to social care as a Child in Need, children subject to Child Protect Plans, Children in Care, children who have previously been reported as missing, primary aged pupils who make their own way to school.

It is vital that parental details are correct. There are times when we need to contact parents/carers to discuss absence or more importantly to contact a parent in the event of an emergency. Personal information check sheets are distributed at the start of the year and it is the expectation that parents notify the school of any changes in personal contact details.

If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts and safety.

If we have not been able to establish a reason for absence, a member of school staff will conduct a home-visit. This will take place within 3 days of the first day of absence. In some circumstances (see list above), this will take place on the first day of absence.

If the school is unable to contact any of the emergency numbers provided and is concerned for the welfare and safety of a pupil, we may request a welfare check from the police.

Rewarding Good and Improved Attendance

The school uses rewards promote good attendance. In order to make rewards as achievable as possible for all pupils, reward prizes are reset each week and at the start of every half term. This means that even when a pupil has been absent through no fault of their own, they can still win prizes. Examples of rewards for good and improved attendance include:

- Prizes for all pupils with 100% by the end of the academic year
- Opportunity to win half termly prizes for all pupils with 100% for the half term
- All pupils with 100% attendance for the full week will be entered into a weekly prize draw
- The class with the best overall attendance each half term wins a prize
- Incentives for pupils with concerning attendance may be included as part of Attendance Support Plans as a way of encouraging improvements

Leave of Absence Requests – ‘Exceptional Circumstances’

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

In line with DfE expectations only very exceptional circumstances will warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will review each application individually, considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance. The school will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The school must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances, based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case; following consultation with other staff as required, including members of the Senior Leadership Team. If any leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days the pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, it can be better for children to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times.

Parents should complete a Leave of Absence Request form which is available from the school. The request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated; and wherever possible, at least **four weeks** before the absence. **Although such absence may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.** Please be aware that you may be required to provide us with additional evidence in order to support your request.

If we have any concerns about possible safeguarding risks such as risk of FGM or Forced Marriage we will follow the necessary protocols. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information)

All term time absence for children in care should be discussed at the child's Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting, in advance where possible, to be considered alongside social care staff and the Virtual School. This permission should be gained before school is approached for approval. The school will contact social care/ the Virtual School in relation to any requests made for term time absence for a child in care.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school has not been given a reason or is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence will be unauthorised if a pupil is absent from school without the permission of the school. Whilst parents can provide explanations for absences, it remains the school's decision whether to authorise an absence or not.

Unauthorised absences may include:

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Absences for shopping, birthdays, day trips
- Absences whereby parents are stating they are waiting at home for a washing machine to be mended, or a parcel to be delivered
- Long weekends and holidays in term time (unless very exceptional circumstances are agreed in writing, in advance by the school)
- In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in legal sanctions, use of penalty notices or prosecution.

Persistently and Severely Absent pupils (PA and SA)

A pupil is classed a 'persistent absentee' if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason.

A pupil is classed as 'severely absent' if they miss 50% or more of their school across the school year for whatever reason.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any pupil that is seen to have reached the PA or SA thresholds or is at risk of moving towards that level, will be prioritised by school. Parents will be informed accordingly.

Approved Educational Activity

When pupils are attending educational activities off the school site, that have been approved by the school, the register will be marked to show this is the case.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider such as another school, or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, our school will arrange for the pupil to be dual registered at the other setting and mark our registers accordingly.

If a pupil is attending an alternative education provider, which is not a school or Pupil Referral Unit, for part or all of their education, we will mark the sessions which the pupil attends the alternative

setting as code B (off-site educational activity). We will liaise regularly with alternative providers to ensure we become aware of any attendance concerns as soon as possible and take follow up action as necessary. Attendance updates will be provided on a weekly basis, with the alternative setting.

Any attendance concerns will be followed up by us, in conjunction with the AP setting.

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (as set out in DfE attendance guidance)

In accordance with DfE school attendance guidance, our school will record pupils as 'Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances' in the following circumstances (such circumstances are not recorded as absences):

- Our school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause
- The transport provided by our school or the Local Authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within statutory walking distance. (See the DfE's ['Home to school travel and transport'](#) guidance document or ask the school for a printed copy.)
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.
- The pupil is in custody, but still on the school roll. (If the school has evidence that the pupil is attending educational activities, we can record those sessions as 'present at approved educational activity'.)

