

ATTENDANCE POLICY

OCTOBER 2023

**Our vision is for all members of our school family to be:
Work hard with all your heart, as working for the Lord.**

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The Importance of attendance

Gargrave CE Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which enables them to maximise opportunities to reach his or her full potential. Research shows there is evidence of a strong link between good attendance and increased attainment. Pupils who regularly attend school make much better progress both socially and academically. Regular attendance is important so that children can adapt better to routines, school-work and friendship groups. Therefore, those pupils will have a positive experience of learning and more successful transition between year groups and into the next stage of education and beyond to further education and training.

Gargrave CE Primary School aims to work in partnership with parents and other agencies to strive towards every pupil reaching at least 96% attendance to ensure that each child can get the best of the educational opportunities provided.

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient full-time education suitable to their age and aptitude. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure that their children receive that education by attendance at school.
- Where parents decide to have their child registered at a school, they have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends that school regularly. This means that they must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence.

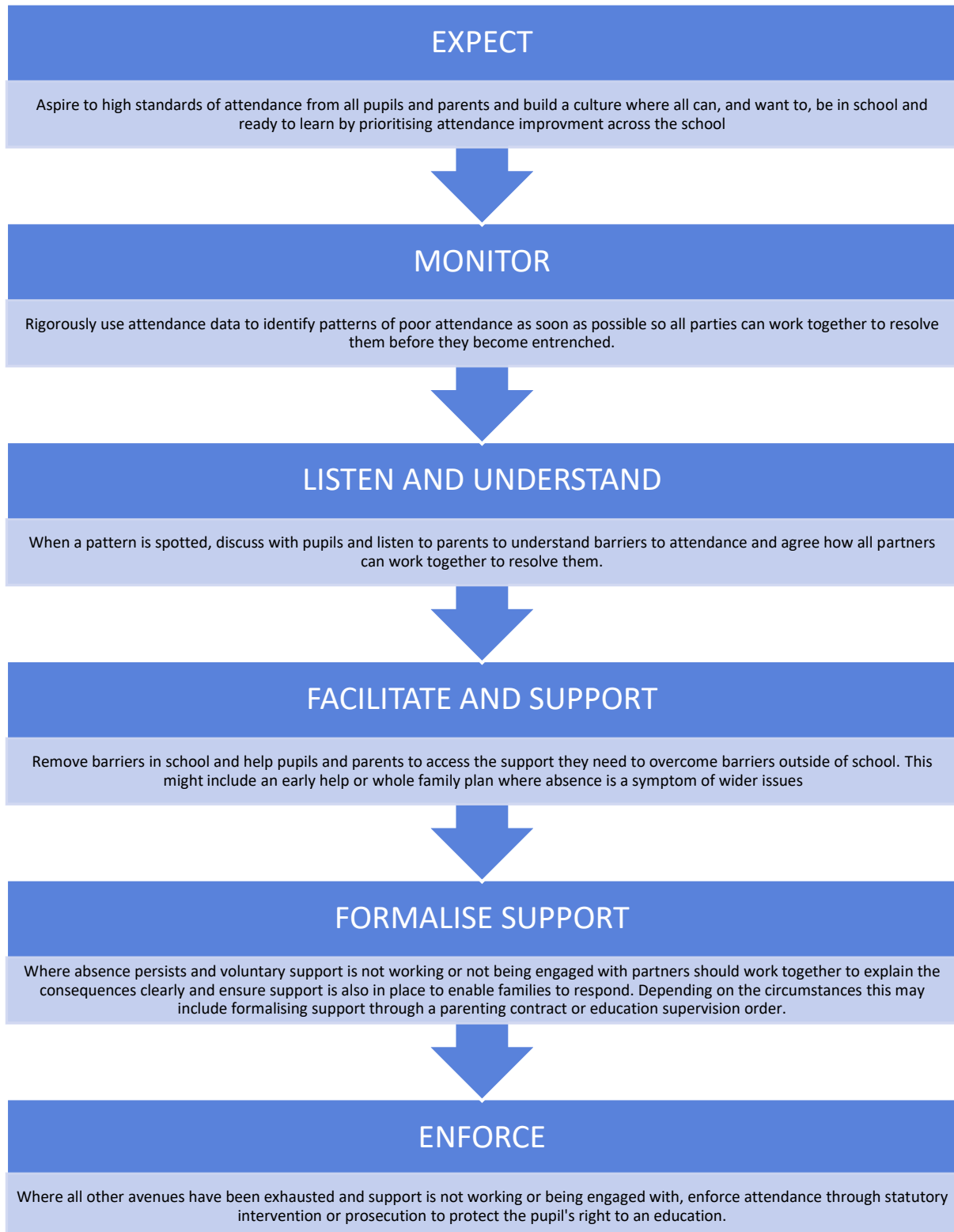
To manage and promote regular attendance the school will:

