

# Shelley Pyramid of Schools

## Attendance Policy

2017/2018



Highburton CE (VC) First School



# The Shelley Pyramid School Attendance Policy

The pyramid is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students. It recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting regular school attendance and excellent punctuality so that all young people take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on excellent attendance.

## **Aim**

We aim to promote a culture where excellent attendance and punctuality are seen as a fundamental requirement for all learners. Throughout the pyramid, we view excellent attendance as 100% every year

## **Objectives**

To have systems and procedures in place that:

- Encourage attendance and punctuality to school and lessons
- Inform parents/carers of absences and involve them in any attendance concerns for their children
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
- Promote effective partnerships with the Attendance and Pupil Support Service and with any other relevant services and agencies.
- Recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

## **Monitoring and Review**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Kirklees Council document “Leave of Absence – Guidance for Schools” (revised May 2017)

This policy was written and will be monitored and reviewed by the Shelley Pyramid of Schools.

Approved by staff: September 2017

Approved by Governing Body: September 2017

## **Further Reference**

Appendix A - Attendance guidance for parents and carers

Appendix B – Leave of Absence

Appendix C - Application form for Leave of Absence.

Appendix D – Persistent Absentee: first warning

Appendix E – Persistent Absentee: Individual Care Plan

## Appendix A – Attendance Guidance for Parents and Carers

### WHY REGULAR ATTENDANCE IS SO IMPORTANT

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Statistics have shown that students ... "with no absence are 1.5 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A\*-C or equivalent and 2.8 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A\*-C or equivalent including English and mathematics than pupils missing 15-20% of ... lessons" (DfE 2015).

Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring every child's regular attendance at school is the parents'/carers' responsibility and permitting absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### 1. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE and helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to parent/carers at least termly on their child's attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor whole school attendance continuously.
- Celebrate good attendance.
- Make sure parents/carers have access to attendance data.
- Recognise good or improving attendance.

### 2. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

2.1 Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of absence is always required, preferably in writing. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absences for religious observance will also be authorised.

Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

### 2.2 PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents/carers will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include:

- Allocation of additional support through a Mentor, individual incentive programmes and
- Participation in group activities around raising attendance.
- ***All PA cases are made known to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service who will work in partnership with schools and families to support regular attendance.***

### 3. ABSENCE PROCEDURES

3.1 If a child is absent parents/carers must:

- Contact school as soon as possible and no later than 9.30 a.m. on the first day of absence;
- Contact school daily, **no later than 9.30 a.m.** for any continued absence;

3.2 If a child is absent school will:

- Telephone parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them.
- Invite parents/carers in to school to discuss the situation with the Headteacher and possibly the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer for the school, if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Attendance and Pupil Support Service; if attendance falls below 85%.

## TELEPHONE NUMBERS

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have contact numbers at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year. **Please ensure that if you change your contact number you inform school.**

## 4. LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can 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 registration.
- All children arriving after registration period will be required to sign in at the office. The reason for lateness is also recorded.
- If a child has a persistent late record parents/carers will be asked in to school to meet with a member of staff to resolve the problem, but parents/carers can approach us at any time if they are having problems getting children to school on time.

## 5. LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME – see Appendix B

## 6. ATTENDANCE AND PUPIL SUPPORT SERVICE

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problem together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance and Pupil Support Officer from the Local Authority. He/She will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents/carers or children may wish to contact the APSS themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

The table below is a guide to indicate what may happen when a student's attendance falls below 95%. Previous attendance history and the time of the year will be taken into consideration.

First day absence	Phone call home
90-95% attendance	Letter home
85-90% attendance	Letter home Parental interview Action plan and set targets (suggest this moves to box below)
Below 85% attendance	Letter home Parental interview APSO involvement Use of Action Plan/Parenting Contract by APSS Warning letter from APSO Fixed Penalty Notice

## 7. COMMUNICATION

At the induction meetings for children about to join the school, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. At this initial meeting parents are asked to arrange their family holidays within school holidays, rather than in term time so that their child's education is not disrupted. The pyramid's policy relating to authorisation of holidays is also communicated to parents.

When children join our schools at other times of the year, the importance of regular attendance is discussed with parents.

## 8. SUMMARY

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. All school staff are committed to working in partnership with parents, children and families to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

## **Appendix B – Leave of Absence in Term Time.**

It is well recognised that good, consistent attendance at school is crucial to a child or young person's future prospects and reducing absence from school continues to be a priority for the Shelley Pyramid Family of Schools. Reflecting national concerns around attendance, the Department for Education issued guidance in June 2013 (revised 5<sup>th</sup> January 2017) strengthening the view that as a general rule, children should not be taken out of school for the purposes of a holiday.

### **Leave of absence in term time may be granted for a family under special circumstances.**

These might include:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking leave outside term-time if the leave will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education;
- and
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

**All requests from parents for leave of absence must be made in writing to the school in advance**, using the "Application for Pupil Leave of Absence from School" form, which is available from the school office. The request should be sent for the attention of the Headteacher and outline the specific reasons why the request meets the requirements of "special circumstances".

