



Rationale

St Lawrence's Church of England Primary School is committed to providing a welcoming environment where every child is valued. We hope to make a difference to their lives and consequently aim to balance learning, fun and boundaries. We believe that all pupils benefit from education and from regular school attendance. St Lawrence's will do all that we can to ensure that all pupils attend school to their fullest and that any barriers to full attendance are identified and acted upon as soon as possible.

Aims

1. To maintain regular attendance to benefit from every learning opportunity
2. To ensure a commitment to learning
3. To ensure the safety of pupils
4. To instill good life skills

Definitions:

School activity strives to promote good attendance. Absences from school will always be unauthorised unless there is an exceptional circumstance.

Good Attendance:

Good attendance at school is vital for pupils to achieve their full educational potential. Good attendance ensures:

- continuity of learning which makes progress, attainment and retention of learning easier,
- continuity of relationships and friendships, leading to positive emotional wellbeing,
- good habits are formed for later life,
- The effective safeguarding of pupils.

Guidelines

Expectations

We expect the following from all pupils:

- That they attend school regularly and get their registration mark on time.
- That they will arrive on time and appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will inform a member of staff of their choice, of anything that may prevent them from attending school, or getting to school on time.

We expect the following from parents:

- That they will ensure that their children attend school.
- That they will ensure that their children are able to arrive on time for school.
- That they will contact the school in confidence whenever there may be something that occurs that may keep their children away from school.
- That they will give a reason for their child's absence, via the telephone, class teacher, or a message left in the school office or a note on their return to school. Do you have e mail, text or a voicemail for parents?
- Will give an indication of when their children are likely to return to school.



What parents and pupils can expect from the school:

- A broad and balanced curriculum
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents from the school office when their child fails to attend school without providing a good reason.
- Encouragement to good attendance.
- Immediate and confidential action on any barriers to good school attendance.

Registration:

Codes:

There are a series of codes which are used to denote authorised and unauthorised absence. These can be seen in the document

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

It is the school's responsibility to ensure the correct codes are recorded and that patterns and trends in children's absence are analysed.

Punctuality and the Closure of Registers:

We need children to arrive at school punctually so that they can access all learning opportunities. Late arrivals can disrupt lessons and it is embarrassing for the child which may encourage further absence. We encourage parents in ensuring their children arrive at school on time. Children are expected to arrive in school for the start of the school day which is at 8.50am.

Children arriving before 9.50 am but after 9.00am should be recorded as Late (using the code 'L'); this will be reported as an attendance.

Children arriving after 10.00 am should be recorded as 'late after registration closes' (using the code 'U'); this will be reported as an absence.

Medical Appointments:

We encourage families to book medical appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, the following codes are used:

If a child arrives back in school before the official close of the register (10.00 am), this will be recorded as 'L' and therefore the child is marked as attending school. If a child arrive back after the official close of the register, the child will be marked as 'M' for a medical appointment.

Parents must sign their children out at the front office if they are taking them to an appointment and the children have already registered.

Requests for Leave of Absence:

We believe that all children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible and for this reason. As a general rule, we do not authorise leave of absence (including holidays) in term time

The Secretary of State for Education expects the Heads of School to unauthorise all requests for leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. Following guidance written by the City of York Council (Guidance relating To Pupil Leave of Absence from school for Family Holidays June 2013), the Head Teacher may only authorise a leave of absence when there are exceptional circumstances. These may include:

- Service personnel who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.
- Any other circumstances the Principal/Head of School consider being exceptional.



The City of York guidance expects that requests for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods
- Overlap with beginning or end of term

If we know that the pupil has siblings in other schools, we are advised to make contact with the other school to come to an agreement when coding the leave of absence (i.e. whether the leave of absence is authorised or unauthorised).

The City of York Council may issue parents who take their children out of school for holidays in term time, or indeed any unauthorised absence, with a Fixed Penalty Notice. A notice can be issued to each parent for each child. For example a family with two parents and two children could be issued with four penalty notices. Each Fixed Penalty Notices require parents to make a payment of £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120, if paid after 21 days and before the end of the 28th day. If parents do not pay the Fixed Penalty Notice they may be prosecuted.

In certain circumstances children taken out of school for holidays or taking leave of absence can be removed from the school register and therefore lose their place in the school.

Authorised Absence:

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority.

Unauthorised Absence:

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence or has received no reason from the parent or carer.

Total Absence:

Total absence represents all the time children are absent from school, regardless of whether this is authorised or unauthorised.

Persistent Absence (PA):

The DfES defines a 'persistent absentee' as a pupil who, at any point in the year, has accumulated absence at 5% or more of the available sessions regardless of whether or not any of it is authorised. The PA status may change as the terms progress but these pupils are at particular risk of achieving poor outcomes at school and beyond.

