



P04

Attendance Policy

Every school within Cumbria Futures Federation aims to provide a safe and hardworking environment where every child can be successful, whatever their abilities.

Version No	Author/Owner	Date Written	Note of amendments made
01-2021	JR/JSu	March 2021	Updated policy
02-2021	JR	December 2021	Update and creation of 5 minute briefing
01-2022	JR	April 2022	Update with reference to Arbor implementation Clarification of timescales in relation to missing children
01-2023	JSU	Sept 2023	Child missing terminology clarified in line with KCSIE & contact details updated
01-2024	JSU	Sept 2024	Align with new Working Together guidance and including updated legislation which came into effect 19/08/24

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What Cumbria Futures Federation believes and intends to do about attendance

Good attendance is essential if students are to take full advantage of school and gain the appropriate skills which will equip them for life.

The school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which students, staff, parents and Attendance Manager can work in partnership.

While our expectation is that students will attend 100% of the time, we recognise that illness and unavoidable absences can occur, therefore our minimum expectation is that a student will have an attendance over the school year of **97%** or above. This is equivalent to **6 days** absence over the school year.

The school will monitor attendance and ensure quick and early intervention if a problem is identified.

All staff will encourage punctuality and good attendance and pastoral staff will liaise with home and other agencies about a child's attendance when this is appropriate.

Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in its own right and recognised as such with awards such as certificates and prizes. See Promoting Attendance section.

1. Principles

A child should come to school every day.

i) A child should only be absent if the reason is "unavoidable.". Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required. School does not have to authorise an absence if they have any doubts about the validity of the excuse.

ii) Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes.

iii) Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given. This includes:

- going shopping
- minding the house
- truancy
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

Providing an explanation may not be sufficient if the reason given is not "unavoidable."

Not every illness needs to keep a student from school. For example, a student may be unwell, but they are well enough to do the activities of the school day. See the [NHS Livewell website](#) for advice on whether your child is too ill to attend school.

iv) Some children need encouragement to attend regularly. Any problems are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. It is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from school. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving problems together.

v) In the first instance, school will make every effort to resolve issues, support may be offered in school, via early help and if problems cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the LA Access & Inclusion Officer. They will also try to resolve the difficulties by agreement or by a further referral to Inspira, School Nurse or other external agency to provide support. However, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, court proceedings can be used to prosecute parents.

vi) Parents or children may wish to contact the Access & Inclusion Officer themselves to ask their advice. They are independent of the school.

2. Procedures

We expect that all students will attend school regularly, arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.

Our Federation values: Courage and Compassion, Inclusion and Equality, Respect and Courtesy, Optimism and Perseverance, Forgiveness and Tolerance, Ambition and Achievement

To support this, if a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school **each day** the child is absent, in person or by telephone. This contact should be made **by 9am at the latest**.

Parents may email the school office (contact@solway.cumbria.sch.uk or contact@beaconhill.cumbria.sch.uk), or speak with our Attendance Officers to explain the absence and enable us to record details.

Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which are unavoidably in school time, provided a written explanation is received. We require sight of appointment cards prior to any appointments held within the school day, these will be stored in the child's personal file and electronic copies added to Management Information Systems (MIS).

Tutors must ensure that registers are completed correctly as they serve as a register in case of an emergency and for Fire Drills. The register is a legal document which must be correct at all times.

Our Attendance Officers will produce a daily absence list which class teachers will use to check attendance in classes during the day.

On the first day of absence:

If a child is found to be absent with no prior notice from home, this will initiate a call from school before **09.30am** where practicable. Where there is no response from home, and we are concerned about the welfare of the child, we may arrange a home visit and/or report to the Police as a potential missing child. We will follow a procedure to ensure that we have attempted to locate the child using all avenues available to us, where reasonable and practicable.

Where a child is still unaccounted for by **10.30am**, we will report to the police as a potential missing person as soon as possible and request a welfare visit. For this reason, it is essential that parents make contact with school as soon as possible to explain unexpected absences.