- Keep parents updated about the school's attendance via the school's newsletter
- Follow the DFE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance in relation to attendance.
- Notify parents on a termly basis (or more regularly if appropriate) if attendance levels raise concerns. Share concerns and attendance information at parent consultation meetings.
- Build positive relationships between home and school that can support good attendance.
- Follow Public Health guidance should any outbreaks at the school occur.
- Utilise attendance data, analysing patterns and trends to target attendance and punctuality to reduce persistent or severe absence from school
- Review the attendance policy and publish it on the school website
- Account for and consider the specific needs of pupils and their families where there may be other barriers to attendance (medical conditions or special education needs and disabilities) and provide support to overcome these barriers (eg Early Help or other wider partners)
- Support pupils back into school following a length of unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge learning gaps.
- Notify parents when we are worried about their child's attendance using the approach outlined in this policy.

Working together to improve attendance

Successfully addressing the root causes of absences and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school requires school and local partners to work collaboratively with families. The Department for Education DFE provide guidance on how schools should respond.

All partners should work together to:



School staff to support and monitor attendance

- The school strategic leader for attendance is Sarah Peel, Headteacher
- The school attendance officer is Sharon Aldous
Please ensure that you contact the attendance officer on a day to day basis when your child is absent or for any enquires regarding attendance.
Call: 01756749433
Email: admin@gargrave.n-yorks.sch.uk
- The school's SENCo, inclusion and well-being lead is Natalie Dawson
To discuss attendance or access support:
Call: 01756749433

Registration

Doors open for learning	8.45am
School day end time	3.15pm
Morning registers should all be completed by	9.15am
Afternoon registers should be completed by	1.30pm

Pupils arriving at school after 9.00am will receive a late mark and the reason for lateness will be recorded. After 9.15am this will be recorded as late after registration, this counts as one session of absence.

Reporting absence and daily routines

Parents are expected to inform the school of the reason for absence by 9.15am at the latest. Where a communication is not received the attendance officer will endeavour to contact parents and carers using the list of contacts. If no response is received the absence may be recorded as unexplained. It is a parent's responsibility to ensure that contact details and emergency contact details are kept up to date.

Where the attendance officer cannot make contact with parents for a sustained period (24 hours), a visit to the home may be carried out or the local police may be informed so that a welfare check can be carried out.

Monitoring lateness

Lateness is monitored. Where a child is repeatedly late (more than 10%) the welfare lead will make contact to offer support. If there is no improvement in punctuality over an agreed period, parents and carers will be asked to come into school to discuss how punctuality can be improved and a referral for support may be completed.

Promoting good attendance

Good attendance is a learned behaviour that is promoted through the school's ethos and culture. As a school we aspire for all children to be in good attendance so that they can flourish in their learning. In order to recognise and promote good attendance the school will:

- Recognise the importance of good attendance and make it a central part of the school's vision to aspire, flourish and love.
- Recognise improving attendance and champion positive and improving attendance.
- Ensure that all staff know the importance of good attendance and are consistent in how they support pupils attendance.
- Use funding to appropriately support the most vulnerable by providing pastoral care and support.

Planned absences

Where possible we ask that parents try to arrange medical appointments during holiday times or out of school hours. If you cannot make doctor or dentist appointments outside of school hours, wherever possible the child should come to school before the appointment and return to school afterwards. If you wish to take your child out of school for a specific religious observance please ensure you inform school in advance.

Request for leave of absence

All parents and carers who wish to take their child/children out of school for any reason (other than medical reason) should complete a leave of absence request form. This should be done at the earliest possible opportunity and at least 2 weeks' notice. Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. School will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is the head teacher's decision to determine the length of time that is authorised that the pupil can be away from school. Head teachers can only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

A letter informing parents and carers of the school's decision whether an absence will be authorised or unauthorised will be sent via email within 5 days of the submission of a request. This letter will outline the school's decision and expectations and ensure parents and carers are aware that if they take a pupil out of school when it is unauthorised that a penalty notice maybe issued by the Local authority.

Fixed penalty notices for unauthorised absence

In North Yorkshire, Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the North Yorkshire County Council's Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices. Where a pupil has unauthorised absence for more than 10 sessions (2 sessions per day) within a 4 month period, in line with guidance, the school will submit documentation and a witness statement to the Local Authority so that a penalty notice can be issued.

