



Cowling Community Primary School



Attendance Policy

Date this policy was adopted by the school	October 2022
This policy will be reviewed	October 2025

This policy is in line with the 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance (August 2024)

The importance of school attendance

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, Cowling Community Primary School will work with pupils, parents and outside agencies to remove any barriers to attendance. This will be done by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. We understand that the foundation to good attendance is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils want to learn and thrive.

There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Regular attendance and punctuality is very important. Children who frequently miss school often fall behind with their work because they fail to learn the basics, which are built upon later. Poor attendance can also lead to feelings of isolation due to lack of social friendships and disengagement from learning. It is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.

Pupils right to education and the law

The law entitles children 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/carers to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents/carers decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. 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 having permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Working together to improve attendance

EXPECTATIONS

Cowling Community Primary School works alongside our parents and partners to aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

We promote the benefits of good attendance (newsletters, website, meetings). Cowling Community Primary School sets high expectations for every pupil (school target of 100-97%) and these are communicated to our school audience.

All teachers and non-teaching staff understand the importance of good attendance and are consistent in their communication with pupils and parents.

Cowling Community Primary School's Governing Body will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Set high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils and parents.
- Review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends.
- Help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Recognise that attendance improvement does not happen in isolation and will prioritise it in wider improvement strategies. For example SEND, safeguarding and raising attainment.
- Ensure high aspirations are maintained for all pupils, but that processes and support are adapted to the individual needs of particular pupils. This includes those with long-term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.

Start of the School Day

Children are welcome to arrive on site from 08.50 am (Please note that children should not be on site prior to this time as there is no supervision). Registration is at 09.00 am. Pupils arriving after this time will be registered with a late mark and parents/carers will be asked for a reason for the lateness. If a child arrives after registration closes (09.15am for all pupils), they will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the whole morning sessions. Arriving late means that your child will miss important instructions for the day as well as learning time.

Short-term absences

Minor illnesses/ailments such as coughs and colds are not usually a reason to keep a child at home but occasionally there will be times when children are simply too ill to attend school. If your child is ill, please follow the procedures below:

Illness: For absences of up to 7 days, parents/carers must contact school by telephone or email on the first day before 09.15am. If the absence is likely to be prolonged, keep school informed at regular intervals. A child, who has an upset stomach, must remain at home until 48 hours after the last incident of sickness and / or diarrhoea.

Medical Appointments: Absences can be authorised by the school for medical or dental appointments during the school day. However, every effort must be made to try to make these appointments outside of school time.

Long-term absences

Occasionally, some pupils experience health or other difficulties that prevent them from attending school for some time. We deal with each case individually, agreeing procedures for re-integrating these pupils with each family as the need arises. Please contact the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher if your child would benefit from such an arrangement.

Leave of absence from school during term time

Occasionally parents/carers may require their child to be absent due to other reasons. A request for leave of absence in term time must be made to the Headteacher using the Request for Leave of Absence Form. Each leave application is considered individually, taking into account any factors presented by the family. Leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Holidays in term time

Taking a pupil out of school during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt your child's educational progress. The law says that parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time. On application made by the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides, schools have a discretionary power to grant up to 10 days absence in a school year for a family holiday if they believe that the circumstances warrant it. No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a holiday as a right. The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment.
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company.
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.

- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

Parents / carers who take a child on leave in term time without the permission of the school risk being issued with a penalty notice fine by the Local Authority for unauthorised absences. The amount payable for a fixed penalty notice is £120 per parent per child reducing to £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days. If the penalty notice is not paid in full by 28 days then the authority will commence legal proceedings for the original offence of 'failing to ensure your child attends school regularly' under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

MONITORING

Cowling Community Primary School rigorously monitors attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched. Cowling Community Primary School uses an electronic management information system to keep our attendance and admission data. This improves accuracy and speeds up the process of sharing and analysing information. Registers are a legal record and we must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry.

Emma Pease is the designated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. It is her responsibility to have an oversight of data analysis and to communicate these to the Governing Body on a half-termly basis. Data will be monitored and analysed weekly to identify attendance patterns and trends. Mrs Pease and the governors will analyse the attendance data (by gender, year group, SEND and Pupil Premium) and respond accordingly (Please see Appendix A). Regular attendance reports will be given to class teachers, SEND coordinators, Designated Safeguard Leads and Pupil Premium Lead.

Attendance figures are published for individual pupils in their school report at the end of each year.

Persistent Absence

Governors monitor attendance each half term. Attendance below 90% is classed as persistent absence. Cowling School will notify parents/carers if there are concerns about their child's attendance. We will work alongside the local authority to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance. At this point, parents/carers may be at risk of prosecution.

Severe Absence

Attendance below 50% is classed as severe absence. These families will be prioritised by the relevant services. This may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include considerations for an EHCP or an alternative form of educational provision to help overcome barriers to being in school. If all avenues of support have been

facilitated and the appropriate support provided but severe absence continues, it is likely to constitute as neglect. In these cases, the local authority and ourselves will be conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment.

LISTENING AND UNDERSTANDING

When a pattern is spotted, discussions will be held with parents and the best placed person in school who has a positive relationship with the family. All partners will understand the barriers to attendance and agree how we can work together to resolve them. We will hold regular meetings to discuss attendance and engagement at school.

FACILITATING SUPPORT

Cowling Community Primary School will help families to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include early help or support of the whole family where absence is a result of wider issues. These actions will be regularly discussed and reviewed together with families. The school will monitor the impact of any intervention and make adjustments where necessary.

FORMALISING SUPPORT

If absence persists and voluntary support is not working or being engaged with, we will work alongside partners to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is in place to help families respond. Depending on the circumstances, this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order. A fixed penalty notice may be issued where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with.

ENFORCEMENT

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, we will use statutory intervention or prosecution to enforce attendance and to protect the pupil's right to education.

Appendix A

Cause for concern	Action(s) to be considered
<p>95% attendance or below at any point within an academic year after October half term.</p> <p>Letter 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance will be monitored by the School and attendance history considered. • Contact with parents/carers if deemed necessary
<p>90% attendance or below at any point within an academic year after October half term</p> <p>Letter 2 70%-90%</p> <p>Letter 3 Below 70%</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter to parents/carers asking them to work with external support to improve attendance • Discussion with parents/carers to develop a plan of action • Discussion with ESW service re possible referral for consideration within NYCC policy and practice guidance
<p>Repeated incidences of illness-related absence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with parents/carers • Referral to school nurse • Request that parents/carers provide proof of doctor's involvement (appointment card with child's name on / letter / copy of prescription etc) • Work for the pupil might be sent home to be completed
<p>Repeated arrival at school after 9.00am</p>	<p>This will be marked in the class register as a LATE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter to parents/carers requesting that the matter is addressed and offering support • An action plan to be established • Consideration of request from outside agencies through the Common Assessment Framework
<p>Repeated arrival at school after 9.15am</p>	<p>This will be marked in the class register as an UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE for the session.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An action plan to be established • Consideration of request from outside agencies through the Common Assessment Framework • Referral to the Education Social Worker for consideration within NYCC policy and practice guidelines

Appendix B