Any child who leaves school in a vulnerable state outside normal leaving times will usually be identified through lesson registers. Where not previously agreed with their parent/carer this absence will initiate a call home to alert parents within 20 minutes of discovering they are missing from school. At the same time a search of school will be carried out. If the child cannot be located by school or the child's parent/carer, the Police will be alerted within 20 minutes of the child being reported as missing to their parent/carer, or sooner if school deems it necessary.

On the second and subsequent day of absence:

If a child is found to be absent on the second and subsequent days of absence and we have not heard from parents that day, we will attempt to call home before 09.30am where practicable.

If contact has been made and adequately explained on the first day of absence, we may choose not to initiate a home visit and/or report to the police as a potential missing child on any subsequent days. However, where we are concerned about the welfare of a child or are worried that the reason is not valid, we may initiate a welfare check either via a home visit by school staff or via the Police at any point during the absence.

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any student who is absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent or carer, the Local Authority will be notified that the child is at risk of being missing from education (CME). If we cannot establish a reason for absence, then we will continue to schedule home visits during this period, as we have a responsibility to see the child in person, so that we can ensure that they are safe and well. A police welfare check may well be requested if concerns.

We will work in conjunction with the Local Authority to make the reasonable enquiries.

3. Attendance Information and Monitoring

Parents will receive information about their child's attendance with each report sent home and is available to view through the school management system, Arbor Parent App

Where attendance is a concern, the school will contact parents to discuss how attendance could be improved, this may take the form of a meeting in school and the creation of an attendance action plan and may involve a governor as well as the Attendance Officer. An Early Help Assessment may be carried out to identify other agencies that may support the student and family.

Where attendance doesn't improve, schools are advised to start an Attendance Case File and keep the Local Authority up to date with this.

If attendance remains a concern the student may be referred to the Access & Inclusion Officer who may arrange a Notice to Improve meeting (formally known as Attendance Review Conference), where the consequences for continued low attendance will be discussed and targets set.

The ultimate result of continued poor attendance may be legal action being taken by the Local Authority against the parents. Our Child Missing in Education policy may also be implemented as required.

4. Other circumstances in which a child could be absent

Other circumstances for absence in term time are at the discretion of the Head.

The appropriate forms can be found on the school website or can be picked up from the school office.

Provided the request is made in advance in writing by the parent looking after the child, exceptional leave may be granted, provided the child's attendance record is otherwise satisfactory (greater than 97%).

Leave of absence may be refused where children have already missed a lot of work in the past or at crucial times of the year (eg during exams).

It is recognised that there may be circumstances when a child may arrive late or be absent for a period of time because of transport difficulties or because of prolonged illness. The school will adopt a flexible approach in these instances.

5. Unauthorised leave of absence

Holidays are not allowed in term time. Since September 2013 Headteachers have not been able to authorise term time absence except in exceptional circumstances, which would not normally be for holidays. From 19th August 2024, the Department for Education update their legislation on unauthorised absences, a family holiday for leisure or recreation is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

All leave of absence requests must be completed by e-mail or letter to the Headteacher. This should be sent to the school at least 7 days before the start of the holiday. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken. Leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

A fixed penalty notice may be issued if unauthorised absence is taken, and indeed parents should be aware that they would be committing a criminal offence. There are circumstances in which this may happen:

- **10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks.** This can be met by any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in 1 week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.
- If the student's attendance is below **97%**
- If the holiday is in September, or was taken during exams
- The student is in year 6 or 11

All unauthorised absences, including holidays that have not been sanctioned by the headteacher, are accumulated and parents/carers who fail to ensure regular attendance of their children at school can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The amount as from 19th August 2024 is £80 (per parent/carer per child) if paid within 21 days; and £160 (per parent/carer per child) if paid between 21 and 28 days. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will result in prosecution, except in limited circumstances.

6. Illness

Procedures and reasonable adjustments for students recovering from injury, medical or surgical procedures, who have a long term or recurring illness, or a clinically defined mental health disorder which causes them to be absent for a period in excess of 15 days where medical opinion states they are still unable to access mainstream school are covered in our Medical Needs Policy.