Support for Poor School Attendance (other than unauthorised term time leave)

Sometimes pupils can be reluctant to attend school. We encourage parents and pupils to be open and honest with us about the reason for the pupil's absence. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or for a parent to give in to pressure to let the child stay at home. This can give the impression to the child that attendance does not matter and can make things worse. As a school, we need to understand the reasons why a pupil is reluctant to attend in order to be able to support pupils and parents in the best way.

When we have concerns about the attendance of a pupil, we will do our best to make the parent/s aware of the concerns about their child's attendance and give them the opportunity to address this. However, if parents do not make use of the support offered and improve their child's attendance to an acceptable level, this may result in legal sanctions. Where there are no genuine reasons for the absences, parents may be asked to meet with a member of the Attendance Team (Ms Donna Howard, Mrs Angela Grayson or Mrs Julia Neesome) to discuss the matter. In some cases, this may result in a formal attendance action plan or parenting contract being drawn up.

If our school is unable to work in partnership with parents to overcome any barriers preventing regular attendance we may refer a case of poor school attendance to the Local Authority for legal sanctions. We will show all the steps we have taken to support parents and pupils and that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a Penalty Notice or other legal sanction. This will be evidenced via the sending of a warning letter and school records will be shared with the Local Authority.

We will not usually request legal sanctions from the Local Authority in cases where poor attendance is symptomatic of complex family circumstances. In such circumstances our school will take a holistic, early help approach to the issue and will involve other agencies if deemed necessary. The exception to this will be where parents fail to accept or engage with support offered by the school

and/or other agencies or fail to implement the suggested changes. Again, when referring for legal sanctions, we will show that we have warned the parent/s that they are at risk of receiving a penalty notice or other legal sanction.

If our school has safeguarding concerns about a pupil who is absent, we will share information with other agencies as we deem necessary.

- With continued non-attendance (<95%) the case will be brought to the attention of the Attendance Officer. An Awareness Letter (Letter 1) will be sent home expressing school's initial concerns.
- If a parent is continually claiming the absences are due to illness, a request for confirmation the child was not well enough to attend can be requested from medical practitioners such as doctors or hospital consultants.
- Pupils whose attendance falls to <90% will be contacted by the Attendance Officer and invited to attend an Attendance Meeting where an agreed action plan will be created. If appropriate, other agencies may be invited in an attempt to identify and solve the problems which are preventing the pupil from attending school
- Attendance will continue to be monitored for a further 6 weeks with meetings taking place every 2 weeks. If attendance has not improved, you will be required to attend school for a further meeting with the Headteacher, where an Education Penalty Notice may be issued..
- If improved attendance has not been secured following the application of all school attendance support systems; and where parents have failed to engage with the processes; the case may be referred to the Local Authority Attendance & Pupil Welfare Service, who may issue a fixed penalty notice or begin legal procedure regarding an Attendance Order.

Pupils on Reduced (Part-time) Timetables

Pupils are entitled to a full-time education, suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and any special educational needs or disabilities that they may have.

If, for any reason, our school is unable to provide a pupil with a full-time education due to the pupil's needs, we will work with the pupil, parent and other agencies where appropriate, to come to a mutually convenient arrangement. Any reduced timetables will be for the shortest amount of time possible, whilst arrangements are made to support the pupil's return to full-time provision as soon as possible.

Penalty Notices and Prosecutions

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, it is a criminal offence to fail to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil. This applies to both resident and non-resident parents, as well as to any person who, although not a parent, has day-to-day care of the child. In line with Department for Education guidance, legal action will usually be considered against the parent(s) or carer(s) who have day-to-day responsibility for the child, or who are in a position to influence and secure their regular

attendance, and where it is reasonable to expect them to take steps to do so. All may be subject to legal sanctions if the child does not attend school regularly.

Unauthorised absence from school can result in a range of outcomes for both parents and children, and each case is considered on an individual basis.

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, where a child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, their parent(s) may be found guilty of an offence. Where parents have more than one child of school age, each child's attendance is considered separately.

