

Northern Counties School Attendance Policy

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Policy Control/Monitoring

Version:	V1.0
Approved by: (Name/Position in Organisation)	Headteacher
Date:	23.10.2023
Accountability: (Name/Position in Organisation)	Headteacher
Author of policy: (Name/Position in organisation)	Deputy Headteacher
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Revised (Date):	17/09/24
Target audience:	This policy applies to all members of the education community (Teachers/Tutors, Therapists, Support Staff, Parents, Pupils/Students, and members of the school/college governors)
Amendments/additions	
Replaces/supersedes:	
Associated Policies: (insert hyperlinks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child protection and safeguarding policy • Positive Behaviour Support policy • Local Approach to Behaviour and Exclusion Policy
Associated National Guidance	Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE, 2024

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Document status	<p>This document is controlled electronically and shall be deemed an uncontrolled documented if printed.</p> <p>The document can only be classed as 'Live' on the date of print.</p>
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Equality Impact Assessment

This document forms part of Percy Hedley’s commitment to create a positive culture of respect for all staff and service users. The intention is to identify, remove or minimise discriminatory practice in relation to the protected characteristics (race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religious or other belief, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity), as well as to promote positive practice and value the diversity of all individuals and communities.

As part of its development this document and its impact on equality has been analysed and no detriment identified.

Version Control Tracker

Version Number	Date	Author/ Title	Status	Comment/Reason for Issue/Approving Body
V1.0	17/09/24	Deputy Headteacher, NCS	Approved	Statutory

Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility

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1. Introduction

Northern Counties School is committed to providing all pupils with an appropriate and effective education in a safe and happy environment. Each child is welcomed, valued, respected and encouraged to respect themselves and others. We are a school where individuals are valued and helped to achieve their personal best. Our holistic, aspirational approach to education enables our students to make a full and positive contribution to school and community and fully prepares them for future enjoyment and fulfilment.

2. Purpose

We are committed to meeting our obligation about school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality

3. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the education community (teachers/tutors, therapists, support staff, parents, pupils/students, and members of the schools/college governors).

4. Monitoring and Compliance

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This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by Deputy Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

5. Associated Policies & References

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Positive Behaviour Support policy
- Local Approach to Behaviour and Exclusion Policy

This policy meets the requirements of [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold

- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)
- [Support for pupils where mental health issues are affecting attendance \(Effective practice examples\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The Governing Board of Trustees

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The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The link governor responsible for attendance is Anthony Olsen and can be contacted via 0191 281 5821 and Anthony.olsen@percyhedley.org.uk

6.2 The headteacher

The headteacher/principal is responsible for:

- 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 fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- The Head Teacher is Martin Lonergan and can be contacted via 0191 281 5821 and martin.lonergan@percyhedley.org.uk

6.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

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The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Simon Adams and can be contacted via 0191 281 5821 and simon.adams@percyhedley.org.uk

6.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- 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 relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Simon Adams and can be contacted via 0191 281 5821 and simon.adams@percyhedley.org.uk

6.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day and by 0930 each morning and 1.15pm each afternoon.

6.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the class teacher or Head of Department to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

6.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day and every timetabled session on time
- Email or a note in the school diary if the absence is known in advance (e.g., medical appointment)
- A telephone call to the school office before 9.30 on the first day of absence if the absence was unplanned (e.g., illness)
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

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6.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Attend every timetabled session on time

7. Recording attendance

7.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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 if 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive at school by 0900 on each school day.

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The register for the first session will be taken at 0910 and will be kept open until 0940. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.15pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm

7.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 0930 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff.

This may be via:

- Email or a note in the school diary if the absence is known in advance (e.g., medical appointment)
- A telephone call to the school office before 9.30 on the first day of absence if the absence was unplanned (e.g., illness)

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

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or another appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

7.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This can be via telephone to main office, email to class teacher or a note in home school diary.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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

7.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

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- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- The school will use the [U] code for arrivals after 30 minutes from the start of the session

Where a pupil is transported to school by parents and there is a pattern of consistently late arrival school staff will discuss this with parents and seek to offer support to resolve it. The register closes at 9.40. Anyone who arrives after this time will be marked as unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on their overall attendance.

7.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

On the first day:

- 1. A member of the class team will contact the office to check if a call and reason has been received. If no contact has been made a call to parents or carers will be made to seek an explanation.*
- 2. If no contact can be made by 12.00, the emergency contacts will be called. If no contact can be made with any emergency contacts by 1.30, staff will visit the home. They may knock on neighbours' doors. If staff are unable to get a reply from the home the child will be reported as missing from education and a DSL will inform social services and the local authority.*
- 3. 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*
- 4. Where a reason for absence is sought and given, the register will be amended to reflect this. However, a late arrival after the register has closed will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.*
- 5. Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer*

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If a child returns to school where no contact has been able to have been made during the absence, the parents or carers will receive a letter from the Headteacher reiterating the school procedures for pupil absence.

