Le Cateau
Community Primary School

Le Cateau School Attendance Policy

Introduction

Regular school attendance is important for children's academic progress and well-being. We aim to maximise attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take full advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits. ○ Ensuring equality and fairness for all. ○ Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents. ○ Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils. ○ Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance. ○ Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

The school's Attendance Champion is Mrs Cafferty, Deputy Headteacher. She works closely with our Attendance Admin, Mrs Galloway and Mr Mottram, Headteacher. All can be contacted via the school office and parents are expected to contact Mrs Cafferty or Mrs Galloway if they have any queries or concerns about their child's school attendance.

Responsibility

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for: ○ Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.

- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Working with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy. ○ Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation of the policy. ○ The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Ensure that all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensure that every child has access to full time education and will act promptly to address any patterns of absence.
- Analysing and monitoring attendance and implementing any interventions with the Attendance Champion and Attendance Admin.
- Communicate with pupils and parents regarding attendance.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- Getting their children to school every day.
- Getting their children to school on time.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Informing the school of any reason for absence on each day of absence.
- Avoiding taking children out of school for routine medical/dental/optical appointments or for a holiday during term time.

Children are responsible for:

- Attending school each day on time.
- Following the school rules.

Registration

Under regulation 3 of the Pupils' Registration Regulations 1956, all schools must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The 1991 Regulations also state that registers must state whether an absence is authorised (agreed by the school) or unauthorised (not agreed by the school/ no reason provided).

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which cannot be made out of school time, for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency (where there is no alternative but for the child to be absent from school.)

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Absences which are not explained properly.
- Arrival at school after the register closes.
- Absence due to children's birthdays, looking after other children or going shopping.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term time.
- Truancy.

Persistent Absence (PA):
The government categorise any child missing 10% or more of their education as persistently absent. Missing this much time at school can significantly impact on the child's education. Persistent absence includes all types of absence – authorised and unauthorised. Parents will be regularly notified throughout the academic year if their child's attendance falls into persistent absence and support will be given where needed to help parents make improvements in their child's attendance.

SEND and health-related absences
The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

The school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will endeavour to secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.
If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

Attendance Expectations
The school has high expectations for children's attendance and punctuality. Children are expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school and attend for the full day.

Access to the school site is from **8:35am**
Classroom doors open at **8:40am**
School gates are locked at **8:45am**
The school day officially starts at **8:45am** with the register being open for a 5 minute window. The register is taken by **8:50am** and all children must be in school by this time.
A child arriving in school between **8:50am and 9:05am** will be recorded as 'authorised late' (L).
A child arriving after **9:05am** will be deemed unauthorised (U - arrived in school after the registration has closed).
Any child arriving late must be signed into school by an adult at the main entrance and the reason for late arrival explained.

Reporting Absences
It is parent's responsibility to inform schools of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible. Parents are expected to contact the School Office on the first day of absence by **9:00am** giving as much information as is available. A dedicated absence reporting line is available for notifications. A conversation will take place where needed if it is considered the child may be able to attend.

If a parent does not contact the school office to explain a child's absence, the following procedure will take place:

- Phone call to the parent asking for reasons for absence by 9:30am. (First Call)
- If no answer, message will be left asking for immediate contact to be made with school and an attendance SMS sent via Arbor.

- If no communication by **9:45am** – the admin team will make a further phone call home and/or send a text message.
- Unexplained absence will be referred to the Headteacher or Deputy Head.
- Headteacher/Deputy will liaise and a home welfare visit will be made by school if no contact is made.
- The home visit will be conducted to speak to the parent and ensure that the child is safe.
- If contact is not made at the home, Headteacher will action safeguarding procedures (this includes contact with the police, Unit Welfare and/or social care).

When children are off school due to illness, the priority for the school remains as safeguarding. Where a child has been absent for **three school days** in a row, and communication has been limited, an unannounced home visit may take place.

Lateness

The school policy is to encourage punctuality but to also actively discourage lateness as it can disrupt lessons. If a child is late and misses registration (8:45am – 8:50am), a late mark will be recorded. If a child arrives after **8:50am** but before **9:05am**, the child will be recorded as late. If a child arrives after **9:05am** when the register is closed, then the lateness will be marked as unauthorised.

Applying for Leave of Absence

All requests for Leave of Absence should be made on the relevant form available from the School Office or via the school website. Requests, where possible, should be made at least 2 weeks in advance of the planned leave. A reply will be sent stating whether the absence will be authorised or not authorised. Implications for absence that is unauthorised follows the NYC policy regarding the issuing of penalty notices.

It is essential that requests for such leave are made **PRIOR** to booking any holiday.

Holidays in Term Time

A family holiday in term time is not an exceptional circumstance and likely to be recorded as an unauthorised absence. ***Some exceptional circumstances may be authorised, but this is at the discretion of the Headteacher.***

Exceptional circumstances *could* include a request for leave following;

- the return from 'active deployment' by a parent serving in the Armed Forces
- where leave is recommended as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided from external agencies for this to be considered.
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This must be evidenced by the production of documentation from the organisation/company.

