



Whittingham

C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy



Whittingham School Vision

As a school, we take inspiration from the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). In this story, the Samaritan was **kind** by going the extra mile so that all the injured man's needs were met. He was **collaborative** to make sure the man received the best care from him and others. Finally, he was **courageous** in helping someone who was different to him.

These three values are at the heart of the community we seek to be at Whittingham School.

Through our daily worship, we acknowledge the presence of God in our lives.

Through our learning environment, we provide space for everyone to flourish.

Through our broad and balanced curriculum, we aspire for each child to be the very best they can be.

At Whittingham, we are:

Kind



Caring for everyone's safety, happiness and well-being by treating others how we'd like to be treated ourselves.

Collaborative



Providing opportunities for all to be involved in the daily life of school; preparing learners to be active in the wider world and fostering a supportive relationship between school, home and church.

Courageous



Celebrating what makes each of us unique and special; equipping us to make healthy choices in all areas of our life; and empowering us to step out for justice.

Whittingham C of E Primary School Attendance Policy

1. Policy Statement

At Whittingham C of E School, we are committed to ensuring that every young person achieves success both academically and socially. Regular school attendance is essential for students to gain the full benefits of education, including intellectual growth, emotional development, positive peer relationships, and long-term life opportunities.

This Attendance Policy outlines our commitment to promoting regular attendance, preventing absence, and supporting families in overcoming barriers to attendance.

2. Aims

- To ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and on time.
- To work in partnership with families to promote excellent attendance.
- To identify and support pupils whose attendance is at risk of becoming a concern.
- To follow national guidance and legal requirements regarding attendance and absence.

3. Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by the following legislation:

- **Education Act 1996**
- **Children Act 1989**
- Other relevant government guidance and statutory instruments relating to school attendance

4. Principles

- Every child has a legal right to a full-time, suitable education.
- Parents and carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly.
- Low attendance is directly linked to poor educational outcomes and may indicate vulnerability.
- Regular attendance fosters academic progress, emotional wellbeing, and social development.

5. Attendance Expectations

We expect:

- **All pupils** to attend school at **least 97% of the time**.
- **All families** to support their child's full attendance and punctuality.
- **All staff** to promote, monitor, and follow up on attendance and punctuality concerns.

6. School Day and Registration

- Pupils must arrive at school by **8:45am**.
- Morning registration is taken at **8:55am** and closes at **9:00am**.

- Afternoon registration occurs as soon as pupils return from lunch at 12.55.
- Pupils arriving after 8:50am must be signed in at the office by a parent or carer.

7. Parental Responsibilities

Parents and carers must:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.
- Report absences on the first day via:
 - Email: **admin@whittingham.northumberland.sch.uk**
 - Telephone: **01665574222**
- Provide a follow-up call if absence continues.
- Notify school of any ongoing medical or family circumstances.
- Provide medical evidence for appointments (e.g., NHS App message, appointment letter).
- Schedule routine appointments outside of school hours.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.

8. Pupil Responsibilities

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day unless unwell or given authorised leave.
- Arrive on time and attend all registrations and lessons.

9. Authorised vs. Unauthorised Absence

Authorised Absence

- Illness (with valid reason or medical evidence if required)
- Emergency medical or dental appointments
- Exceptional circumstances (with prior approval)

Unauthorised Absence

Absences not authorised by the Head Teacher, including:

- Shopping trips or birthdays
- Looking after siblings
- Staying home due to illness of other family members
- Day trips and term-time holidays
- Arriving after close of registration (unless exceptional circumstances)
- Truancy

We may reclassify an authorised absence as unauthorised if new information becomes available (e.g., evidence of a holiday during reported illness).

10. Illness and Medical Evidence

Where pupils experience frequent absences due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for each subsequent absence. This may include:

- Doctor's notes
- Appointment confirmation
- Prescriptions

If appropriate, the school may seek your written permission to liaise directly with health professionals.

NHS advice can help determine whether a child is too ill for school:

[Is My Child Too Ill for School?](#)

11. Persistent and Severe Absence

- **Persistent Absence (PA):** Attendance falls below **90%** (equivalent to 10% or more missed sessions).
- **Severe Absence:** Attendance falls below **80%**.

When a child becomes a persistent absentee:

- Parents will be informed.
- Attendance will be closely monitored.
- Northumberland County Council Education Welfare Officer will be informed.
- A support plan may be developed in collaboration with the family to improve attendance.

School Refusal / Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)

EBSNA occurs when emotional challenges like anxiety or low mood prevent a child from attending school.

We urge parents to contact us early if attendance issues appear emotionally driven. We will work with you to understand the cause and implement support. Withholding attendance due to emotional distress often increases anxiety and makes return more difficult.

Legal Action and Enforcement

Parents/carers have a **legal duty** to ensure regular school attendance (Education Act 1996). Legal action is used only after other interventions have failed, but it is a key part of our strategy when support is not engaged with or absences are unauthorised. However, at every stage we would encourage families engage to engage with us so we do not get to this stage.

Legal Sanctions May Include:

- Parenting Order
- Education Supervision Order
- School Attendance Order
- Fixed Penalty Notice (Fine)

