



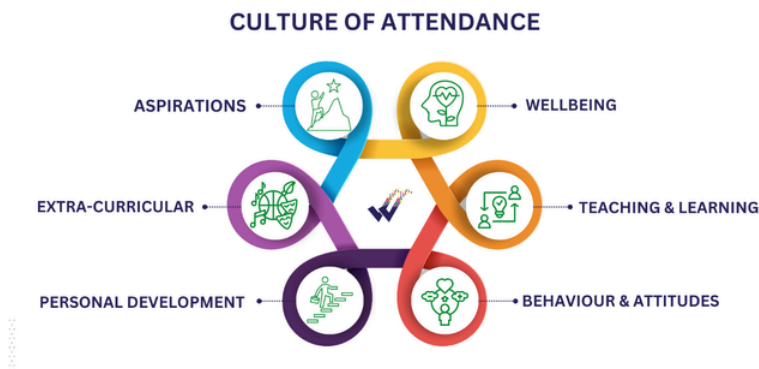
Attendance Guide for Parents & Carers



**WHICKHAM
SCHOOL**

Attendance at Whickham School

Whickham School offers an exceptional learning environment where pupils are happy and want to attend. Strong attendance is fundamental in ensuring effective safeguarding and excellent academic progress. We actively celebrate excellent attendance with termly prizes and annual certificates. At Whickham School we have a culture of strong attendance and all staff play a key role alongside parents/ carers in ensuring students attend.



Every day at school counts. The evidence is clear - even a few days of missed school can have a significant impact on a child's education and future prospects.



Quick read policy

The Law

In the UK, parents and carers are legally obligated to ensure their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education, either through regular school attendance or by other means such as home education. For children registered at a school, parents must ensure their regular attendance on every day the school is open. Failure to ensure regular attendance can lead to legal consequences, including fines and even prosecution.

Responsibilities

School will:

- Monitor and analyse attendance daily
- Share daily attendance data with DfE
- Safeguard all students by robustly following attendance procedures
- Keep parents informed about their child's attendance by sending half-termly attendance reports and communicating key messages via social media and ClassCharts
- Intervene early when attendance falls below expectations
- Work collaboratively with parents/carers to remove barriers to attendance
- Celebrate excellent and improved attendance

Parents/Carers must:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and on time. Students must be in school by 8:30am ready for registration starting at 8:35am
- Work together with school to improve attendance when it is below expectations
- Report their child absent on each day of absence with a reason and expected return, providing medical evidence where appropriate
- Refrain from taking holidays in term time
- Avoid arranging medical appointments during school hours



How to report an absence

You must report your child absent by 8am on **each day** they are absent from school. For safeguarding purposes, we cannot assume that your child is at home. Absences can be reported by:

- Calling 0191 496 0026 option 1
- Completing the absence form on ClassCharts, found in the Announcements section. Medical or supporting evidence can also be uploaded [here](#)

You must include a reason for absence. Stating that your child is 'unwell' or 'poorly' is not sufficient and you will be contacted for further information

Attendance at WHICKHAM SCHOOL

If your child's attendance falls below 95.1%

- We will send you a letter expressing our concerns about your child's attendance and a reminder of expectations
- Your child's attendance will continue to be monitored for 4 weeks. Further absences may require you to attend a meeting in school

If your child's attendance falls between 94% and 93%

- Your child will be placed on an attendance report to their form tutor for 2 weeks
- If there are further absences in this 2 week period, you will be required to attend a meeting in school with a member of the attendance team

If your child's attendance falls between 92.9% and 90.1%

- You will be sent a letter informing you that your child is at risk of becoming persistently absent*. Your child will be placed on attendance report to their Pastoral Leader. This will be reviewed every 2 weeks
- If there are any further absences, you will be required to attend a meeting in school with a member of the attendance team where a pupil attendance contract** will be drawn up. Your child's attendance will be formally monitored for a period of 4 academic weeks
- If there are further absences during the monitoring period, a referral will be made to the Legal Intervention Team at Gateshead Council.