Requests for leave of absence will **NOT** be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- Parents employment
- When a child's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence

Other requests for leave of absence:

- **Family bereavements** – the Headteacher has the discretion to authorise absence to attend funerals or associated events. Any request will be dealt with sympathetically.
- **Days of Religious Observance –** absence of a pupil for participation in a day set aside exclusively for religious observation by the religious body to which the parents belong can be classed as authorised. Advance notice should be given to the school.
- **Family Circumstance –** It is for school to determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not dependent on the circumstances of the particular case. Only exceptional circumstances will be sanctioned through discussion with the Headteacher.

Attendance Procedures

The school will always strive to work in partnership with parents and will provide support from within school resources and also make referrals to other agencies or sign post parents to other agencies/ organisations where appropriate. The school therefore always takes a '*support first'* approach to school attendance.

We monitor the attendance of all our children very closely and when it becomes apparent that, despite support, the attendance remains unsatisfactory school attendance procedures will be commenced.

Attendance procedures are led by our Attendance Champion working closely with school staff and the Headteacher.

Stage one- warning letter
Parents will be sent a warning letter stating that they have 10 school days to make improvements in their child's attendance. If this is not achieved an attendance panel meeting will take place.

Stage two – attendance panel meeting
Parents will be sent a formal invitation to attend and attendance panel meeting. The meeting aims to examine the reasons for absence and formulate a plan with parents about how concerns about attendance will be address. The plan is time limited (usually for 4 weeks but can be extended where improvement have started to be made) and parents will be informed that further unauthorised absence could lead to a referral to the local authority Attendance and Enforcement Officer.

Stage three – referral to the local authority
The local authority have the power to enforce the attendance of the child by investigating the absence and taking legal intervention against parents where necessary. Once a referral has been accepted by the local authority it is usual that parents will be invited to a PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence Act) interview to explain their child's absence and the steps they have taken to improve their child's attendance. It is usual that the school and/or the schools Education Welfare Officer will be present at this interview.

Following this interview the local authority will decide on the next appropriate steps which may include:

- A penalty notice warning/ Notice to improve letter issued to parents
- A penalty notice fine issued to parents
- An Education Supervision Order
- Prosecution of parents

Penalty Notices
Penalty notices are fines imposed on parents for unauthorised absence and unauthorised holidays in term time. From September 2024, new procedures are in place due to a change in the national framework.

In a three-year rolling period, there will be a two-penalty notice limit to the same parent for the same child.

- The first penalty notice issued in respect of the pupil will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- The second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil will be charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice will not be issued to the same parent for the same child in this rolling 3-year period and an alternative legal sanction will be given, this may include prosecution in the magistrate court.

Monitoring and analysing absence

The Attendance Champion, Headteacher and Attendance Officer will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.
The school will collect data regarding punctuality, authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The Attendance Champion will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a monthly basis which is shared with the Headteacher in a meeting where any attendance intervention is discussed and reviewed.

The governing board will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional and national level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

Promoting Good Attendance

The school promotes positive attendance rates at every opportunity. We have many ways in which we can support children to be in school more. Detailed below are some strategies we have in place.

- Supporting Pupils – Pastoral support to help with home to school transition, reintegration support after a period absence, personalised support (e.g. sensory, calm areas, drawing and talking, 1:1 pastoral/Nurture input), regular check ins from Learning Mentors during the school day, offer of The Retreat/The Nest at playtime/lunchtime to support during the day.
- Relationships with parents – regular discussions, support from SLT/Learning Mentors at drop off time, messages home, attendance techniques shared with parents, emotional support at times of stress, support from Army Welfare Service/Unit Welfare as appropriate, home visits to support parents.
- Use of Seesaw to promote exciting learning opportunities in school so that the children have a desire to attend school.
- Celebrating success – class weekly attendance percentages shared and celebrated in weekly KIT newsletter, attendance praise in assemblies/in class, 100% attendance certificates.

Policy adopted by Governing Body and implemented: September 2024
Review: Annually
Reviewed: 28th August 2026
Next Review: September 2026
Lead member: Ali Cafferty (Deputy Head/Attendance Champion), Ian Mottram (Headteacher)

Flow Chart of School/LA Attendance Procedure – Time restricted

The following procedure will be undertaken by the school should there be no significant improvement in your child's attendance and unauthorised absence continues to be recorded.

Initial Warning Letter

10 school day monitoring period

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Attendance Panel Meeting

20 school day monitoring period
(Review Meeting – Optional)

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(P)olice (A)nd (C)riminal (E)vidence Act (1984) Formal Caution Interview/LA Panel Meeting (Chaired by the Local Authority)

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LA/ Panel Decision :

No Further Action /Review Meeting
Notice to Improve
Education Supervision Order
Prosecution Education Act 1996 s444 (1,1A)

If at any stage in the above procedure your child's attendance improves significantly the school will not proceed to the following stage.

However, your child's attendance will continue to be monitored by the school and should there at any time in the future become further concerns the above procedure will be continued onto the next stage or recommenced from the first stage depending on the severity of the situation.