Religious Observance:

The DfES recommends the use of code 'R' when children are absent from school to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.

This is interpreted to mean that if the parents' religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival then the school must authorise the absence. Where necessary, school should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

If the religious body has not set the day apart there is no requirement for the school to approve the absence or grant a leave absence. Additional holidays and days off linked to the religious festival but not 'exclusively set aside for religious observance' by the religious body are not marked using code 'R' and may be regarded as Unauthorised Absence.



Attendance Protocol for Parents

The protocol details the daily routine for promoting good attendance. It should be read in conjunction with this attendance policy.

The government have recently raised the target attendance rate to 97% for all pupils. We therefore, have a legal duty to support families to reach this target. This document sets out how the school promotes good attendance through Local Authority's Fast Trace System.

In order to fully support our families, an attendance team has been created. This includes: Mrs Tori Nicholas-Brown, Mrs Crooks and Mrs Woodall. This team will be responsible for contacting families, monitoring attendance and analysing attendance data.

Encouraging Good Attendance

We will encourage good attendance in the following ways:

- Accurate completion of registers at the beginning of each session.
- A record of authorised and unauthorised absences on every pupil's school report.
- Rewards for those pupils who show good or improved attendance.
- Work closely with the Local Authority who will contact families when there are concerns about the number or nature of a pupil's absences.
- Prompt communication with parents when their child fails to attend without an explanation.
- Parents will be issued with guidelines on their rights and responsibilities.
- Prizes will be awarded to pupils with 100% attendance in any year.
- Postcards will be sent home and awarded to pupils who show significantly improved attendance.
- The class with the best attendance is celebrated in our weekly newsletter

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school regularly we will respond in the following manner:

- If a notification of absence (verbal or written) is not received from a parent they will be contacted by a telephone call from the school to ascertain the reason for the absence.
- If no response is received the parent is contacted again by telephone.
- If no response is received then these are classed as unauthorised absences.
- The Pastoral Care Officer will follow up any concerns regarding any unauthorised absences by telephone or home visit.
- Parents of children with high levels of absence may be invited into a meeting or Attendance Panel at school. A representative from the Local Authority may also join the meetings.
- Lateness will be recorded. Parents of children who are persistently late will be contacted and asked to explain reasons for lateness.

What to do when no-contact from a parent regarding a child's absence

Day 1 by 9.30 am

1. *Ring every number on the student information forms*
2. *Ring every number on the student information forms using Pastoral's mobile phone*
3. *Send a text and an email asking the parent/carer to contact school regarding their child's absence as soon as possible.*
4. *Inquire of siblings/friends if they know any reason why the child might be off*

Day 1 if child considered at risk

5. *Contact the school of any siblings*
6. *If considered safe, and if possible, two members of staff to call at the house.*
7. *If already involved with the family- contact social services or lead practitioner of FEHA.*
8. *If still no contact – call Front Door or 101 to raise concerns about no- contact.*



Day 2

1. Repeat 1-4 from above
2. Contact the school of any siblings
3. If considered safe, and if possible, two members of staff to call at the house
4. If still no contact – call 101 to raise concerns about no-contact.

Persistent Offenders

Where non-contact is persistent problem call Mark Smith – City of York Council Attendance Officer or call Children's Service's to raise concerns

Student Information Forms

- Schools should ensure that they have a minimum of three people's contact information for every child (e.g. parents/carers, plus other family members) including any workplace numbers.
- Schools should ensure that they have a regular system for updating student information.

Organisation

In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make their attendance and punctuality a high priority and convey to the pupils by their behaviour, the importance of the education being provided. This means ensuring that all staff arrive to lessons on time and well prepared.

In addition there are the following responsibilities:

Headteacher:

- To oversee the whole policy.
- To report to governors.
- To report to the Local Authority.
- To liaise with the LA as appropriate.
- To report to MAT

Pastoral Care Officer

- Monitor attendance across year groups.
- Analyse attendance data alongside academic data.
- Identify pupils and groups at risk of becoming persistent absentees, set appropriate targets and implement intervention strategies to meet targets.
- Ensure that information is regularly communicated and that all staff is aware of persistent absentees.
- Ensure that parents are aware of their legal responsibility and provide support to help them meet this responsibility and promote good attendance. We will ensure that information is communicated through a variety of means.
- Work and communicate effectively with external agencies to ensure good attendance and children's safety.
- The Pastoral Care Officer will follow up any concerns regarding any unauthorised absences by telephone or home visit.