If your child's attendance falls between 90% and 85.1%

- You will be sent a letter informing you that your child is persistently absent* and you will be required to attend a meeting with a senior member of staff. A parental attendance contract** will be drawn up
- Your child will be placed on an attendance report to a senior member of staff. This will be reviewed every 2 weeks

If your child's attendance falls below 85%

- You will be sent a letter about your child's attendance now being a significant concern and you will be required to attend a meeting with a School Leader
- You may be required to attend an attendance panel with a School Governor
- We may consider referrals to external agencies including Early Help or Children's Services

***Persistently Absent:**

The Government defines a young person with an attendance of 90% or below as persistently absent, and studies unfortunately show that students who are persistently absent from school do not achieve their full potential academically.

****Attendance Contract:**

An attendance contract offers a structured way to improve attendance and access support. The contract outlines agreed-upon actions for both yourself, your child, and school to improve attendance

Half Term 1 Approach



During half term 1, we adapt our whole year approach slightly and focus on days missed. Actions taken during the first half term are based on the individual student's attendance for the previous academic year.

Tier 1: between 93% and 90.1% attendance last year

Concern: any absence in half term 1

- You will receive an initial concerns letter, reminding you about attendance expectations

If there are any further absences within Half Term 1:

- Your child will be placed on attendance report to their form tutor for 4 weeks
-

Tier 2: Between 90% and 85.1% attendance last year

Concern: any absence in half term 1

- You will be sent a letter outlining significant concerns about your child's attendance
- Your child will be placed on daily attendance report to their form tutor

If there are any further absences within Half Term 1:

- You will be required to attend a meeting with a member of the attendance team where an attendance contract will be put in place
-

Tier 3: Less than 85% attendance last year

Concern: any absence in half term 1

- You will be sent a letter regarding the legal intervention process
- You will be required to attend a meeting a member of the Leadership Team
- A parental attendance contract will be drawn up and your child's attendance will be formally monitored for 4 academic weeks
- You may be offered support from external agencies such as Early Help

If your child has any further absences during the monitoring period:

- A referral will be made to the Legal Intervention Team at Gateshead Council

Daily Absence Process

First Day of Absence

- ✓ If no reason for absence has been provided, a message will be sent to parents/carers
- ✓ A phone call will be made if we do not hear from you or if your child's attendance is being monitored

Second Day of Absence

- ✓ You may receive a call from your child's Pastoral Leader. This is a check-in call to establish if your child needs any extra support to return to school
- ✓ A home visit may be made if we have yet to obtain a reason for absence or if your child's attendance is being monitored

Third Day of Absence

- ✓ A home visit may be made by a member of the attendance team. Please do not worry! We are simply fulfilling our duty of care and are here to help.
- ✓ A plan can be discussed where necessary to support your child back into school.

Ongoing Absences

- ✓ Daily calls will be made for an update on your child's condition. We may request medical evidence to authorise any further absence
- ✓ Further home visits will be made
- ✓ You may be asked to attend a meeting in school with the attendance team to establish any further support needed

Is my child too unwell to attend school?

We understand that sometimes, absences are unavoidable. There may be some days when your child is just simply too unwell to attend school. However, sending your child to school when they are perhaps just not feeling 100% or have a minor illness helps to build resilience and good habits for the future, particularly the world of work. Quite often, getting dressed and out of the house can be enough to make you feel better. We will always try to support students who are unwell in school, and will make a judgement call if they are too unwell and need to come home.

Medication such as antibiotics, paracetamol and antihistamines can be securely stored in school for your child to access if required. Please ask for a medication form from reception.

Yes - please keep your child at home if they have the following diagnosed illnesses. Medical evidence must be supplied to authorise the period of absence. Please note, usual day-to-day absence procedures will still apply.

- Chickenpox return to school 5 days after the onset of the rash when all spots have crusted over
- Measles: return to school 4 days after rash appears
- Mumps: : return to school 4 days after swelling appears
- Whooping cough: return to school 5 days after commencing antibiotics
- Impetigo: return to school 48 hours after starting treatment
- Scarlet fever: return to school 24 hours after starting treatment
- Scabies: return to school after starting treatment

No - please send your child to school. They will be supported throughout the day and adjustments can be made to help them

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| • Cold | • Minor injuries |
| • Mild temperature | • Ingrown toenails |
| • Sore throat | • Headlice |
| • Tonsillitis | • Threadworms |
| • Headache | • Ringworm |
| • Period pain | • Slapped cheek |
| • Cough | • Glandular fever |
| • Covid | • Hand, foot and mouth |

Please note: We DO NOT have a 48 hour rule after periods of sickness or diarrhea. Your child can return to school as soon as they are well enough. They are not required to isolate.