Persistent and severe absence – School Response

Stage		Attendance	School Response		
1	Above average	Above 97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise good attendance – report attendance in spring and summer reports 		
2	Average	93% - 97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote positive attendance – monitor and report attendance in Spring and Summer reports 		
3	Below average	90% - 93%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school will closely monitor attendance and alert by text to parents that attendance is below average (termly checks) 		
			Response 1	Response 2	Response 3
4	Persistent Absentee	85% - 90% <i>More than 4 weeks of absence in a year Over half a day of absence every week</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school will consider when measures of attendance are taken and evidence associated with levels of sickness and authorised absence that may adversely impact on data. Attendance will be monitored and if there are no further issues and attendance improves no further action will be taken. School will notify parents of attendance levels and make parents aware that if attendance does not improve further actions may be taken. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School will monitor attendance through half termly measures and during internal progress meetings. Where attendance continues to be of concern parents/carers will be invited to attend an attendance panel meeting. During the meeting a plan will be put together in order to address barriers to attendance. In line with LA guidance, attendance will be monitored closely for a fixed period of time. Parents will be consulted about a referral to Early Help to support attendance. Evidence to support reasons for absence will be requested. If attendance improves school will continue to monitor and work with the family to maintain improvements If attendance does not improve support will be sought from the Local Authority. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school will continue to work with any external support and arrange attendance panel meetings supported by attendance governors to address ongoing concerns. School will refer the ongoing attendance concerns to the Local Authority for support and potential escalation. Escalating concerns may be referred to MAST The attendance and enforcement officer will consider potential progression to PACE ad formal caution – this could lead to a penalty notice, education supervision order or prosecution.
5	Severe Absentee	Below 85% <i>More than 6 weeks of absence in a year</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school will consider when attendance measures are taken and also evidence of sickness and authorised absence that may adversely impact on data. Attendance will be closely monitored of a fixed period. If attendance improves no action will be taken. School will notify parents of attendance levels and make it clear that severe absence is of significant concern. School will make a welfare call and offer support – including through Early Help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents/carers will be invited to attend an attendance panel meeting supported by the attendance governor.. During the meeting a plan will be put together in order to address barriers to attendance. In line with LA guidance, attendance will be monitored closely for a fixed period of time. Evidence to support reasons for absence will be requested. If attendance improves school will continue to monitor and work with the family to maintain improvements. If attendance does not improve support will be sought from the Local Authority attendance officer and relevant agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school will continue to work with any external support and arrange attendance panel meetings to address ongoing concerns. School will refer the ongoing attendance concerns to the Local Authority for support and potential escalation. Escalating concerns may be referred to MAST The attendance and enforcement officer will consider progression to PACE ad formal caution – this could lead to a penalty notice, education supervision order or prosecution.
6	Chronic Attendance Issues	Below 80% <i>More than 8 weeks of absence in a year Over a day of absence each week</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school will contact the family to raise concerns about identified chronic attendance issues. Attendance information will be communicated regularly (monthly). Families will be offered support through school and Early Help. Any medical anxiety issues will be considered and where appropriate families will be asked to attend a meeting with school so that issues can be explored and a plan put in place to address the school's/family's concerns. Any medical issues will be considered and appropriate support accessed following LA guide lines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents/carers will be invited to attend an attendance panel meeting supported by the attendance governor.. During the meeting a plan will be put together in order to address barriers to attendance. In line with LA guidance, attendance will be monitored closely for a fixed period of time. Evidence to support reasons for absence will be requested. If attendance improves school will continue to monitor and work with the family to maintain improvements. If attendance does not improve support will be sought from the Local Authority attendance officer and relevant agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school will continue to work with any external support and arrange attendance panel meetings to address ongoing concerns. School will refer the ongoing attendance concerns to the Local Authority for support and potential escalation. Escalating concerns may be referred to MAST The attendance and enforcement officer will consider progression to PACE ad formal caution – this could lead to a penalty notice, education supervision order or prosecution.

Persistent and severe absence

It is important to take a pragmatic approach when considering data and communicate accordingly. As a school in addition to termly data we do also take into consideration historical attendance information to help inform how the school responds. Our response plan is based on the guidance from Working Together to Improve attendance and DFE's responsibilities for school attendance guidance (see Appendix A)

Children missing in education

We recognise that a child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Where we identify, or receive a report that a child is missing from education we will comply with our statutory duty to inform the local authority.

Elective home education

If a parent of a child wishes to home educate their child, they must inform the head teacher in writing. This is required to de-register the pupil, otherwise the pupil will remain on roll and the parent may be liable to prosecution for non-attendance. When notified of a parent's wish to home educate, the school will forward the parent's communication and inform the local authority as soon as possible (where ever possible on the same day of the parent notification).

Further guidance on elective home education can be accessed though the following link:
<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2020/10/20/all-you-need-to-know-about-home-schooling-and-elective-home-education-ehe/>

Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility. The Attendance Policy has a direct link to the school's Child Protection Policy, Behaviour Policy, and the Health and Safety Policy. The school also has policies for Children Missing from Education and follows the Local Authority Guidance with regards situations when parents deregister pupils for Elective Home Education.

