

# Attendance Policy



## Whole School Attendance Policy

2024/2025

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**Head Teacher: Mr D Christie**

**Chair of Governors: Mrs D Howarth**

**Seascape Primary School- Attendance Policy**

**Principles:** Regular and punctual attendance at Seascope Primary school is both a legal requirement and is essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. Good attendance by pupils will be recognised appropriately in assemblies, through rewards and celebrations and through phone calls and letters to parents. **All children should be at school on time every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.**

Seascope Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

We believe that all students benefit from the education we provide; this means regular attendance is essential. The aim of our attendance policy is to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty; to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. A whole school attendance target of 96% has been set for the **academic year 2024/2025** and various measures will be put in place to help work towards this.

The school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality. (See attached attendance strategy)

**This policy has been reviewed and rewritten in line with the new DFE regulations in school attendance ‘School attendance Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities’ (May 2024) and Working together to improve school attendance August 2024 ‘School attendance parental responsibility measures’ (December 2021).**

This policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

## **1. Attendance and Attainment**

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our pupils is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

### **We will ensure that:**

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Student’s will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of other students.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

## **2. The Law**

You need to make sure your child attends school regularly and on time. Because parents are responsible for this duty in law, you will be **breaking the law** if you do not do this and there are no good reasons for missing school.

The School and Local Authority **want to help you if you have a problem.** If attendance does not get better or you do not accept help and support offered, the Council may issue you with a warning notice, a Fixed Penalty Notice or ask you to attend an interview to ask you questions about whether you have broken the

law.

If you go to court and are found guilty of an offence, you could be fined up to £1,000 for a less serious offence or up to £2,500 if the law breaking is more serious. **In very serious cases, the court may involve the probation service or consider up to 3 months in prison.**

### **3. Attendance Procedures**

On entry to Reception class, parents are required to sign an attendance contract, clearly stating their agreement to ensure their child attends school every session unless they are ill, or have a medical appointment that cannot be arranged outside of school hours. Failure to adhere to the attendance contract/agreement will result in involvement from the attendance lead, support will be offered. However a failure to adhere to agreements and failure to improve attendance will lead referrals to the attendance improvement team.

#### **a) On the first day off and any further absence**

If a child is ill or is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home, then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why. School will ring each subsequent day until day 3 when a member of the pastoral support team will call and offer support.

Doctors and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. Your child should return to school following an appointment, if they are well enough to do so.

#### **b) Periods of extended absence**

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then the attendance lead will call, and a home visit may be arranged at this point. If parents do not respond to phone calls then the Pastoral Manager will visit the child's home, meet with parents and devise an action plan.

If the school receives no reason for any absence, then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences will result in further action, including a possible fixed penalty notice, (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence taken during term time).

**Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.**

**Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark, children who attend school after 9.00am will have a late after registers close mark.
- Any absence where parents fail to provide medical evidence, when their child's attendance is below 93%, and have been issued with a letter requiring them to provide medical proof.

**If your child is absent from school more than they should be:**

At the end of each half term, all children’s attendance data will be shared with their parents and support offered to the families of those children where attendance has fallen below 95% (unless this is due to frequent hospital appointments and/or long term medical needs, where support will already be in place).

**c) Help & Support:**

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you talk to the school about the issues as soon as possible. You may need to attend a meeting in school to talk about the problems and to put a plan in place to help. Sometimes, school may need to involve other services to help.

All families where additional support is needed will be offered the support of a Team around the family to remove barriers to good school attendance.

**d) Communication:**

The school will always try to communicate with you regarding your child’s attendance if it declines. This communication may involve explaining that attendance is a cause for concerns by letter, making telephone calls to you, and inviting you to attend a meeting in school depending on the circumstances, or completing home visits. The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve the situation.

