Learning Together,
Growing Together

Bywell CE (C) Junior School

Attendance Policy

2026

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1.1 INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF INTENT

Bywell C.E. (C) Junior School regards regular attendance at school as essential to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all children and that regular attendance at school is necessary to promote better life chances. The school's ethos encourages children to feel that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late. The expectation at Bywell C.E. (C) Junior School is that children should be attending 100% of the time, unless absence is authorised by the Headteacher.

Absence from school presents safeguarding concerns, especially where these are frequent and/or school is not informed as to the reason for absence. For these reasons, absences should be reported to school and will always be chased up when unreported. Frequent absences will result in school requiring evidence that medical professionals are supporting the child's good health to support positive safeguarding outcomes.

There is a clear link between good attendance and high standards. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The Government expects schools to ensure that all pupils regularly attend school.

This policy sets out the principles and guidelines by which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality, to raise levels of achievement and to maximise opportunities both in school and in later life.

1.2 Why Regular Attendance Is So Important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and of others.

2.0 LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'
- DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'
- The following is also a relevant policy regarding legal measures in supporting school attendance: Legal action to support school attendance - Kirklees Council

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy

3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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.
- 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 KCSIE 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.
- Ensuring school staff receive adequate training on attendance

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring they act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Give parents details on attendance and punctuality half-termly.
- Monitor whole school attendance continuously.
- Celebrate and reward good 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.

The attendance officer/s is/are responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents with regard to attendance.
- Leading a compassionate approach when listening to parents and pupils regarding barriers to attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Enforcing attendance through statutory interventions in cases of persistent poor attendance where other supports have not succeeded.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Children are responsible for:

- Following any support provided by the school to improve attendance.

Parents / Carers 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.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

- Proactively engaging with any attendance support offered by the school and the LA.
- Notifying the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent.
- Requesting leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances, and in advance.
- Booking any medical appointments around school where possible.
- Following any family-based support implemented by the school to improve attendance.

If Parents/Carers permit absence from school without good reason they create an offence in law which may result in prosecution.

4.0 UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending the registered school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving/being collected from school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Missing education

- Not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school

5.0 ABSENCE PROCEDURES

Parents/Carers will be required to contact the school office via telephone before **8:45 am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day. Parent/Carers may also report absence via email using the dedicated email - attendance@bywelljuniorschool.co.uk

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by **the close of the morning register** (8:45am) to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent by **telephone call** as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances; however**,** the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. **The school will always request medical evidence when attendance is a concern. Without the required medical evidence, the attendance will be recorded as unauthorised.**

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance officer. The school will inform the LA, on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If required, a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will consider the removal of the pupil from the admissions register.

6.0 LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher, getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

- Children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by the time their door closes.
- All children after their door has closed will be recorded as late. These children are required to enter school through the main school office.
- Instances recorded as "Late" may count as unauthorised absence and reduce the overall attendance level for the child.

School will use its Comms to communicate late attendance to Parents/Carers.

If a child has a persistent late record Parents/Carers will be asked to meet with the Attendance Worker/Learning Mentor or the Head Teacher to resolve the problem, but Parents/Carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time.

7.0 LEAVE OF ABSENCE TERM TIME

The school will only grant a child leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents to complete a 'Leave of Absence Form' which can be accessed on the school website at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the child's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the length of time that the child can be away from school.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason
- Parent/s work/holiday rota
- A family holiday at a lower cost
- Parent/s wedding of a child at the school as this can be arranged during school holidays
- Booked by a member of the extended family without your knowledge
- Family reunions or gatherings

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice/prosecution. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents/Carers will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such

appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

The school will ensure that all children engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not, which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA which authorises the school's absence(s).

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the Parent/Carer will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

8. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

Parent/Carers will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks** advance.

The school will only accept requests for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the child's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

9. SEND AND HEALTH RELATED ABSENCES

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

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled children to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will seek additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a child'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 child that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

If a child is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

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

The school will incorporate an action plan to help children 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 child is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of children with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist where appropriate/possible.