If a parent contacts the school to say a child is ill and will be off for 4 days or more the school will do a "Safe and Well" check after the third day. This may be via telephone, video call or home visit. Where possible staff will communicate directly with the pupil.

If a child is admitted to hospital, with appropriate consent, a member of staff will contact the hospital to liaise with them about the child's care, treatment and return to school.

The school will record and monitor where pupils arrive late at school because of difficulties with organised transport (taxi or minibuses). Where patterns of consistent late running by contractors occur school will liaise with parents and local authority SEND transport to resolve the issue.

When classes go off site during school time details must be recorded in the school office.

7.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels at parents evenings, in annual review meetings, and through informal communications

8. Authorised and unauthorised absence

8.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as an incident or occasion that cannot be avoided or rescheduled, and attendance is compulsory, and to not attend would be detrimental to the learner.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via your child's teacher or the main office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

8.2 Extended Leave

When a child is absent from school for an extended period (i.e 15 school days or more) parent/carer should advise the school of the temporary address

8.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued a fine, or penalty notice, **each** parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

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- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action should be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

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 fixed period or permanent exclusion. These penalty notices are charged at £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days

9. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

The school will celebrate good attendance in assemblies, class time, weekly Headteacher Awards and end of year awards presentations. Where attendance has significantly improved, recognition will be shared with parents or carers.

10. Attendance monitoring

The Lead Administrator and others are responsible for monitoring attendance within school on a weekly basis. Leaders will support individuals to improve their attendance where frequent or long-term absences are identified. A plan to improve school attendance will be made and a date agreed for its review. The Lead Administrator prepares attendance reports weekly for safeguarding and senior leadership teams weekly to look at all absences and take appropriate actions for individuals.

The school's will work with local authority Attendance Officers where appropriate.

Any absences of concern are reported immediately to the DSL, in person or via CPOMS

Referrals may be made to the school's Wellbeing and Engagement Officer for certain types of absence.

Therapists and other staff may also be involved in all multi-disciplinary strategies to improve attendance.

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The attendance of each pupil is regularly assessed as part of the school's assessment procedure, as it impacts on learning and progress. Individual targets, interventions and motivational actions will be made, dependant on each individual's circumstances.

The Senior Leadership Team review school attendance on a half termly basis to review overall attendance and identify any patterns of concern and report to the Trust's Safeguarding group (and then into Trustees) and to the local governing board.

If no progress is made in efforts to improve attendance, the local authority will be notified. This could ultimately result in a review of school placement. The school works closely with the Attendance Officer from placing authorities.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring overall attendance and will report each term to the Governing Body.

10.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority levels through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

10.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

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- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

10.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

10.4 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.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils whom the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Where a child is out of school for long period due to ill health, as they sometimes are at Northern Counties School, staff will work with the family and medical professionals to offer support, maintain contact and to continue to deliver education through alternative means if this is in the best interests of the child. This may be through a combination of contact by phone, home or hospital visits, provision of relevant schoolwork and virtual contact with school staff and peers. On the advice of medical, or other, professionals, school will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to support a child back to school as soon as practically possible.
- In instances where a pupil is refusing to attend despite parents' best efforts, the school Wellbeing Officer and senior leadership team will support class teams in encouraging or supporting good attendance. The school may seek to work in collaboration with external agencies such as CYPS, CAMHS and social services to

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support the child to access education The Headteacher will consider cases individually and decide on the most appropriate code to record this on the register.

- Where a pupil is not attending due to parents/carer refusing to send them in, despite the school being able to meet the pupil's needs, this will be marked as unauthorised absence and no attempt to home educate will be facilitated while the pupil has a suitable place in school.
- If there are any Child Protection concerns these will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on the first day of absence, or subsequently if new concerns arise. The DSL will decide on the appropriate steps.

11. Support

The school will:

- Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School-based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

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Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following registration is effective from the 19th of August 2024 - [‘Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2024’](#)

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	The pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	The pupil is present at the afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	The pupil arrives late before the register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
K	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the local authority
D	Dual registered	The pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	The pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	The pupil is on a work experience placement

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Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Leave of absence	The pupil should be participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
C2	Leave of absence – Part-time timetable	For compulsory school-age pupils who are on an agreed part-time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	The pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness	The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J1	Leave of absence	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ admission to another educational institution
M	Medical/dental appointment	The pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations

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T	Parents travelling for occupational purposes	The pupil is a mobile child due to the parent travelling from place to place for business/trade
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend due to a lack of travel arrangements made by the local authority
Y1	Unable to attend due to lack of transport	Where the school or local authority normally provides transport which is not available; and the school is beyond reasonable walking distance
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	The pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed	Where the whole school was planned to be open but remained closed unexpectedly
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	If the pupil is in police detention or on remand to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Pupil travel to or attendance at the school would be contrary to restrictions set by the secretary of state for health
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent

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Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	The pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	The school is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	The pupil arrived late and after 30 minutes from the start of the session

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

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