**e) Enforcement Action:**

**School enforcement - Attendance strategy 2024/2025**

						<u>Data</u> <u>2024/2025</u>	<u>Impact</u> <u>25/26</u>
<b>Letters of concern</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> letter will go out first week of term to inform parents of last year’s overall attendance. A letter of notice to improve attendance may be issued at this point if attendance at the end of the last school year was below 95%	2 <sup>nd</sup> letter will be a notice to improve school attendance, with an invitation to seek support from school.	3 <sup>rd</sup> letter will be an invitation to a support meeting.	4 <sup>th</sup> letter will be to notify parents that they have been referred to AIT. Leave of absences that have been declined and exceed 10 sessions will be referred for a fixed penalty notice.	5 <sup>th</sup> Letter will be issued by AIT for formal intervention and may result in the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal warning</li> <li>• Fixed penalty fine</li> <li>• Attendance case conference (Under police caution)</li> <li>• AIT panel to decide next steps</li> <li>• Legal court case arranged if evidence to support parents have committed an offence.</li> </ul>	<u>Autumn</u> <u>Spring</u> <u>Summer</u> End of year	
<b>Updates</b>	Information leaflet on impact of absence given to parent at beginning of the school year.	Weekly checks on the late book to look at patterns of lateness for individual’s	Weekly checks on the school absence book – to look for patterns of absence, look for	All actions to be recorded on c-poms. All actions and copies of attendance letters, meeting minutes, planning	Weekly update of all attendance data to the head teacher every Friday		

	information for parents) At the end of every half term all parents to receive a parent mail to inform overall attendance year to date, and remind parents of importance of regular school attendance		medical evidence not provided, concerning reasons for absence.	meetings, formal warnings, fixed penalty notices, court action to be uploaded to c-poms.			
<b>Contact with parents</b>	Daily parent mail on every day of school absence	Absence longer than 3 days to be followed up with a call from PM to ensure no on-going concerns or need for support.	Staff on the gate every morning to greet children and parents, ensuring staff always available to parents if support is needed.	Late door every morning, log of children arriving late kept and looked at by TD?DC, patterns of persistent lateness picked up and parents offered support.			
<b>Referral process</b>	Initial meeting arranged and issues discussed TAF opened on all persistent absentee	Review TAF Look at removing barriers to attendance as follows School Nurse (Health issue) One point (Family worker) DISC (substance abuse) Stonham – (Mental health) Merrick House (mental Health) Harbour – DV Young carers service Police – anti social behaviour	3 <sup>rd</sup> TAF will form the planning meeting with AIT Plan to: Provide further support to remove barriers.	4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> TAF to evaluate progress over next 10 weeks.  Reviewed after this if good progress continues end. TAF – continues if further concerns AIT enforcement will proceed as above.			

		CAMHS – Child Place 2 Be – Counselling Place for parents - counselling Housing solutions					
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If, following the school’s attempts to intervene there is no significant improvement and no good reasons for absences (i.e. absences are not supported by relevant evidence), or you have not co-operated with the school’s attempts to improve the situation the school are required to consider referring the matter to the Local Authority for enforcement action. Once the threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence has been met within a 10 week period, school will refer for enforcement action, unless there are exceptional circumstances and the head teacher feels this is not appropriate.

The High Court has confirmed that the school’s Head Teacher authorises absences. If your child misses’ school a lot because of illness, or if school do not know of any serious health issue that would mean your child could miss school a lot, the school may ask you to provide medical evidence to authorise absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

**Circumstances where a penalty notice may be issued**

Fixed penalty notices:

A penalty notice may be issued in cases of unauthorised absence from school. The issue of a penalty notice may be considered in any of the following circumstances:

- In cases of overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps).
- In cases of parentally condoned absence, where this can be demonstrated. This may include instance of children stopped on truancy sweeps whilst accompanied by their parents.
- In instance of un-authorised holidays in term time, (where the holiday gives rise to 5 days/10 sessions or more unauthorised absence in any period up to a maximum 10 rolling weeks).
- In instances of excessive delayed return from holidays without prior school agreement.
- In case of persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed.

To ensure the consistent and fair delivery of penalty notices, the following criteria for their use will apply:

- The pupil concerned must have lost 5 school days or more due to unauthorised absence in any period up to a maximum of 10 rolling school weeks.
- Each liable parent/carer shall receive formal warning from the local authority of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued, and shall be given a maximum of 15 school days to effect an improvement. In the event of further referral in the same rolling year a penalty notice may be issued with immediate effect.
- Holidays taken in term time will result in the immediate issue of a fixed penalty notice if permission for the absence has not been agreed by the Head Teacher and exceeds 5 school days.
- In cases where there is more than one poor attending pupil in a family multiple notices may be issued; this decision will involve careful consideration and consultation with school by AIT regarding the families’ current circumstances.
- There will be no restriction on the number of times a parent or carer may receive a formal warning of a possible issue of a penalty notice.