Class Teacher:

- To ensure that Integris is ready for the pupils to self-register.
- To ensure registers are complete accurately and on time.
- To ensure numbers of pupils are recorded for fire reasons on the laminated sheet near the door.
- To save registers to the school office at the appropriate time.
- To record all reasons for absence on the official absence note or using Integris notes, using the appropriate code.
- To make a note of any verbal authorisations.
- To inform the Pastoral Care Officer of any concerns.
- To encourage good attendance and punctuality.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator:

- To assist in planning the return of long term absentees.
- To liaise with multi agencies such as behaviour support for persistent and concerning absentees.

Local Authority

Role of the Local Authority:

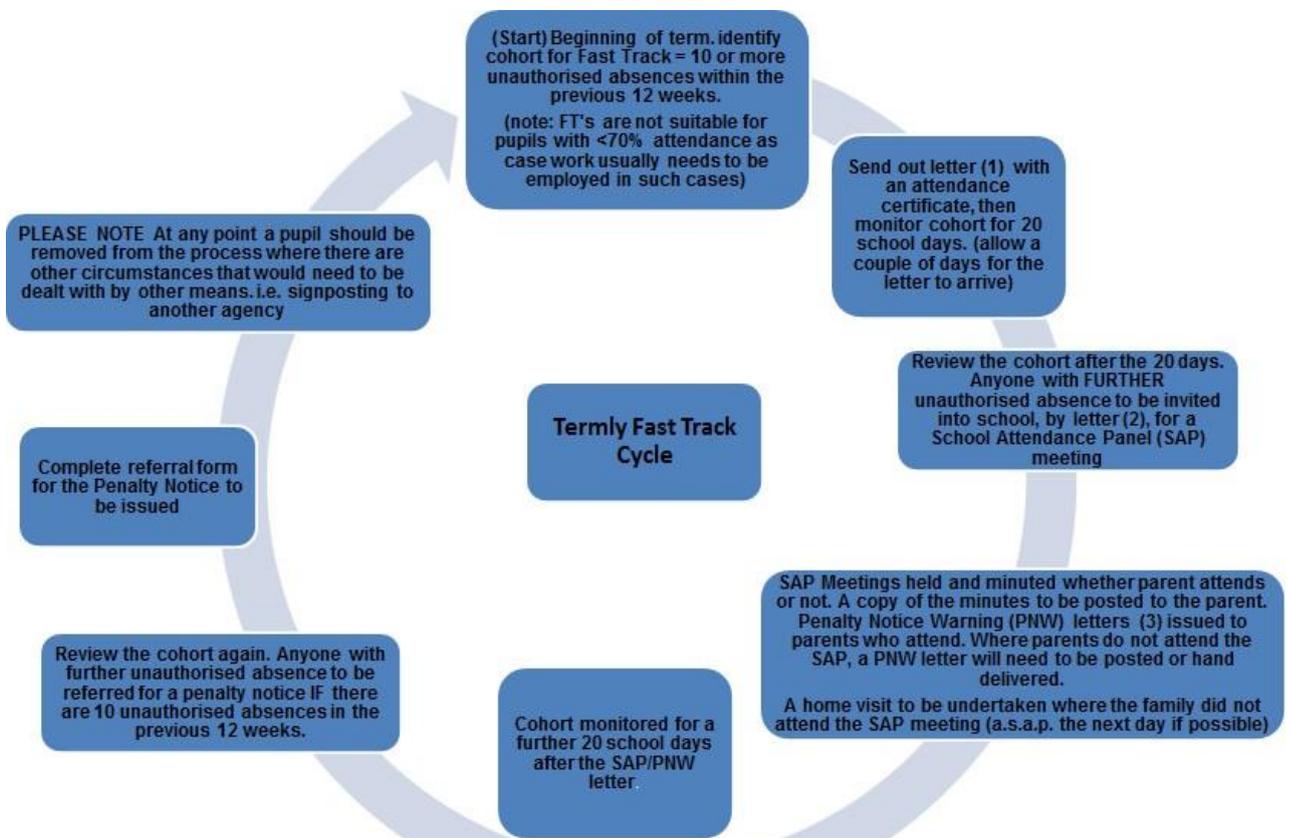
The Local Area Team is available to offer further information regarding a child and advice on services available that may help reduce any barriers to a child achieving good attendance. The Schools Adviser for Attendance supports the school with attendance panels and provides guidance on national legislation and local initiatives.

Governors

A report on attendance will be made to governors regularly. This will include National (MAT) comparison details of attendance figures and an overview of measures taken to improve attendance.

Intervening with Attendance Concerns:

Where we have concerns around a pupil's attendance we have a range of strategies to support and intervene. The Pastoral Care Officer monitors the attendance of all pupils on a half termly basis and more regularly for those pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern. An attendance tracking system is in place which sets out agreed actions to be taken at different levels of attendance/absence.





