



# School Attendance Policy

Date: September 2023

<b>Date ratified:</b>	September 2023
<b>Signature of Chair:</b>	
<b>Author/Reviewer:</b>	S Ahmed
<b>Date for Review:</b>	September 2024

## DOCUMENT CONTROL

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this Policy will be reviewed annually. Should no substantive changes be required at that point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.

<b>First Issue</b>	September 2023
<b>Originator</b>	S Ahmed
<b>Linked Policies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy</li> <li>• Behaviour Policy</li> </ul>
<b>Target Audience</b>	School Staff, parents, governors
<b>Dissemination via</b>	School website

Version	Date	Reviewer	Changes

## **Attendance and punctuality at Nether Edge Primary**

This Policy has been developed alongside the Department for Education guidance on 'Working together to improve school attendance' - September 2022

It is also in conjunction with Sheffield City Council guidance on 'Expectations for schools' – August 2023

The policy should be read in conjunction with other school policies, including the child protection and safeguarding policy, and not as a standalone policy.

### **1. The importance of school attendance**

Nether Edge Primary school has a statutory duty under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. School plays a central role in ensuring that children and young people attend school regularly. In order to achieve this we take a positive and proactive approach, promoting regular school attendance through a variety of effective strategies.

We recognise the impact that good attendance has on a child's ability to reach their full potential. We aim for all children to attend school as often as possible and that they will be on time for school every day so they are ready to learn.

It is the duty of the Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996. This duty is to ensure that a child receives full time education.

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day possible
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has been unexpectedly absent
- Only request a leave of absence or term time holiday in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible
- Talk to school about issues that are impacting on school attendance so school and home can work together to address these
- Work with school to address medical or SEND needs to ensure plans are in place which will fully support their child's time in school

Poor attendance and punctuality can result in a child feeling unsettled:

- Reducing their abilities to form secure friendships
- Having a negative impact on confidence and resilience
- Struggling to achieve academically

## 2. The Attendance Team



**Miss Sara Ahmed**  
Attendance Lead  
Assistant Headteacher



**Mrs Nichola McQuillan**  
Attendance Officer  
Admin Team



**Mrs Natalie Short**  
Attendance Officer  
Admin Team

The attendance team can be contacted via:

- Phone – 0114 2550926
- Email – [enquiries@netheredge.sheffield.sch.uk](mailto:enquiries@netheredge.sheffield.sch.uk)
- Class Dojo – You can message them on the app
- Or in person by coming into school

The attendance team, alongside all staff in school, work hard to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Ensure the attendance policy is followed and maintained
- Accurately complete the registers
- Effectively follow up each absence
- Robustly track, monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils which need more support
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Additionally to this all staff in school are committed to:

- Building strong relationships with families to understand and support barriers to attendance.
- Supporting parents and pupils when more formal processes are needed.
- Recognising improvements, no matter how small, to a child's attendance

### 3. The School Day

#### The Main School Day

**8.00am:** Breakfast club begins

**8.35am:** Main gates open for children to go to their classroom

**8:45am:** Registration closes.

**8:45am:** Shutter is closed.

Children arriving after 8:45am must report to the Office and be signed in by their parents. A late mark will be recorded by the office team with reasons and minutes.

All gates are locked by 8:45am

**3:10pm:** Shutter is opened

**3:10pm to 3:15pm:** Parents are welcomed into the playground

**3:15pm:** Children are dismissed

#### The Nursery School Day

**8:45am:** Gates open for morning children to arrive

**9am:** Gates are closed

**11:45am:** Gates open and children are collected

**12:30pm:** Gates open for afternoon children to arrive

**12:45pm:** Gates are closed

**3:20pm – 3:30pm:** Gates open and children are collected.

#### Collection of Children

- The end of the school day is 3.15pm for the Main School.
- The end of the day for Nursery is 3:20pm - 3:30pm.
- Nursery children are collected from the Nursery door.
- Reception children are collected from the Reception playground.
- Y1, Y4, Y5 and Y6 are collected from the main playground.
- Y2 and Y3 are collected from the car park.
- Y6 children are allowed to walk home alone if parents have previously completed a 'Walk home' form given to all parents at the start of Y6. Parents telephoning school

and requesting that their child walks home alone will only have this authorised if the forms have been completed.

### Safeguarding the collection of children

- It is the parent/carers` responsibility to ensure their child is collected from school, on time, by an adult known to us.
- During the admissions process, parents/carers are asked to complete a form naming those adults with permission to collect their child. Parents/carers are reminded to update this annually.
- No child will be released to an unknown adult without prior consent either in person or via the telephone. They will also need to provide the password set by parents/carers during the admissions process.

