

# COGNITA

An inspiring world of education



LONG CLOSE SCHOOL

## **Attendance Policy**

**April 2018**

### KEY FACTS:

- **Regular attendance is vitally important for successful academic achievement and well-being**
- **The school will promote good attendance for all, in close liaison with parents and pupils**
- **Parent/carer(s) have a duty to ensure regular and punctual school attendance**
- **The school will refer persistent absentees to the local authority for support**
- **The school will communicate attendance rates to parents and work proactively with parents to improve attendance**
- **The school will maintain separate attendance and admission registers in keeping with regulations and using DfE national codes**
- **This policy applies to statutory age pupils and those educated in the early years.**

### Introduction

It is important that staff, parents and pupils are familiar with the Attendance Policy to ensure all children achieve their potential. Regular school attendance from an early age creates a culture about the importance of education and learning so that all can benefit equally. Missing learning time leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and it is well-known that poor attendance leads to lower levels of achievement. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child, beginning from the early years.

### The legal framework

The Education Act 1996 specifies the legal responsibility of parent/carer(s) statutory school age children to ensure they attend school. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs; either by regular school attendance or education otherwise such as home education.

The same law requires the school to have an admissions register and an attendance register, and to place all children on both registers. Failure to do so is an offence. Specific details are contained within the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006(c) and referred to as such within the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (England) 2014 (Part 3 s15).

The Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2014) requires at section 3.76 a daily record of the names of the children being cared for on the premises and their hours of attendance.

Children missing education who are of compulsory school age are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) later in life. Pupils at risk of harm or neglect may miss education as a result. The school must take action under the school's safeguarding duties under section 157 of the Education Act 2002 and Part 3 of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (England) 2014 in respect of all pupils. As such, the school must investigate any unexplained absences and follow the local authority children's social care referral procedures accordingly.

### School aims

#### Curriculum

We aim to provide a first-class academic education through a broad and balanced curriculum, which will equip each child for life in and out of the classroom. In particular, it is our aim to provide a sound base in language and number, which are the springboards to success in all other areas of the curriculum, and promote a positive attitude to learning.

#### Standards of Effort and Achievement

We aim to set and expect high standards of work and behaviour, to encourage each child to make maximum effort so they he/she can fully exploit their individual talent.

#### Environment

We aim to create a bright, challenging, secure and happy learning environment, which will promote individual development as well as love of learning.

#### Moral Standards

We aim to foster personal and social responsibility among all members of the school community and to encourage in particular the virtues of industry, honesty, kindness, tolerance, good manners and courtesy.

#### Individuals

We aim to recognise the needs and abilities of individual children, with a view to developing their confidence and the “whole child”.

#### Extra-curricular Activities

We aim to provide children with the opportunity to participate in and enjoy a wide range of activities for which there is neither time nor opportunity during the normal school day.

#### Safeguarding

We aim to ensure that we deliver all of these commitments in a safe learning environment. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff, volunteers and other third parties to share this commitment. The safety of our pupils is our number one priority.

#### Link between attendance and achievement

There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement, as well as a strong link between truancy and antisocial behaviour:

- of pupils who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% manage to achieve five A\* to Cs including English and maths.
- of pupils who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% manage to achieve five A\* to C GCSEs including English and maths.
- of pupils who miss less than 5% of school, 73% achieve five A\* to Cs including English and maths.

### Parent/carer(s) responsibilities

- Encourage regular and punctual attendance, being fully aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives punctually, prepared for learning
- Provide clear reasons for any absence which ensures the school can code the absence properly and accurately
- Contact the school on the first day of the child's absence as early as possible and preferably before the start of the school day
- Avoid making arrangements to remove children from school during term time
- Respond helpfully and positively to any enquiry made by the school to ascertain the reason for any absence, including any safeguarding matter

### School Responsibilities

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (attendance below 90%)
- Ensure every pupil has high levels of attendance so s/he can access the education s/he is entitled to
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Encourage parents to ensure their child attends all learning opportunities regularly and punctually
- Keep accurate and efficient records of attendance and registration at school including attendance at all after school and before school activities

We achieve this in the following ways:

- Teachers are ready to take a register at 08.30 and 13.50
- Mark all children not present by the designated time, taking account of absence notes
- Follow up first day absence with a telephone call to the parent/carer(s)
- Monitor attendance and lateness and implement strategies for promoting improved awareness of attendance such as year groups or vulnerable children, as required, including the use of formal letters home
- Report on patterns of attendance to our Safeguarding Governance Committee (SGC) to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils
- Specifically monitor any persistent absence (individual attendance below 90%)
- Proper use of the DfE national codes to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations, including preservation of the entries on both the admission and attendance register for a period of three years after it was made
- Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence
- Close discussion with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) to identify children causing concern, including interviewing children and parents regarding any unsatisfactory attendance.