- To ensure that Durham County Council has a consistent approach to the issuing of penalty notice the AIT will apply their current criteria to each case, i.e. at least 10 sessions lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil, attendance should be calculated cumulatively.
- Fixed penalty notices are issued per child to each natural parent whether married or not, any adult who has a parental responsibility for a child/young person. Any person who has care of a child/young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

**Punctuality:**

Registration time is at **8.45am** and **12.30pm** for Foundation stage, Key Stage One and Key stage 2 are 8.45am) and 1.00pm at which point the pupil entry gates will be locked and all pupils must enter by the main entrance. It is very important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time, then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed after 30minutes and any children arriving more than 30 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to a fixed penalty notice being issued).

**If your child is late for school:**

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school’s attendance data base (SIMs).

**1. If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions;**

A letter will be sent home from school to parents to say their child’s punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment with the Pastoral manager will be offered to discuss ways that the school can offer support to improve this. Incentives to improve punctuality may also be offered to pupils e.g. Dojo points for every day a child arrives on time to school, a weekly raffle of children who attend on time for a full week will be held in the celebration assembly on Friday afternoon, with winning child being able to choose a prize from the selection offered. (See positive attendance strategy).

**2. If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason –**

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment given to meet with Pastoral Manager for a ‘planning meeting’. This will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality. Support via a TAF will be offered.

**3. If the school continues to have concerns about a child’s punctuality;**

Then a referral may be made to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

**g) Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Head teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; considering the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil’s prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time e.g. termly tests.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher’s discretion. As stated in the most recent DFE guidance on attendance, if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.

**5. Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

<b>Lateness</b>	EYFS On time clock chart once per half term	KS1 On time Clock chart Once per half term. Reception WK1 Yr1 WK2 Yr2 Wk3	KS2 Chatty council to agree strategy Year 3 week 4 Year 4 week 5 Year 5 & 6 week 6		
<b>Assemblies</b>	Attendance will be celebrated in the weekly celebration assembly on Friday afternoon.	Celebrate success Weekly tally of the best class attendance, Class who win attendance award most each half term Logged that class with the best half termly attendance will win a class prize, to be agreed by the class and their teacher.	Celebrate coming to school on time.  KS1 clock chart awards  Attendance Dojo raffle.  PREFECT ATTENDANCE – class prize	Celebrate most improved class attendance.  Most improved individual attendance.	Each term cert for all children with 99% and above attendance.  Children with 100% attendance will be celebrated in weekly celebration assembly.
<b>Rewards</b>	Certificates for 99% attendance termly  Extra playtime/class prize for best class overall over each half term	Certificate for being on time	Chatty Council to decide on reward/trip for 99 % attendance termly.	Each class Y1-Y6 For every day class has 100% attendance one letter of “PERFECT ATTENDANCE” written on board when all letters are written class can celebrate in any way they have chosen (Discuss reward with class prior to beginning)	Attendance dojo raffle weekly Every day you arrive on time you will get a dojo point. If you get 5 in a week you are entered into the raffle for that week, there will a KS1 prize and a KS2 prize.
<b>Well done Letters to Parents</b>	Letters to parents of children with 99% and above attendance each term	Letters to parents with Improved attendance following intervention			

**6. Children Missing from Education:**



If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known. Any children deemed missing from education will be referred to first contact and the local authority as being at risk of harm.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Governing Body:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed to parents and staff.
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and students to implement the policy effectively.
- Ensure regular meetings of the behaviour and attendance sub-committee take place and they will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance. The governor's meetings will review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to be fully aware and supportive of expected attendance targets for the year.
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off site.

### **School Leadership Team:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the policy and its effectiveness, with annual review of full policy.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure government legislation on attendance is complied with and that the leadership team are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take responsibility for overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to the job, this is T Duncombe.
- Report to the Behaviour and Attendance Governors Sub Committee meeting each term on attendance records, data and provision.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.

### **Teachers and support staff:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Ensure the manager responsible for overseeing attendance and any other relevant personnel are kept fully aware of and up to date with any concerns relating to students that may impact on their attendance.
- Ensure compliance with regulation and guidance on attendance.

- Work professionally with parents, carers, students and relevant agencies to secure improvements in attendance via appropriate support or enforcement measures.
- Ensure understanding and are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken each morning and afternoon.

**Parents / Carers:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, we expect that parents / carers will:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy regarding absences, ill health, medical or dental appointments, leave of absence in term time and punctuality.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance and work with staff in resolving any issues that may be having an impact on their child.
- Enforce a regular schedule at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc. so that the child has a consistent routine and the school becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same messages at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.