## 4. Absence

Children should attend school every day. If they are unable to attend school parents/carers are requested to telephone school on the first day of absence to explain why their child is not in school. School provides a telephone answering machine for parents to leave these messages if the phone isn't answered. The appropriate code will then be entered in the attendance register by a member of the office team. A follow up call will usually be made to ascertain when a child is likely to return to school and offer support.

### First day calling

If a parent/carer fails to notify the school the attendance team will call home. This is known as 'First Day' absence calling.

If parents/carers cannot be contacted by phone, a home visit will be made.

If the home visit is unsuccessful and school remains unaware of the reason for the absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised.

### Authorised/unauthorised absence

**It is important to note that a letter or phone call from a parent does not authorise an absence, only the school's acceptance of the explanation can authorise the absence.**

Absences from Nether Edge Primary School may be authorised for the following reasons:

- Sickness
- Days of religious observance – Request for Exceptional Leave to be completed.
- Exceptional family circumstances, e.g. bereavement.
- Medical/dental appointment - Medical evidence may need to be provided.
- Pre-arranged visits to another school / educational setting.
- Exams e.g. Music, Dance, Gymnastics etc.

Absences will not be authorised for the following reasons:

- When no explanation is forthcoming from the parent/carer.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation given.
- The child is staying at home to look after siblings, mind the house or because their parent/carer is ill.
- Keeping off all day due to late rising.
- Holidays.

### Arrangements for medical or dental appointments

Where possible all medical appointments should be made outside of school hours. If this is not possible then the child must be collected from school by a parent/carer and signed out on the Electronic Entry System.

An appointment card, letter or text must be shown at the school office in order to authorise the absence. Failure to provide this may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

The school must be informed if a child has an emergency appointment, and will not be in school for morning registration.

Children are expected, where time allows, to be in school before a medical or dental appointment, and to return afterwards. If school believes there is time to do this and the child does not attend, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

### Part-time table tables

In some exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a part-time timetable to meet a pupil's needs. Where this occurs, the school will:

- Discuss the part time timetable with parents, and ensure full understanding and agreement;
- Review any part time timetables regularly, and meet with parents regularly to discuss whether a child is ready and able to move back to full time provision;
- Provide alternative provision where appropriate;
- Record all part time table absence as authorised (as per DfE guidelines).

Any child who is working under a part time timetable will be offered additional provision, relevant to the needs of the individual at that time. This may include 1:1 support, pastoral intervention or time working in our SEND base for a period of time. The decision for this would be taken by the Headteacher and the SENDCo, in discussion with class teachers, any agencies involved and parents.

(See Appendix 1 – **Part time Home School Agreement**)

## Attendance Expectations

It is expected that:

### Parents will:

- Ensure their child attends regularly and on time.
- Notify school on the first day of absence.
- Only request a holiday in term time in exceptional circumstances.
- Not keep their children away from school for trivial reasons.
- Not keep their children off school during SATs or at times of testing.
- Discuss any concerns which may impact on their child's attendance with staff in school

### The school will:

- Regularly communicate the Attendance Policy to parents/carers.
- Share children's current attendance regularly or make figures available upon request.
- Ensure that the Head Teacher is informed about any attendance matters and is in agreement with any action taken.
- Have an expectation that full time, punctual attendance will be the norm and all persistent absences/lateness will be followed up.
- Monitor attendance through checking registers and the computerised attendance system.
- Identify and act upon problems with attendance.
- Liaise with the Local Authority over attendance concerns.
- Conduct home visits when children are absent from school

## 5. Monitoring

Attendance and punctuality is monitored in the following ways:

- The registers are monitored on a daily and weekly basis by staff responsible for attendance.
- The attendance team meets weekly to analyse attendance and develop further strategies to improve attendance.
- Attendance patterns are monitored every 4 weeks by the attendance team.
- Parents/carers will be informed as soon as their child's attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern
- Individual records of children who raise concerns will be discussed within school, with the Local Authority Attendance Team and FIS (Family Intervention Service).
- Information on attendance and punctuality is returned termly to the Local Authority who monitors the attendance of all pupils.