More common illnesses, for example those outlined on the NHS Living Well Website will usually be an authorised absence, unless concerns are present for reoccurring absence.

If a student is building up a high number of absences for illness over the year, then a higher level of certification may be asked for before the absence can be authorised. This would ideally be made up of consultation notes, paediatric consultant letters, documented referrals for further investigation etc

The school will follow the guidance set out in [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#) (August 24) and “not routinely authorise absences”, where low attendance is also present. This will be review by the Attendance Manager and Senior Leadership member with oversight of attendance when a child reaches 5 days.

7. Medical Appointments

To ensure students’ attendance meets our expectations, all medical appointments should be made, where possible, outside school hours. In situations where this is not possible, we expect students to attend school before and after the appointment, ensuring that they only miss a small amount of lesson time. For example, if a student has a dentist appointment at 10.30am, we expect the student to arrive at school for 8.40am, be collected before their appointment, and then to return in time for late morning/afternoon lessons. If medical appointments are arranged during the school day, these will only be authorised if we are provided with evidence of an appointment. This may be in the form of an appointment card, letter, screenshot of a text, dated prescription label, note or compliments slip, signed and dated to say they attended.

8. Lateness

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for a session. Parents are expected to ensure that children are present at registration (8.40am).

Students need to arrive before 9.10am and 1.40pm after which the register will be closed. Students who arrive after registration but before 9.10am or 1.40pm must sign in at the Office to get their mark.

Arriving more than thirty minutes after the start of the session without good reason is counted as unauthorised absence and a U code will be used. In the event a U code is issued, parents will be informed via email. If lateness persists and exceeds 10 unauthorised sessions a penalty notice may be issued.

Parents will be notified if there is a recurring pattern of lates and they may be requested to attend school for a meeting with the Attendance Team/Senior Leadership Team. Where students are late twice within a school week our behaviour policy will be implemented.

9. Emotional School Based Avoidance

Parents should do everything possible to encourage their child to attend school.

If the reason for their reluctance to attend appears to be school based, such as difficulty with work, or bullying, parents and carers should contact the school at the first opportunity to discuss.

We will work with parents, carers and students to resolve such issues and alternative arrangements will be put in place for students, to support them with their reintegration into school.

If the reason for their reluctance appears to be based around issues outside of school, parents and carers should still contact the school at the first opportunity to discuss.

Advice and support will be offered to ensure the prompt return of a student.

It is not acceptable for a student to refuse to attend school and, as such, parents and carers must work with the school to agree a way forward as a matter of urgency.

10.Missed Work

It is expected that in all cases of absence students will catch up with work missed at the earliest opportunity.

If a child is absent for extended illnesses or other absences, parents should discuss with school whether setting of work is appropriate.

11.Promoting Attendance

We will implement various rewards and hold regular attendance assemblies to promote a good level of attendance.

Students are rewarded regularly throughout the year: half termly, termly and end of year with vouchers and prizes awarded to winning students.

Students with 100% attendance at the end of the year are also rewarded. Unavoidable medical appointments are taken into consideration.

Attendance is also taken into account when considering student places for trips, rewards events and social events.

Discussions are held in form time each week with a focus on praising good attendance, improved attendance and those students who need to improve. Students are also encouraged to write their attendance into their planners.

12.Attendance Registers

The school will follow legislation on completion of attendance registers usually on Arbor but paper copies are in all form folders to be picked up by staff each morning. New staff will be given induction on their role and legal obligations.

13.Children Attending Other Sites / Education Providers

Some students occasionally or regularly attend other providers for all or part of their education. While a student is receiving their education elsewhere, we are obliged to complete attendance registers, and chase up absences, in the normal way.

To do this, our Attendance Officers will request attendance information from other providers. Where a child is not in attendance at the other provider but was expected to attend, we will follow our school procedures to contact parents and locate the child promptly to fulfil our safeguarding obligations.

