

Upperby Primary School

Attendance Policy



School Details

Head teacher:	Mrs P Burns
Co Chair of Governors:	Mr W Atkinson/R Mason
Policy Date:	September 2024
Policy Review Cycle:	Biannual
Next Review Date:	September 2026

Introduction

Upperby Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our children every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment. To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all pupils attend regularly and on time. Pupils should aim to attend every day that the school is open.

We set a target for all pupils to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all pupils achieve at least 97%. **As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.**

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

School's roles and responsibilities

All staff (teaching and support) at Upperby Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The Deputy Headteacher and Pastoral Support Worker, in conjunction with the Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Deputy will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data is available and liaise with class teachers and admin staff to ensure attendance issues are dealt with promptly. The

Deputy (in conjunction with the Pastoral Support Worker) will meet half-termly with the Head teacher and admin attendance staff to discuss any attendance issues and follow up with parents as appropriate. The aim is to identify issues at an early stage and ensure support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the Scholar Pack attendance register electronically with either: - Present - Absent - Late

The register will be called promptly at 9.00am and 1.00pm or 1.30pm (according to dinner rota) by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

The registers close at 9.30am. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will count as absent. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as present but will be marked as late.

Categorising absence

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absence until admin staff are able to enter the correct code once the reason for absence is established.

Upperby Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. We will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised.

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's / student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
- in exceptional circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance, due to the fact they cannot take their annual leave at any other time. Written evidence from the employer must be provided.

(b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

(c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand;)

(d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;

(e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;

(f) in other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

Staff Training

The Head teacher will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

Collection and analysis of data

The Deputy Headteacher will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body (see paragraph above). The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

Attendance is monitored by class and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance. Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

Attendance has a very high profile at Upperby Primary School. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and weekly attendance figures are displayed in school, alongside rewards for individuals and classes at varying times throughout the year.

Contact

Upperby Primary School has in place a system of first-day contact. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage, pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to contact parents on the first day of absence, the school sends a text message, or may visit the house.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing great harm and we need parent's fullest support to address this. We will give priority to any pupil either at the PA level or at danger of reaching it and parents will be informed of this immediately so that together we can put a plan in place to get that child back into school.

Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

Within the confines of the National Curriculum, pupils are offered a varied, flexible and rewarding education matched to their individual needs. They are not able to take full advantage of this unless they attend regularly. The school employs a range of strategies, celebrations and rewards to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Attendance data is collected and analysed regularly, and combined with an annual review of school attendance policy informs future practise. School expectations and targets are shared with parents and carers. Where school is concerned, attendance reviews between parents and school will be established with clear targets. These targets are monitored over a six-week block. Where concerns remain, school will consult with other agencies.

There may be times when school decides to have a late gate randomly over a set period of time for pupils who arrive at school after the registers close at 9.30am. Parents will be notified in advance by letter and text that this will be happening and given a block but not specific days. Any patterns in lateness that do not improve will be followed up. (Liasion between our school and receiving secondary schools identifies pupils who may require extra support during the transition to Year 7).

We celebrate attendance during our 'Celebration Assembly' each week. The class/es with the highest percentages are awarded points and are given an award at the end of each term. Class attendance figures are published on the school website each week. Certificates are given for 100% for each term and 98% attendance and above is celebrated in an assembly at the end of the year.

Referral to the Local Authority - If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil / student is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the LA Inclusion Officer – Elsa Elliot.

Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils / students who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). Any late arrivals are recorded on our Scholar Pack data tracking system and any concerns will be followed up appropriately.

Any absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the LA Inclusion Officer.

Pupils who arrive late for school but before the register closes are monitored for frequency of lateness. If the lateness is persistent, the parents will be requested to give adequate reason. The school may need to seek support from the LA Inclusion Officer.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the main school office. It is important that all pupils arriving late following this procedure.

For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day report to the main school office.

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil will not be receiving a fulltime education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Upperby Primary School takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a pupil appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately. The school will also contact the police on 101.

Term-time holidays

As from the 19th August 2024

The Department for Education (DFE) have released guidance to support stakeholders with attendance. The guidance is statutory, and schools, trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities have regard to it as part of their effort to maintain high levels of school attendance.

See Cumberland advice:-

www.cumberland.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-attendance-and-exclusion/school-attendance.

Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

Upperby Primary School will consider every application individually, its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays is not a right. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, in advance of the intended holiday. Please note – a holiday form is no longer sufficient. It must be accompanied by a letter of explanation.

Upperby Primary School will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

Upperby Primary School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

Upperby Primary School will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, ie SATS

Parents' / carers' responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by us.

Upperby Primary School expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly achieving 90%+ attendance (school target being 97%);
 - support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
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- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify Upperby Primary School on the first day of absence, by telephoning the school by 9.00am, or by speaking to the school office staff whilst dropping off siblings.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, take an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Upperby Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

Pupils' responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher, the Pastoral Support Worker or Deputy Head or trusted adult within school. These matters will be discussed and noted by relevant staff and further action taken if required.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

Governors' responsibilities

The governors will monitor attendance at each governors meeting. The head teacher provides details of attendance in school at each Governors meeting as part of the head teacher's report. The Governors will support the head teacher in developing strategies to improve school attendance.

Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored on a day-to-day basis by the head teacher, who reports to governors about the effectiveness of the policy on request. The attendance policy is the governors' responsibility and they review its effectiveness annually. They do this by discussion with the head teacher. The policy will be reviewed every two years.