Appendix A DFE Parent responsibilities for school attendance

The Department for Education have produced a summary of responsibilities (September 2022) that outlines what parents are expected to do with regards their child's attendance. These expectations are:

	Parents are expected to:
All Pupils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. notify the school by 9.15am (email admin@riponcathedral.n-yorks.sch.uk Call: 01765 602355) when their child has to be unexpectedly absent. only request a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
Persistently absent pupils (attendance below 90%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> work with the school and local authority to help understand their children's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with any formal support offered including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.
Severely absent pupils (attendance below 85%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barrier to attendance Proactively engage with the formal support offered including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.
Support for pupils with medical conditions or poor attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. Proactively engage with the support offered.

Appendix B Further Information

Working together to improve school attendance (DFE 2022) and Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DFE 2022)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

North Yorkshire Guidance on School Attendance

<https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/school-attendance>

North Yorkshire – Attending school

<https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/attending-school>

Every school day counts

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2009/attendancedata/chapter1a.asp>

Attendance Enforcement Officer

Hambleton/Richmond, Harrogate, Ripon, Knaresborough, Craven).

Julie Parrish – Tel: 01609 798013

julie.parrish@northyorks.gov.uk



One minute guide



School Attendance

Why is attendance at school important?

All parents and carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive an efficient full time education, suitable to their age, aptitude and ability and any Special Educational Needs they may have. This can be achieved by regular attendance at a school where they are a registered student (or alternative provision) or otherwise e.g. by Elective Home Education. Where parents and carers are not fulfilling this responsibility, the Local Authority has a statutory duty to uphold the rights of children and young people and, where necessary, take legal action against their parents or carers. The Local Authority has a School Attendance Support Pathway in place, to assist with this duty, which includes guidance and documentation regarding early intervention strategies and the School/LA Formal Attendance Procedure; Fast track. ([see CYPInfo – School Attendance](#))

School attendance is mandatory during term times with the expectation that a child of compulsory school age, registered at a school, has an attendance of 100% unless there is a statutory reason for absence. Attendance of 90% or lower is of concern and defined by the DfE as Persistent Absence. Schools are encouraged to have clear processes to communicate with parents/carers where there is irregular attendance to seek a return to school. Evidence shows that excellent attendance is key for ensuring positive outcomes for children and young people. Missing school leaves children vulnerable to falling behind, achieving poorer outcomes at both primary and secondary level as well as post 16 choices and outcomes. Where there are unmet needs leading to a barrier to a child accessing their education all agencies need to work together to support the family.

What can we do in North Yorkshire to support improved attendance?

Poor school attendance can be both a cause and a symptom of more complex problems in the lives of children and young people. Where this is the case, schools should initially work with the family to understand the barriers to accessing education and offer support to overcome them. This can be by home visits or meetings in school to formulate a support plan or following the Ladder of Intervention and/or consulting with the locality [SEND Hub](#). The child and family may need support from a number of different agencies to meet their needs. This support can be determined, by the completion of an Early Help Assessment/Plan (with the consent of the family), (T)eam (A)round the (F)amily meeting or referral to the Children and Families Service if unmet needs remain ongoing and become more complex (see [CYPSinfo - Early Help](#))

What are the possible legal consequences for parents whose children miss school?

If support offered to the family has not brought about the required improvement in the child's attendance, the school is required to implement Stage 1 (Initial Warning Letter) & Stage 2 (Attendance Panel Meeting) of the School/LA Formal Attendance Procedure (Fast track) and the Local Authority Stage 3 (Pace Formal Caution Interview/LA Panel Meeting). The following statutory options can be used by the Local Authority as an outcome of that meeting • **Penalty Notice (PN)** - a fine of £60, offered as an alternative to a Prosecution • **Education Supervision Order (ESO)** – applied for through the Family Proceedings Court under the Children Act 1989 • **Prosecution** – pursued through the Magistrates' Courts under s444 (1) or (1A) of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of the most serious offence, parents can be fined up to £2,500 and/or a community rehabilitation order, or a custodial sentence of up to 3 months.

A **Penalty Notice** can also be issued, outside the Fast track Procedure, but only when an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken. In this instance, If the fine is not paid, the parent/carer can be prosecuted under s444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 and receive up to a £1,000 fine.

An **Education Supervision Order**, applied for through the Family Proceedings Court, has to be considered by law prior to legal action being taken against a parent in a Magistrates' Court. ESOs are used where there are significant welfare as well as attendance concerns. An initial consultation must be undertaken with Children's Social Care before proceeding with the application. The Order is usually granted for one year and, if breached by the parent, can lead to a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court and, by the child, an assessment of need by the Children and Families Service.

Where can I find further information?

[CYPSinfo – School Attendance](#); [Elective Home Education](#); [Children Missing Education](#); [SEND Hubs](#); [Early Help](#)