## Attendance Procedures for children with attendance below 90%

### Order of concerns

1. **Attendance falls below 90%**  
*Letter one (PA1) sent to parents/carers outlining initial concerns. No meeting at this time.*
2. **Internal four week monitoring starts**  
*Children added to monitoring list with start and end dates.*
3. **Letter 2 (PA2) sent arranging a meeting**  
*If no improvement after 4 weeks, a second letter is sent to parents outlining concerns and inviting them into school for an initial concerns meeting.*
4. **Meeting 1 held**  
*First meeting held in school. Complete ICM form and set a review date. If needed, referrals to be made to outside agencies.*
5. **Review 1 (text to be sent if improved)**  
*At review point, attendance checked internally. If improved, a text to be sent home.*
6. **Letter 3 (PA3) sent if no improvement**  
*If no improvement a letter will be sent inviting parents in for a second meeting to review actions from the initial meeting.*
7. **Meeting 2 held**  
*Review actions from meeting one and address areas of concern. School to continue to support with any barriers to attendance and praise any successes so far. ICM form to be updated and review date to be set.*
8. **Review 2 (text to be sent if improved)**  
*At review point 2, attendance checked internally. If improved, a text to be sent home.*
9. **Letter 4 (PA4) sent if no improvement**  
*If no improvement a letter will be sent inviting parents in for a third meeting to review attendance concerns. At this point LA attendance will also be invited to join the meeting to see what else can be done to support the family.*
10. **Ongoing monitoring**  
*After this point attendance will be closely monitored and ongoing support offered.*

The aim of all communication with parents/carers is to offer support. We want to help all children to attend school as often as possible. For those children with specific SEND or health needs which impact on their ability to attend school regularly, will be further supported with individualised plans and actions to achieve success. School will work with all agencies to support good attendance for all.

### Punctuality procedures

If a poor pattern of punctuality is formed:

- Staff who have responsibility for attendance will monitor lateness.
- Late arrivals must report to the school office, where their parent/carer must sign them in. A dinner is ordered at this point.
- Staff with responsibility for attendance input this information to SIMs
- A letter is sent to parents/carers of children who are persistently late. (A persistent late attender is defined as a pupil who is late (before registers close) for more than 15% of all possible days)

- Parents will be contacted to discuss any problem which may contribute to a lack of punctuality.
- A referral will be sent to FIS (Family Intervention Service) for early help if necessary.

### Penalty Notices

Where a child's attendance is consistently poor (less than 90% with at least 20% of the absence being unauthorised) and all steps have been taken to rectify this by the school and the Local Authority working with the child and the parents/carers, but have been unsuccessful. A fixed penalty notice will be considered by the attendance legal team.

### 6. Children absent from education and children missing from education (CME)

Children absent from education are those who are of statutory school age and are on roll at a school but not regularly attending.

Children missing from education are those who are of statutory school age but not on roll at a school.

### Referrals to CME

A referral will be made to the Children Missing from Education team for the following reasons:

- They have been absent from school for more than 10 school days and their whereabouts are unknown or we know where they are but not when they intend to return to school.
- If a child has failed to return from term time leave and 10 days have passed since the confirmed return date.
- If a child has moved out of Sheffield and has not started a new school.
- If a child has left the country
- If parents have chosen to home educate a child and remove them from a school roll

All decisions to remove a child from roll without a confirmed location will be made by the Children Missing in Education team and school will be notified when this can happen.

### 7. Children in public care

The attendance of children in the care of the local authority is managed slightly different to those who are not.

The Office will receive a Welfare call on a daily basis and inform the virtual school of any absences on the day.

The Attendance Officer will monitor their attendance and report this to the SLT who will inform the Looked after Children Team on request.

The school's co-ordinator for looked after children is Miss Sara Ahmed.

## 8. Holidays during term time

At Nether Edge we are led by guidance issued by Sheffield City Council. When referring to holidays in term time, they state the following:

- *We won't approve holiday time for children during term time. If you take your child out of school for a holiday or other unauthorised absence, we will issue a penalty notice on behalf of your school.*
- *We believe that regular attendance at school is vital to help children and young people achieve their full potential and get the best possible start in life. This will be our approach unless the legislation or guidance from the government changes.*
- *We are aware that the outcome of a court case in the Isle of Wight has generated some public debate and enquiries about the issuing of penalty notices for unauthorised absence in Sheffield.*
- *The Isle of Wight case has not changed the law or set a legal precedent. This means magistrates courts will continue to consider the legislation on term time absences on a case by case basis.*

Sheffield City Council can give each parent a fine of £60, which rises to £120 each if not paid within 21 days. If the fine remains unpaid after 28 days, parents/carers may be prosecuted for their child's absence from school.

If prosecuted, parents/carers can be fined up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence of up to 3 months.