- Enabling a child to have a reduced timetable.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

10. ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the attendance officer, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
    - Sending letters to parents.
    - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
    - Using fixed penalty notices.
    - Personalising attendance targets

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis, and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- **Classopoly – class rewards for achieving targets set by school**
- **Attendance Reward trips for children achieving the target set by school**
- **Personalised attendance reward systems for children when required**

11. WORKING WITH PARENTS/CARERS TO IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with Parents and Carers. Open and honest communication will be maintained with children and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with children and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each child wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a child where the child is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that Parents/Carers are aware of their legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their Parents/Carers to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for child's absence and will approach families to offer support.

Where these barriers are related to the child's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the school team will support in line with policy to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the attendance officer will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

12. PERSISTENT ABSENCE (PA)

There are various groups of children who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- LAC
- Young carers
- Children who are eligible for FSM
- Children with EAL
- Children with SEND
- Children who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Meeting with pupils to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading **regular** check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or IHP may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Failure to adhere to the contract or to participate in offered support may result in a Notice to Improve being served on the family. Failure to show the required improvement may result in legal action being considered.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may,

in itself, constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

13. PENALTY NOTICES AND LEGAL INTERVENTION

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after **one term**, the attendance officer will consider:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the school's point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.

Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a notice to improve as a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered.

Where a child reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

School INSET days will count towards an unauthorised absence when preceded or followed by an unauthorised absence. For example, If the is an INSET day is on a Monday and the child has an unauthorised absence on the Tuesday- Friday of the same week or Tuesday – Friday of the preceding week, this will be recorded as 10 unauthorised sessions.

A fixed penalty notice will be issued in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

- At the first offence a penalty notice is issued to each parent of each child. This is for £80 if it is paid within the first 21 days, increasing to £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

- If a further offence occurs within a three-year period a penalty notice is issued to each parent of each child for £160 if paid within 28 days.
- Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the local authority commencing legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular school attendance. If found guilty, you may be fined up to £1,000 and you will receive a criminal record.

A penalty notice of £120 may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500. Prosecution is heard in Magistrates' Court for the offence of knowingly failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance (s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996). If found guilty, this carries a penalty of up to £2,500 or up to 3 months imprisonment and you will receive a criminal record. Additionally, other community orders may be attached.

14. EDUCATION SUPERVISION ORDERS (ESOs)

Where interventions have not been successful, an ESO can be an alternative to provide formal legal intervention without criminal prosecution. ESOs are made through the Family or High Court and give the LA a formal role in supporting the child and parents to improve their attendance. LAs will issue parents with a notice of the intention to consider an ESO, set up a meeting to discuss with the parent and pupil, and decide whether the case will be taken forward.

Once an SEO is secured, a supervisor from the local authority will decide any actions or requirements. These may include:

- Requiring the parents to attend support meetings.
- Requiring the parents to attend a parenting programme.
- Requiring the parents to access support services.
- Requiring an assessment by an educational psychologist.
- Review meetings involving all parties to be help every 3 months.

Failing to comply with an SEO will result in a fine and decisions will be made about whether further action is required.

15. MONITORING AND ANALYSING ABSENCE

The 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 and 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 officer will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a **half-termly, termly and full-year** basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The attendance officer will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The attendance officer will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future.

The Governing Body will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends.

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.

16. DELETIONS OF NAMES FROM THE ADMISSION REGISTER

The school will ensure that it only deletes names from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance Regulations. A child's name will never be removed for any other reason and the school is aware that doing so could constitute off-rolling.

The school will make returns to the LA when children's names are deleted from the admission register in line with CME legislation.

When the school is notifying the LA that a child's name is being deleted from the admission register, the following information about the pupil will be provided:

- Full name
- Address
- The full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with
- At least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency
- If applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with and the date the pupil will start living there
- If applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school

- The reason under which the child's name has been deleted from the admission register

Names will never be retrospectively deleted from the admission or attendance register – these registers will remain an accurate record of who is a registered pupil and their attendance at any given time. Pupils' attendance will be recorded up until the date that their name is deleted from the admission register.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **97 percent**.

This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the Headteacher. The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2027**.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.