- Implementing any agreed improvement strategies such as referral to the Local Authority attendance services and/or children's social care in accordance with the safeguarding and child protection policy and procedures.
- Provide parent/carer(s) with the timings of the school day and the calendar via the school website and any other usual method such as the school newsletter, in advance

### **Children at risk of missing education**

A child missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. The school always informs the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register. This includes situations where they have been taken out of school by parents and are home educated, or are in custody for more than four months, or have ceased to attend school because they have a medical condition preventing them from attending school, or have been permanently excluded by the school or an unknown school destination. The school deals effectively with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions to help identify any risk of abuse or neglect. This includes any possible sexual exploitation or extremism risk and helps to prevent any future risk of absconding or truanting. In accordance with the school safeguarding policy, staff are alert to the signs and triggers to be aware of including travelling to conflict zones, Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage.

The school informs the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been unauthorised absent for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at intervals agreed and consistent with the local authority's policy and procedure.

### **Late arrival**

It is essential that if a pupil arrives late, s/he signs in at Reception so our systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times.

### **Leaving school early during the day**

Pupils are not allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by a member of staff or their known parent/carer; or to attend a school visit, an off-site scheduled lesson, or a sporting fixture. If a pupil has to leave the school during the day for illness or a parent is required to collect him/her for a medical appointment, s/he is also required to sign out at Reception and for the parent/carer(s) to have requested permission from the school in advance.

### **Requests for absence from parent/carer(s)**

Schools, not parents, authorise absence. Requests to the school for granting permission for leave of absence to a pupil during term time must be made in writing in advance directly to the Headteacher using the School Request for Leave Form. The Headteacher is only able to authorise leave of absence where exceptional circumstances relate to the application. Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

We ask that parents make contact with the school each day the child is going to be absent for ill health reasons in order that the school can keep records updated and importantly, so that the school can be kept informed of their progress to full health and anticipated return date. If

necessary, the school may ask for medical evidence of any illness. We expect any absence for illness to be evidenced by a note from the parent/carer(s) as soon as possible.

An absence is classified as unauthorised if a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher in advance.

### **Persistent absentees**

Persistent absentees are those pupils with attendance below 90%. The school will contact the parent/carer(s) if their child's attendance approaches that threshold. If attendance does not improve the school will contact the local authority in accordance with local authority procedures.

### **Maintaining records and reporting to the authorities**

The school's attendance register kept by means of a computer is backed up, in the form of an electronic copy, at least once a month.

### **Monitoring and review arrangements**

Attendance rates are reported regularly to the Cognita Board. The Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Governance Committee (SGC) receives regular performance management indicator reports on pupil attendance as well as any patterns or trends of persistent absence from school. The Independent Chair scrutinises admissions and attendance registers for compliance and safeguarding purposes.

## Attendance Policy

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<b>Ownership and consultation</b>	
Document sponsor (role)	Director of Education
Document author (name)	Ros Vahey - Head of Education Compliance
Specialist Legal Advice	None
Consultation	Headteachers at Glenesk, Duncombe, Milbourne, NBH Prep, St Margaret's, Akeley Senior, Hydesville.

<b>Compliance</b>	
Compliance with	Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE 2016 The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 Part 3 Paragraph 15 Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, DfE September 2014 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

<b>Audience</b>	
Audience	Heads and school staff

<b>Document application</b>	
England	Yes
Wales	No
Spain	No

<b>Version control</b>	
Implementation date	01.09.2016
Review date	Sept 2018

<b>Related documentation</b>	
Related documentation	School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy School Attendance, DfE October 2014 Children Missing Education DfE 2013 School exclusion procedures



LONG CLOSE SCHOOL

## Request for Absence Form

Dear Headteacher,

I would like to take..... Class.....

Out of School from ..... until..... inclusive

for the purpose of .....

Signed ..... (Parent/Guardian)

Date .....

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Current Authorised Absences .....

Current Unauthorised Absences.....

**AUTHORISED** Long Close School agrees to your child being absent from school on the specified dates.

Absence dates    /    /    to    /    /   

**UNAUTHORISED** Long Close School does not authorise your request for leave in term time for the following reason:

.....

Authorisation by Headteacher:

.....

Date .....

**NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS**

The law does not grant parents/guardians an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Permission must be sought in advance and must not be for the purpose of a family holiday. If you do not have Parental Responsibility and/or normally live with the child you must seek the consent of the parent who does and that person should complete this form. Long Close School will only consider requests from that parent.

When deciding whether to allow term time leave, for any reason, we will consider:-

- The time and duration of the leave
- Your child’s record of attendance
- Learning that will be missed

**HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME**

IMPORTANT: Please read carefully the information below.

As a parent/guardian, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child’s education by, whenever possible, taking your holidays during school holidays.

1.1 THE FACTS	1.2 THE LAW
<p>We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents may ask for term-time leave for their child. However, it is important that parents carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time.</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the course work they have missed.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their peers.</p> <p><b>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</b></p> <p>There are times during a school year when a child may experience particular problems because of term-time leave such as:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closeness to exams or tests.</li> <li>• During other examination courses.</li> <li>• During the first year at a new school.</li> <li>• At the beginning of a new school term.</li> </ul>	<p>The law does not say that parents have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term-time.</p> <p>However, in exceptional circumstances school may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave. Examples may include: weddings, bereavement, medical appointments, religious observations, visits to schools, etc. Holiday prices, and the fact that the parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school, are not exceptional circumstances</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have to take the child off roll unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. In these circumstances it is up to the parent to inform the school as once removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>