If a parent/carer would like to request holidays in term time, the steps outlined below must be followed:

1. Parent/carer informs the school office that they would like to request term time leave.
2. A meeting is arranged with HT or attendance lead to discuss reasons for this holiday, share details about fines and ascertain if there are any exceptional circumstances.
3. If the parent/carer still wishes to take their child on holiday, a request form will be given at the meeting.
4. This should be handed in as soon as possible, with at least 20 days before they are due to leave.
5. The headteacher's written confirmation of the decision will be sent within 10 days.

Nether Edge Primary School is committed to raising the profile of attendance and its link to achievement. It is important that parents/carers work with school to ensure that all children attend on time, every day and do not take holidays in term time.

## 9. Re-integration into School after Absence

Any child who does not return to school by the date specified on the holiday request form, is at risk of losing their place at school.

Similarly, those who are taken on holiday without school being informed, will also be at risk of losing their place. In this circumstance the child will be referred to CME as soon as possible.

To minimise the impact of long absences, parents/carers are asked to encourage children to read daily and complete learning tasks discussed in advance with the class teacher.

When a child returns to school after a long period of absence (10 days minimum) they will be supported to transition back into school life.

This re-integration will include:

- An initial 'welcome back' meeting. Attendance lead, parents/carers, class teacher and child to all attend where possible
- Updated assessments completed by school staff as soon as possible
- 1:1 support from the classroom staff to rebuild friendships, particularly for younger children and when outside at playtimes and lunchtimes

## **10. Celebrating attendance**

Attendance rewards will be based on individual attendance as well as whole school or whole class strategy.

How it works:

- Daily attendance for the class is marked on each classroom door.
- Attendance is discussed throughout the week with the class.
- In assembly, each Friday, the best class attendance in each Phase is celebrated.
- At the end of each half term, children who have achieved 100% attendance, and those whose attendance has improved markedly, receive a certificate and a letter goes home.
- Children who have previously been persistently absent (ie below 90%) are monitored particularly and improvements are noted and rewarded.
- The attendance team looks for further ideas to celebrate attendance, particularly for those children who are making an improvement.

## **11. Communicating attendance**

Attendance will be communicated with parents/carers in the following ways:

- At three parents/carers meetings throughout the year – individual figure will be given
- On end of year reports – individual figure given
- On cause for concern letters or via phone calls – individual figure given
- At attendance or term time leave meetings – individual figure given

Review: September 2024. This Policy will be reviewed annually or in accordance with changes in Government Guidance.

## Appendix 1

### Home school agreement for part time timetables

#### Home School Agreement

Your child \_\_\_\_\_ has been placed on a reduced timetable.

In order for your child to be able to be successful in school, it is vital that home and school work together to build a supportive partnership. As part of that;

School will:

- ensure that there is a clear plan to reintegrate the child back into school as quickly as possible
- ensure that all agencies that can support this are involved as quickly as possible
- provide work to be completed at home in a specific exercise book which will be marked daily by school
- hold meetings every two weeks to review the timetable
- provide specific interventions to help the child address any needs they have in order to be successful.

Home will:

- ensure work is completed and returned to school daily for marking
- ensure that the child will attend school every day, as agreed, dressed appropriately in the correct school uniform
- drop off and collect promptly as agreed in their timetable
- talk to the child about the importance of returning to school full time.

Signed (home)\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed (school)\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Reduced Timetable Contract

Child's name			
School			
Date Plan Started			
Key Staff			
Year Group			
FSM Y/N	BME Y/N	EAL Y/N	SEN need:

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full time education. Sheffield City Council remains committed to every child's right to a full time education and endorses the requirement that a reduced timetable **cannot be implemented without the agreement of the parent/carer.** By signing this contract the parent/carers and school are indicating they are agreeing to a temporary reduced timetable to meet their child's individual need with the arrangements for this detailed below

Detail regarding the temporary barriers to \_\_\_\_\_ having a full time timetable in school (e.g. SEND/medical condition/young carer/travel)

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Is an updated My Plan attached to this contract?

Proposed timetable:

	AM	PM	Additional Information
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Involvement of any relevant agency			
Additional assessment arrangements			
Arrangements to supervise the child whilst not in school			

\_\_\_\_\_’s part time timetable will remain in place for as long as necessary in order to support their success.

This timetable will be reviewed every 2 weeks.

The next 3 reviews of this timetable will take place on:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Review Date	Any changes to the timetable? (+/-)	Additional Information

	Signature	Date
Parent/carer		
Parent/carer		
School staff		
Headteacher		
Any other agency		