Attendance Panels:

When the school has offered and provided support to parents/carers to improve a pupil's attendance, and the pupils' attendance still causes concerns, the parents/carers are invited to an attendance panel. The panel is attended by the Head of School, Pastoral Care Officer and the Local Authority Schools Adviser for Attendance. At the panel meetings there are opportunities for issues preventing good attendance to be discussed, supported and hopefully resolved. The legal responsibilities of the parent/carer are made explicit and clear expectations for future attendance will be agreed.

One, or more, further panel meetings are planned to monitor and review improvements and progress towards good attendance.

Fixed Penalties:

Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their children to maximise their educational opportunities. It is an offence if a parent or carer fails to secure a child's attendance. When the school has supported a family to improve attendance, and the use of attendance panels have failed to secure an improvement, the school may work with the Local Authority to consider either prosecuting parents for failing to ensure their child attends school regularly or issuing a 'Fixed Penalty Notice'. This will be done in line with the 'City of York Code of Conduct for the use of Education Related Fixed Penalty Notices' (September 2013) – see Appendix 1.

Relevant Legislation

- [The Children Act 1989 \(section 36\);](#)
- [The Education Act 1996 \(sections 7, 19, 436A, 437-39, 443-447\);](#)
- [Crime and Disorder Act 1998 \(section 8 -10\);](#)
- [The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 \(ASB Act\) \(sections 19-24\);](#)
- [The Education Act 2005 \(section 115\);](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006 \(sections 97-111\) ;](#)
- [The Education \(Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders\) \(England\) Regulations 2007;](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) Regulations 2007;](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2012;](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013; and](#)
- [The Education and Skills Act 2008 \(section 2 and 155\);](#)
- [Education \(Pupil Registration\) Regulations 1995 and amendments.](#)

Mrs. Victoria Nicholas-Brown
Pastoral Care & Safeguarding Officer

Mrs Helen Coles
Headteacher

Date: September 2022



Appendix 1

City of York Council

Adults, Children and Education

Children's Advice Team

City of York Code of Conduct for the use of Education Related Fixed Penalty Notices **September 2013**

	Penalty Notice Protocol
1	Legal Basis
1.1	Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LEA officers, Head Teachers (& Deputy and Assistant Head teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The specific regulations governing the use of penalty notices are: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
1.2	The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform with all requirements of the Human Rights Act and all Equal Opportunities legislation.
1.3	The Local Authority (LA) has the prime responsibility for developing the protocol within which all partners named in the Act will operate.
2	Rationale
2.1	Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities.
2.2	In law an offence occurs if a parent or carer fails to secure a child's attendance at the school at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate. The Children's Advice Team (CAT) delivers this LA responsibility.
2.3	Parents and pupils are supported at school and at partner agencies level to overcome barriers to regular attendance through a wide range of assessment and intervention strategies such as the use of Integrated Working tools . Sanctions of any nature are for use only where parental co-operation in this process is either absent or deemed insufficient to resolve the presenting problem.
2.4	Sanctions are never used as a punishment, only as a means of enforcing attendance where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure an improvement.
2.5	These measures are permissive and it is for individual governing bodies and the LA to decide whether to use them. In exercising these powers governing bodies, head teachers and local authority officers should have regard to their safeguarding duties.
3	Circumstances Where a Penalty Notice May be Issued
3.1	A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence. Use of Penalty Notices will be restricted to one per pupil per academic year. In cases where families contain more than one poor-attending pupil, multiple issues may occur but this will be the subject of careful consideration and co-ordination.
3.2	There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent or carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a Penalty Notice.
3.3	The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps) parentally-condoned absences excessive leave of absence in term-time excessive delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed)
3.4	To ensure consistent practice Penalty Notices will be issued only when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least 10 sessions (5 school days) have been lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current term the liable parent or carer responsible for the pupil has received a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement
3.5	The requirement to issue a formal warning will be waived if a period of unauthorised absence occurs of at least 10 sessions in the current term because leave of absence for a holiday is taken in term time without school permission.
3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schools must consider every aspect of a pupil's case before considering whether a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. This must include discussions with the Schools Adviser: Attendance and Integrated Working and any other service that have involvement with or knowledge of the pupil and his or her family. Where absence is regular and ongoing rather than due to unauthorised leave of absence schools are expected to follow the School Attendance Absence Prevention Route Map before requesting a Fixed Penalty Notice. Requests for Fixed Penalty Notices where pupils have ongoing absences will only be issued where school can evidence they have followed the guidance on Attendance and Integrated Working available on the YorOK website.