



POLICY NAME: Attendance Policy

REVIEWED: September 2025

REVIEW PERIOD: Annual

REVIEWER: Assistant Headteacher



Version Control 1

Responsibility for Policy:	Rachael Butler
Policy approval/date:	September 2025
Frequency of Review:	Annual
Next Review date:	September 2026
Related Policies:	
Minor Revisions:	<p>A minor revision was made on 7th September 2025</p> <p>On page 3, replaced 'ensure maximum attendance' with 'reduce absence'.</p> <p>On page 6, replaced 'attendance patterns' with 'absence patterns'.</p> <p>On page 7, replaced 'up to date attendance data' with up to date absence data, and 'trends in attendance' with 'trends in absence'.</p> <p>On page 7, replaced 'regular' with 'absence' and 'attendance' with absence'</p> <p>On page 8, replaced previous image with new image to be used across the school</p>
Major changes	<p>On page 9, the leave of absence section has been updated in line with the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' guidance (August 2024) and The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024</p>
Full re-write	

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1. **Aims**

Kirkby High School is committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

As a school, our target is for all students to be below 4% absence.

Kirkby High School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all students. On the basis of equal opportunities, we will take measures to encourage regular and punctual attendance at school, and in all lessons. We believe our students have a right to education and to do this they require continuity and progression in their learning. Consistent attendance is an essential foundation in order to achieve potential.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career, and as a school we will organise and do all we can to reduce absence for all students. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems that affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents, students and relevant support agencies to resolve those problems as

quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times.

Purposes of the policy

- To ensure all stakeholders understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and the impact this can have on academic achievement
- To foster strong home-school links, ensuring that both school and home fully support a child in aiming for 0% absence from school
- To ensure all students achieve a maximum of 4% absence
- To create a whole school culture where good attendance and punctuality are considered the norm, and is valued by all stakeholders
- To promote a positive, welcoming and supportive atmosphere where students feel like they belong
- To outline all stakeholder responsibilities for ensuring good, regular student attendance

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Working together to improve school attendance (August 2024) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on 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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

By law, all children of compulsory school age must get a suitable, full-time education. It is the parent/ carer's responsibility to ensure that their child attends school both regularly and punctually, in line with the 1996 Education Act.

As a school, we are responsible by law to record attendance under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, and to therefore report poor attendance to the Local Authority if a parent/ carer fails to ensure that their child attends school regularly, even if they are missing school without the parent/ carer's knowledge. The Local Authority may take one of the following courses of action:

- Attendance contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders

- Penalty notices

3. Statutory duty of parents:

In section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, it specifies that parents or carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that students of compulsory school age are educated, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. *Otherwise* may include, but is not limited to, special units, hospitals, education at home by a parent, a private tutor or further education colleges.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines a parent as:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person

Parents should be aware that even though they may not live at the same house as the child, they are still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

As long as a parent can demonstrate to the Local Authority that the education is full-time and suitable for the child's needs, the law allows parents to choose the alternative options up to the child's specified leaving date.

4. Roles and responsibilities for attendance

Attendance Team

- Senior Leader with responsibility for championing and improving attendance and punctuality – Mrs R. Butler – r.butler@kirkbyhighschool.net
- Attendance manager – Mrs G. Harrison – g.harrison@kirkbyhighschool.net
- Attendance officer – Mrs R. Perkins – r.perkins@kirkbyhighschool.net
- Attendance mentors
 - Miss J. Courtney-Ward
 - Miss Christine Ginley
 - Miss Victoria Morgan
 - Miss Maria Horabin

In order to maximise a child's potential, it is crucial that all stakeholders work collaboratively. In order to achieve this, we expect that:

Parents will:

- familiarise themselves with the School Attendance Policy
- ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually, aiming for a maximum of 4% absence rate
- contact school on the first day of their child's absence, and maintain daily contact should the absence continue

- provide a reason for their child's absence
- support regular attendance by requesting medical appointments are made outside school hours; however, if this is not possible an appointment card must be provided to support their child's attendance. If an appointment is made in the school day, student should attend school before leaving to go the appointment.
- be proactive in contacting school where attendance issues develop, allowing for early identification and solutions to be put in place to support
- engage in any school intervention offered, such as attending meetings and the signing of attendance contracts in order to continue the collaborative approach to improving their child's attendance

Students will:

- attend school on time each day
- achieve our whole-school target of a maximum of 4% absence rate
- speak to parents/ carers /teachers if issues arise that may have an effect on attendance in order for school and home to resolve these
- cooperate and engage fully in support and intervention offered by school
- arrive to school appropriately prepared for the day

School staff will:

- create a welcoming and supportive atmosphere where pupils feel they belong
- implement a three-stage approach to promptly and consistently address attendance issues
- ensure those students returning following a period of absence are supported to build confidence and bridge gaps
- provide a quality education
- contribute to creating a whole school culture that promotes the importance of good attendance and punctuality and celebrate achievements
- follow a clear and fully understood registration process, in accordance with statutory regulations to follow up any absence
- record attendance regularly and accurately, including attendance at all timetables lessons
- build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them
- communicate efficiently and effectively with parents when a student fails to attend school
- work with other local schools, the appropriate agencies and Local Authority as per the DfE guidelines when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

Attendance procedures

- Register opens at 8:40am and closes at 9:10am
- Afternoon attendance mark given at 12:15pm
- School day finishes at 3:10pm
- First day calling to address absences
- Home visits
- Weekly Attendance Team meetings to analyse data and implement three-stage approach

Use of Attendance Data

As early intervention is essential in preventing poor attendance escalating, we have robust data analysis procedures in place. In order to provide immediate support, we will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly absence patterns across the school, including individual students, year groups, gender groups, SEND and Pupil Premium and deliver timely intervention and support in a targeted way to students and families
- Compare against historic data and benchmark against local, regional and national data to make accurate judgements about the effectiveness of attendance procedures
- Provide up to date absence information to relevant staff (form tutors/heads of year/attendance team/safeguarding team/SENDSCO), to facilitate discussions with students
- Conduct an analysis of half term and full year to identify any trends in absence, eg specific days

Rewarding Attendance

As a school, we feel it is important to recognise and reward good and improving attendance and punctuality. To assist us all to focus on this, we will:

- promote a culture across school which identifies the importance of low absence and being punctual
- provide attendance rewards, such as post cards home, telephone calls, fast passes, pens and prize draws
- celebrate improvements in absence with students
- provide parents with absence updates at regular intervals
- send regular communication home to reward absence of 4% or below
- record weekly form group absence on the attendance poster in the form room
- consult the student parliament to further develop our reward systems

Action on Poor Attendance

Poor attendance can be identified in a number of ways, such as Persistent Absence. The DfE classes a child as being persistently absent when their enrolment's overall absence equates to 10% or more of their possible sessions, which is around 3 sessions of absence per half-term.

As a school, we will apply a variety of interventions to tackle absence, such as:

- Liaison between school leadership, Attendance Mentors and Attendance Officer to identify absence issues
- Regular meetings between school leadership and the Attendance Team to discuss actions and student absence
- Home visits will be carried out as appropriate and telephone calls made home
- Meetings will be arranged where appropriate with students and parents/ carers to discuss student absences and to discuss steps to support and improve attendance
- The use of attendance support plans and attendance contracts to be signed by parents/ carers, students and school to offer support and guidance, whilst creating a strong home-school link to improve attendance
- Personal attendance plans will be set for students who are persistently absent to support reintegration when necessary
- Attendance conveyor belt will be utilised to support the reintegration of students back into school
- Links with outside agencies will be established if appropriate
- Absence warning letters will be sent to parents as per the school attendance Three Stage Approach

- Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by the Local Authority if a student's attendance fails to improve following intervention strategies implemented by school, which may lead to prosecution if attendance does not then improve

Absence percentages and their impact on learning are defined as the following:



5. Understanding Types of Absence

In school, students are expected to attend for 190 days over an academic year. Every half day (= 1 session) has to be classified as either authorised or unauthorised, which is why it is crucial that school are informed as soon as possible about a student's absence.

Authorised absences are a missed session from school for a good reason, such as illness or medical/ dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time.

Unauthorised absences (codes O, U or G) are those which the school does not consider reasonable. It is the decision of the school, not the parents, regarding the authorisation of absence. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority beginning legal proceedings. Absences will not be authorised in the following circumstances:

- parents/ carers keeping children off unnecessarily
- non agreement with a school sanction
- truancy
- an unacceptable reason is provided for absence
- shopping, birthdays or looking after other children
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- students who arrive after the school register has closed
- holidays – Kirkby High School, in line with current Government legislation, has a zero-tolerance approach to requests for leave of absence during term time and requests for a leave of absence for a holiday will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances (section 11 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024)

The final decision will be made by the Headteacher.

6. Leave of Absence

Taking leave or holidays during term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to support us by not taking your child away during school time. School makes it clear that it actively discourages the taking of holidays in term time, as this is detrimental to the continuity of a child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to take time off in school for the purpose of a holiday. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 act makes it clear that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. No holidays will be authorised in term time unless it is deemed as exceptional circumstances by the Headteacher.

Section 11 of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 states that leave may be granted for

- an interview for employment
- admission to another educational institution
- a public examination
- an appropriate person has asked for the leave in advance; and
- the authorised person thinks that leave should be given because of the exceptional circumstances of the request

All applications for leave must be made at least 3 weeks in advance in writing to the Headteacher. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. The 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (DfE 2024) guidance states that a school cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If a leave of absence is not applied for in advance, it should not be granted.