The school can refer cases of unauthorised absence that may meet the criteria for Penalty Notices or other legal interventions, such as action under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to the Local Authority for consideration. The outcome of a referral may result in a Penalty Notice or prosecution, unless there are reasonable grounds for not taking such action.

Penalty Notices are intended as a sanction for lower-level offences and as a tool to support improved attendance, for example where unauthorised leave has been taken during term time. They provide an alternative to prosecution but may not be issued where prosecution is considered a more appropriate response. (Please refer to the DfE statutory guidance on *School Attendance: Parental Responsibility Measures* for further information.)

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and for each child with irregular attendance. For example, where two siblings have irregular attendance and there are two parents, a total of four Penalty Notices may be issued. Penalty Notices must be paid in full, cannot be paid in instalments, and there is no right of appeal against their issue.

Failure to pay a Penalty Notice within the specified timeframe may result in the matter being progressed to prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Children Missing Education (CME)

Our school will add and delete pupils from roll in line with Regulation 8 Education law. The school will use the [Children Missing Education - City of Doncaster Council](#). If we have any CME related concerns.

Following up Unexplained Absences

Where the school has not been made aware of reasons of absences, the school will contact parents by text or telephone on the first day of absence to try and establish a reason for a child's absence. When we establish the reason for the absence, we will mark it as authorised or unauthorised depending on the reason for the absence. If we are unable to establish the reason for absence within 5 school days, we will make the absence as unauthorised, using the **O** code.

If we are concerned about a pupil's absence and are unable to contact the parent/s, we may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who we reasonably expect may be able to advise us of the pupil's whereabouts and safety.

If we have not been able to establish a reason for absence, a member of school staff will conduct a home-visit. This will take place within 3 days of the first day of absence. In some circumstances, this will take place on the first day of absence.

Reporting to Parents

Attendance will be reported annually in the pupil's end of year school. It will also be shared with parents/ carers at the end of each term through Termly Attendance & Attainment Reports.

Where a child's attendance falls below 92%, for whatever reason, our school will contact parents to highlight this, unless there is a good reason not to.

Recording Information on Attendance and Reasons for Absence

Information regarding attendance and reasons for absence will be recorded on SIMS. Information about who reported the absence and the reason for the absence will be recorded.

Where there are concerns around a pupil's attendance or when home-visits have been conducted, this will be recorded on CPOMs.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis (3 times a year). They should also support the promotion of regular attendance and provide support and challenge holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Governors of the school have a responsibility for setting an annual attendance target before December 31st in each academic year and reviews the Attendance Policy annually.

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

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

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher/attendance lead/ Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) as appropriate.
- Arranges calls, home visits and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence (this includes liaison with the Attendance/DS Leads and Safeguarding Team) and advises the headteacher as requested.

- Celebrate and reward good and improving attendance through competitions, certificates and outings/events
- Support when there is a problem of long-term illness
 - School will send a letter out to all families at the start of each year clearly outlining the school's expectations for attendance.
- To keep parents/ carers informed of their child's attendance on a termly basis
- All attendance below 95% will be monitored.

Class Teachers/Form Tutors

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Welcoming pupils positively, even if they arrive late
- Promoting the value of regular attendance on a day-to-day basis through interactions with pupils and parents
- Creating a sense of 'belonging' in classroom environments for all pupils
- Taking the register twice a day and reporting any known absences to office staff
- Sharing any concerns regarding attendance with the Attendance Lead/ DSL
- Noticing any patterns in emerging attendance or punctuality trends
- Speaking to parents/ carers to highlight and share initial attendance concerns including at informal times such as pick up times, and during formal Open Evening discussions
- Reporting attendance to parents/ carers each term through Attendance & Attainment Reports
- Supporting interventions to improve attendance for whole class and individual pupils

Office Staff

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- The Admin Assistant will note all registration marks in SIMS by 09:15.
- Registration will be used to:
 - identify patterns of non-attendance at an early stage
 - resolve personal/social difficulties where possible
 - provide an effective and efficient system for the monitoring of attendance.
- Voicemails must be listened to and acted upon by 09:45. Emails and Class Dojo messages will also be checked.
- Any child whose whereabouts are unknown must be followed up by 10:15. All adults on the child's contact list must be called.