For students who are Dual Registered with another educational provider we will request weekly attendance certificates to identify any issues. When a Dual Registered student is absent at their provision the Alternative Provision (AP) is expected to establish contact with parents in the first instance and if unsuccessful make the main school aware, with main school assisting with possible home visits, where possible

14.Annual Strategy

The school and the Access & Inclusion officer will develop a strategy for the forthcoming year which will detail any new initiatives and deadlines so that regular monitoring of the DfE target of 97% is in place

15.This policy

This has been formulated after consultation with students, staff, governors, parents and the Access & Inclusion Officer.

It will be reviewed every three years or sooner if the need arises, so that changes, additions and amendments can be made after consultation with all parties.

Appendix 1

Extract from Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy:

Our Safeguarding Responsibilities

A child is considered missing when their whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be the subject of a crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.

Actions (Timeliness should be on a case by case basis.)

1. Inform Designated Safeguarding Lead and ascertain vulnerability
 - a. Take reasonable steps to locate the child and ascertain their safety.
 - b. Search school building and site;
 - c. Advise the parent/carer that the child is missing and of the duty to report this matter to the Police.
 - d. Contact known friends and relatives where child may be;
 - e. Visit locations that the child is known to frequent, if it is possible.
 - f. Contact the child on their mobile phone.
2. Inform the Police.
3. If the child is on a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need Plan, is looked after or is open to Children's Services assessment inform the relevant Social Worker.
4. Whilst the search is ongoing, the school will continue to liaise with the Police and act in accordance with Police instructions.

The reporting of the child should include the details of the child as follows:

- The students name/s; date of birth; status (for example looked after child); responsible authority;
- Where and when they went missing;
- Previous missing episodes and where they went;
- Who, if anyone, they went missing with;
- What the child was wearing plus any belongings they had with them such as bags, phone etc.; include mobile number;
- Description and recent photo;
- Medical history, if relevant;
- Time and location last seen;
- Circumstances or events around going missing with relevant safeguarding information;
- Details of family, friends and associates;
- Contact details of safeguarding lead if it was after school hours.

Outcomes:

Option 1 – if the child returns before the Police have arrived then the Police must be informed and own school procedures need to be followed.

Option 2 - if the child returns to school of their own volition, then the Police must be informed and own school procedures need to be followed.

Option 3 - if the Police locate the child and bring them back to the school the Police will conduct the safe and well interview and the school will follow School procedure.

Appendix 2

Missing young persons procedure (replacing separate policy)

Statement of Intent

This setting has the highest regard for the safety of the young people in our care. Even when all reasonable precautions are taken, however, emergencies can still arise.

In the event of a young person becoming lost whilst in the care of the school staff, the school will put into practice the "Missing Young Person Procedures". These ensure that a systematic approach to find the young person is taken and consideration is given to the levels of risk to the young person.

Registration is taken at the beginning of the school day and immediately after the student's return from lunch in order to ensure that all are accounted for.

Aim

In the event that a young person is lost, staff will ensure a search is made for the young person as soon as possible, parents and authorities are notified at the appropriate stage, and a high level of care is maintained to other students at the school while the procedures are followed.

Procedure

During the normal school day

If the child has not arrived in school and no contact with parent/carer before 09.30am

- Check that the register is not incorrect. This can be done by Attendance Officer visiting class, or via teachers checking absence list and flagging the child's presence in school
- **Inform SLT immediately (JS, JR, TH, AY, ST, JSu). If contact is subsequently made, inform SLT immediately**
- Attendance Officer MUST continue to attempt to make contact with parent/carer
- Several attempts should be made to contact parent / carer and other contacts listed on school records
- Before 10am SLT should arrange a home visit if practicable
- Before 10.30am, and following home visit, Police should be informed via 101
- If the DSL feels a child is at significant risk, this process may be accelerated
- If parent/carer is contacted and does not know where the child is, request that they return home immediately to check whether child is, and inform parent/carer that we will call the police if the child is not located (parent confirms whereabouts, and we have spoken with the child) within 20 minutes.