When making the decision, the school will consider the individual circumstances of each application, including any previous pattern of leave, both current and historical attendance and the length of leave requested.

7. Responding to Non-Attendance

When a student does not attend school and there is no prior contact from home, parents/ carers can expect:

- a member of school staff to contact home on the first day of absence to make the parent/ carer aware the student is absent, ask for an explanation and log the parental response to determine the appropriate attendance code. If contact cannot be made in the morning, a second telephone call may be made or a home visit arranged by one of the school's attendance mentors
- the absence will be logged as 'unauthorised' should an acceptable reason not be provided
- school to follow all recommended statutory action, such as criminal proceedings in the case of persistent absenteeism

8. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when 10% or more schooling on an ongoing basis is missed for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing a considerable amount of damage to any student's educational prospects and we need parent's/ carer's full support and cooperation to tackle this and support improvement.

9. Absence Procedures

If your child is absent, you must:

contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence to inform school of the reason.

If your child is absent, we:

- will contact you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you that day
- may arrange for a home visit to be made by our attendance mentors
- may invite you in to school and conduct an attendance meeting, involving the signing of an attendance contract should the absences persist, to work collaboratively to improve your child's attendance

10. Student Absences

In order to maintain our high expectations on attendance, school will actively support and seek guidance from the LA with regard to unauthorised absences and legal intervention. This will take the form of a Education Penalty Notice (EPN), following guidance from the Local Authority.

School will contact parents/ carers to highlight school's concerns. As part of the school's monitoring of attendance and unauthorised absences, school reserves the right to mark as unauthorised any absence that is not satisfactorily evidenced.

If a student's attendance is below the school's expectations, they may be added to one of the attendance intervention groups, which could involve parental and/or student meetings to create a collaborative approach to support and assist in improving student attendance.

11. Student Punctuality

- Punctuality to school is logged on Arbor
- Any student arriving late to school will sign in via the attendance office
- Any student arriving after 9:10am (30 minutes after the register has closed) will receive an unauthorised absence mark for the morning session, unless an acceptable reason is provided. Persistent lateness could result in an Education Penalty Notice being issued.
- Students arriving late to school will attend punctuality detentions
- Students must be punctual to all lessons, and any lateness will be recorded on Arbor. It is the class teacher's responsibility to deal with any lateness to their lesson

12. Use of Legal Interventions

In law, an offence occurs if a parent/ carer fails to secure a child's attendance at the school at which they are registered. 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 possible.

Legal action in the courts may be used as a strategy to improve attendance when parents have failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school. Penalty Notices are a further option available to the Local Authority.

13. Pastoral and Safeguarding

At Kirkby High School, every child has the right to an education and to be safe and cared for in a way that meets their individual needs. We recognise that all children need a safe and stable environment to enable them to flourish and achieve to the best of their abilities, away from anyone or anything that may cause them harm. To ensure this, we follow the school's Safeguarding policy. We respect all members of the school community and treat information with confidentiality. The Attendance Policy is served in conjunction with our role to safeguard all our students. It is important to note that extremely poor attendance may be classed as 'Educational Neglect', which could potentially form part of a referral to Children's Social Care for action and trigger further support from external agencies.

14. Students with extremely low attendance

It is the parent / carer's responsibility to encourage your child to attend school every day. However, if the reason for their reluctance appears to be due to issues in school, please contact school at the earliest opportunity to discuss this and enable school and home to work collaboratively to support the child to attend school.

15. Outside Referrals

The school cannot work in isolation. The partnership of school, parents and the LA is fundamental, with all involved accepting responsibility and working together to improve attendance for the benefit of the students and community. Prompt action on non-attendance and accurate and consistent registration are important areas of child protection.

16. Early Help

Early identification of needs and support required can prevent concerns escalating. Early help plans should have focused outcomes for children and families and should be actively planned with them. Plans should deliver evidence-based interventions, and clear thresholds for specific agency intervention, such as social care, housing and mental health services.

Areas of Vulnerability and Support

Possible issues that may lead to non-attendance are:

- Parentally condoned unjustified absence
- Unrecognised SEND barriers
- Abuse or neglect
- Student disaffection
- Inappropriate curriculum for a child
- Burdens of domestic responsibilities

17. Vulnerable Children

Children who are looked after (LAC), subject to a Child Protection Plan (CP) or Children in Need (CIN) and who may have an Educational Healthcare Plan (EHCP) will be treated with the highest priority and will be known to the attendance team. Any unexplained absence will be followed up immediately by a telephone call to the home, liaising closely with the school's inclusion faculty.

Any outside professionals who are also working with the children and family will also be notified of the absence. Children with SEND will be treated with a similar priority to ensure that their time in school can be maximised and their learning is supported.

Through the Inclusion Faculty, a bespoke approach will be used for students of different ages and needs.