Medical Appointments

We kindly request that all routine medical and dental appointments are booked outside of school hours wherever possible to minimise lost learning time.

If an appointment during the school day is unavoidable, please note the following guidelines:

- To authorise the absence, please provide evidence of the appointment such as an appointment reminder text, letter or appointment card. Without evidence, the absence will not be authorised
- Pupils are expected to attend school before and after an appointment. Missing a whole day of school for a short appointment significantly impacts a child's learning and will not be authorised

How to arrange for your child to leave school for a medical appointment:

- Submit a request using the absence reporting form on Classcharts. Please remember to upload evidence of the appointment and state the time your child will be collected from reception. We can then arrange an exit card for your child to enable them to leave lesson
- Email your child's Pastoral Leader or a member of the Attendance Team
- Call the main office or the absence telephone line. Please note, evidence of the appointment will still need to be provided



Punctuality

Punctuality is an essential life skill which transfers into adulthood. We expect our pupils to be in school on time, every day.

8:30am: The first bell rings allowing 5 minute movement time for students to move to their registration classrooms.

08:35am: Registration begins. Students arriving after this time are late.

Please encourage your child to get a good night's sleep and take responsibility for setting their own alarm.

Whickham is a busy area, so please factor in the traffic. It's better to be early than late.

If punctuality continues to be a problem, we will contact you to make an appointment to discuss your child's timekeeping. Persistent lateness can lead to unauthorised marks which will contribute to legal intervention.

Managing lateness

- Late to school: 20 minute lunch time detention
- Late to school twice in one week: 1 hour after school detention
- Late after registration: 60 minute detention the following day
- Late to period 1 or period 4: up to 20 minute same day lunchtime detention
- Late to 3 or more lessons in 1 week: 1 hour after school detention

Detentions will be issued on Classcharts. Please ensure you have access to your parent account for live monitoring of your child's attendance, punctuality, behaviour and homework.



MINUTES LATE	LEARNING DAYS LOST
5 MINUTES EACH DAY	3 DAYS PER YEAR
10 MINUTES EACH DAY	6.5 DAYS PER YEAR
15 MINUTES EACH DAY	10 DAYS PER YEAR
20 MINUTES EACH DAY	13 DAYS PER YEAR
30 MINUTES EACH DAY	19 DAYS PER YEAR

Term Time Holidays

Term time holidays are not permitted and will not be authorised.

DfE guidance states:

"Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance."

New legislation came into force on 19th August 2024 regarding the criteria and the issue of penalty notices to address school attendance.

The following rules now apply:

- 5 days of unauthorised absence (10 sessions) in the most recent 10 school week period are liable for a fixed penalty notice
- 2 penalty notices can be issued to a parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year period.
- The first penalty notice is charged at £160 per parent per child. This reduces to £80 per parent per child if paid within 28 days
- The second penalty notice is charged at £160 per parent per child. No discount is offered
- Further absences within 3 years will proceed for prosecution in the Magistrate Court.

Leave of absence request

To request a leave of absence, please complete the Google form on our school website.

Holidays taken in term time are not permitted and will be liable for a fixed penalty notice.

Responses to leave of absence requests will be sent by post to all parents/carers with parental responsibility.

Please note: unreported holidays are still liable for fixed penalty notices. If an unreported holiday is suspected, you will be required to disprove that your child was on holiday.



Unauthorised Absences

Parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.

Penalty notices can be issued to parents and carers when a child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 week academic period.

This threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence and the sessions do not need to be consecutive. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms of academic years.

A referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made if the 10 session unauthorised absence threshold is met and any of the following criteria apply:

- A parent/carer persistently fails to report their child absent from school
- A child is persistently late to school after registers close (9:05am)
- A child's attendance is below expectations and subject to formal monitoring
- Any combination of 10 sessions of unauthorised absences within a rolling 10 week period (eg 6 sessions of holiday within term time and 4 late to school after register close).