If the child has arrived in school but has gone missing during the school day

- Keep calm
- Check the register to confirm that the young person has arrived at the morning/afternoon session
- If young person has registered but appears to be missing – raise the alarm by contacting another member of staff/school office.
- Class teacher will ensure that remaining students are safe and properly supervised. This may necessitate doubling up for a short time.
- Class teacher and another person will make a search of the premises and outdoor areas. All indoor rooms to be checked systematically first followed by outdoor play areas, car park and adjacent road(s). This will be undertaken as quickly as possible.
- Report to SLT

- Whilst the initial search is made, the Person in charge will make enquiries of all adults in the school to establish the last sighting and time, clothes that the child was wearing, and the possible mental state of the young person (happy, upset etc.)
- If the child has not been found within 20 minutes, parent/carer should be contacted – using emergency contact details provided – encourage to keep calm and enquire as to whether the child has returned home or might be making his/her way home. Ask the parent to come to the school by using the normal route that the child would take and to walk if appropriate. The person in charge will send a member of staff to make a search of the area and to continue to do so until instructed otherwise. A mobile phone should be used in order to effectively communicate with the setting.
- Organise a wider search of the area surrounding the school.
- Where appropriate, check with young person's known friends to establish whether or not they are aware of his/her whereabouts.
- If young person is not found during the initial search and after informing parents (after 20 minutes MAXIMUM) the police must be informed via 101 (Phone or email) and asked for advice.
- If the parent arrives at the setting and the young person is still missing, ask the parent to return home in the event that the young person has managed to make their way home by an alternative route. Ask them to remain at home and to contact others who the young person may have gone to visit. The parent must be contactable by the setting at any time in the event that the young person is found.
- Telephone lines should remain as free as possible so that messages are not delayed. It may be possible to plug a separate handset into the fax line temporarily to help the short-term situation, or use mobile phones as appropriate.

Off-site Visits Procedure

The setting will take all reasonable precautions to ensure that whilst young people are on off-site visits, they are appropriately supervised by members of staff, parents, volunteers and others.

- If the off-site visit involves coach travel or travel on public transport, the group will be counted on and off the vehicle with an additional head count before the vehicle moves off.
- At the venue, all young people will be given details of where the meeting point is.
- In some circumstances, and where it is deemed appropriate, young people will be provided with a card which indicates the school name and the name and telephone number of the accommodation at which they are staying.
- Where young people are given 'free-time' they will be required to stay together in group of not less than 3.
- If a young person is lost at a venue. All other students will be required to remain with their group leader and assemble at a pre-determined meeting point until the missing young person is located.
- A head count will be taken to confirm all those who are present. Supervising adults will be asked when the young person was last seen and what clothes he/she was wearing. All adults will be asked to look for the young person as they proceed with the visit. A member of staff or other responsible adult will remain at the meeting point in the event that the missing young person turns up there.
- The Visit Leader will alert officials at the venue that there is a missing young person and take their advice.
- The Visit Leader will alert the base education setting who will contact the parents via the emergency contact details.
- If the young person remains unaccounted for more than 15 minutes maximum, the police will be informed and their advice taken.
- If by the end of the visit, the young person is still missing, arrangements will be made for a member of staff or other responsible adult to remain at the venue or vicinity until the young person is located. This will be in conjunction with the Police, the school setting and the parents.

Notifying the Police

The information required by the Police to assist in locating and returning the student to a safe environment is as follows:

- The student's name, date of birth, status (for example looked after child), responsible authority
- Where and when they went missing
- Previous missing episodes and where they went
- Who, if anyone, they went missing with
- What the child was wearing plus any belongings they had with them such as bags, phone etc.; include mobile number
- Description and recent photo
- Medical history, if relevant
- Time and location last seen
- Circumstances or events around going missing with relevant safeguarding information
- Details of family, friends and associates
- Contact details of safeguarding lead.

Whilst the search is ongoing, the school will continue to liaise with the Police and act in accordance with Police instructions.