The following rules now apply:

- 5 days of unauthorised absence (10 sessions) in the most recent 10 school week period are liable for a fixed penalty notice
- 2 penalty notices can be issued to a parent in respect of the same child within a 3 year period.
- The first penalty notice is charged at £160 per parent per child. This reduces to £80 per parent per child if paid within 28 days
- The second penalty notice is charged at £160 per parent per child. No discount is offered
- Further absences within 3 years will proceed for prosecution in the Magistrate Court.

We are committed to working together with parents and carers to ensure every child is fully supported to attend school every day and achieve their full potential. As a school, we will always hope to avoid further action.

Keeping you informed

As a school we analyse attendance data daily. We want to work with you to help you to fulfil your obligation as a parent to ensure your child attends school.

Communication is key, and with that in mind we are committed to providing regular, clear and transparent updates to parent and carers to keep them informed about their child's attendance.

ClassCharts



All students, parents and carers have a ClassCharts account. ClassCharts is used to give live updates on your child's school progress, attendance, homework and behaviour as well as providing important announcements. If you do not have access to your account, please contact the school office who will be more than happy to assist you.

Attend



Attend is a new attendance monitoring system for 2025. We will be monitoring attendance closely and will communicate attendance news regularly. Messages from Attend will appear separately from our main school communication system so please do look out for these text and emails. An example of a message from Attend is available to view on our website.



Half Termly attendance reports

Parents/Carers are emailed a report of their child's current year to date attendance. This includes information on punctuality, days missed and a summary of missed learning.



Rewards and incentives

We routinely recognise and celebrate outstanding attendance and improvements to attendance. Certificates are issued at the end of each half term and we hold regular competitions/reward schemes in school to encourage strong attendance.



Social Media

We utilise social media to promote our values and raise awareness around attendance. Follow our Facebook page for updates, celebrations and useful information about attendance.

How can Parents & Carers help to improve their child's attendance?



Medical appointments

Where possible, medical appointments should be made for outside of school hours. If this is not an option, please ensure your child attends school before and after the appointment to minimise lost learning.



Work together with school

Support us to foster a culture of attendance. Speak to your child about their attendance and take an interest in their school day. Celebrate their achievements and listen to their worries. Try to attend parents evenings and keep up to date with communications from school.



Family holidays, celebrations and casual absence

Avoid taking your child out of school on a holiday in term time. There are 175 non school days per year for holidays, celebrations, events and shopping.



Routines

Establish a good morning and evening routine to prepare your child for the school day. Try to limit screen time at night and ensure your child has a good night's sleep. Encourage them to set their own alarm on a morning to promote independence.

We are here to help

Please do not hesitate to reach out if you or your child have any worries or concerns. We are committed to working together to remove barriers to attendance, whatever they may be.

Who to contact for support:

- Miss Tumelty: Assistant Headteacher: stumelty@whickhamschool.org
- Mrs Hall: Senior Pastoral Leader: ahall@whickhamschool.org
- Miss Dewar: Attendance Coordinator: sdewar@whickhamschool.org

Frequently Asked Questions

1 How is attendance calculated?

Each day has 2 sessions, morning and afternoon. A whole day off school equals 2 absences. Attendance is affected by any absence, regardless of the reason.

3 Why do I need to report my child absent each day they are off?

We have a duty of care and cannot assume that your child is at home. A daily call will give school and home the confidence to know your child is safe

5 Can I take my child on holiday in term time?

Holidays in term time are not permitted and will be liable for a fixed penalty notice.

2 How do I report an absence?

Please report your child absent by 8am by either calling 0191 496 0023 option 1, or via the Google Form on ClassCharts announcements. You must include details of the reason for absence.

4 My child is unwell and wants to stay at home - what should I do?

We can support students in school with minor illnesses and injuries and can make adjustments to their day to allow them to continue their learning. If your child becomes too unwell to remain in school, we will send them home.

6 My child is feeling anxious about school - what should I do?

Talk to us - we are here to help and are committed to working together to remove any barriers to attending school. We have a fantastic team of mental health support workers in school along with a dedicated counsellor.

Who to contact for support:

- Miss Tumelty: Assistant Headteacher: stumelty@whickhamschool.org
- Mrs Hall: Senior Pastoral Leader: ahall@whickhamschool.org
- Miss Dewar: Attendance Coordinator: sdewar@whickhamschool.org



Contact us



Website

www.whickhamschool.org



Phone

0191 4960026



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E-mail

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