### **The Head teacher will determine if the request is reasonable. Unless there are exceptional circumstances the school will not approve any term time leave of absence:**

- For any Key Stage 4 students (years 10 and 11).
- Any student in full time education (years Reception-9) where current attendance is less than 95%.
- Statutory exam periods.
- In the month of September

### **Sports Coaching**

In line with the DfE guidance for attendance, all pupils of compulsory age are entitled to a full-time education. Authorisation by the Head teacher for external sports coaching will only be granted in exceptional circumstances where a pupil is particularly skilled or working towards entry to a specialist sports school or county / national competitions.

A written request must be made to the Head teacher by the child's parent or carer in the first instance. The school may request further details from the external sports provider.

### **If leave is taken without proper authorisation, the schools may respond as follows:**

- The absence will be treated as unauthorised and recorded on the child's Record of Achievement.
- Parents can be given a Kirklees Penalty Notice or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised absences.
- In certain circumstances, the school may delete pupils from the register who fail to return on the date they were expected back from extended leave.

## Appendix C

This form has been designed to clarify the process of leave of absence requests. The school is expected to comply with Government guidance by the DfE (Department for Education) and the LA (Local Authority).



APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL		
Pupil Name:		Class:
Any other school age children:	Name(s):	School(s):
Absent from school date		Back at school date:
Total amount of days absent from school:		
Does the holiday overlap with the beginning or end of term? Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>		
Please state the reason for your application:		
Signature of Parent/Carer:		Date:
<p><b>Where a parent is unable to take leave during the school holidays, evidence from the employer will be needed to verify this (with the exception of armed forces personnel).</b></p>		
<p>The Headteacher will consider the following points before authorising leave:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Whether the request fits the 'special circumstances' criteria outlined by Kirklees LA and the DFE</li> <li>2. The child's attendance history (above or below 96%)</li> <li>3. The time of year (Controlled Tests, Exams or September).</li> <li>4. The length of leave.</li> <li>5. The family circumstances</li> </ol> <p><b>Penalty Notice:</b> Where the Headteacher decides that authorisation cannot be given but the absence occurs, consideration will be given to the issuing of a Penalty Notice in line with Kirklees Code of Conduct or there is a possibility that your child may be taken off the school roll.</p>		
<p><b>Office use only:</b> Current attendance % Number of late marks: Number of days requested: Number of previous sessions granted: Would granting this request mean attendance would fall below 95%</p>		Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Office use only:</b>		
Signature:		Authorised: <input type="checkbox"/> Unauthorised: <input type="checkbox"/>
Reasons:		

**Appendix D**

**LA Guidance Pro-Forma Letters (PNS 4 -10). See document attached with this policy.**

**PNS 4 - LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST AUTHORISED**

**Name  
Address etc.**

**Dear (Name of Parent/s)**

**Re: Leave of absence request for .....**

**Following your recent request for .....to be allowed leave of absence, I am writing to confirm that I have authorised this planned absence, from .....to ..... My reasons are as follows:**

-  
-  
-

**However, I must point out that the school strongly discourages leave of absence during term time.**

**I must also draw your attention to the school's Attendance Policy. This makes it clear that if leave of absence occurs which has not been authorised, a penalty notice may be issued. The penalty notice is for £60, for each parent of each child, if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid after this date but within 28 days.**

**Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular attendance at school. If you are found guilty of the offence you may be fined up to £1,000, and you will receive a criminal record.**

**Finally, you also need to be aware that if your child does not return to school on the date stated in the request, the school place is at risk of being withdrawn.**

**Yours sincerely**

**(PNS5 - LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST NOT AUTHORISED)**

**Name  
Address etc.**

**Dear (Name of Parent/s)**

**Re: Leave of absence request for .....**

**Following your recent request for ..... to be granted leave of absence, I regret that I am unable to authorise this leave. My reasons are as follows:**

- 
- 
- 

**Should you continue with your plans for ....., I must draw your attention to the school's Attendance Policy. This makes it clear that if a leave of absence occurs which has not been authorised, a penalty notice may be issued.**

**The penalty notice is for £60, for each parent of each child, if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid after this date but within 28 days.**

**Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular attendance at school. If you are found guilty of the offence you may be fined up to £1,000, and you will receive a criminal record.**

**Finally, you also need to be aware that if your child fails to return to school following 20 days of absence, he/she is at risk of losing their school place.**

**Yours sincerely**

**(PNS6 - ABSENCE NOT AUTHORISED – WARNING LETTER)**

**Name  
Address etc.**

**Dear (Name of Parent/s)**

**Penalty notice warning – leave of absence**

**It has come to my attention that .....has been absent from school for ..... days from.....  
to ..... This leave of absence was not authorised by the school.**

**The school's Attendance Policy makes it clear that parents must seek permission for leave of absence in writing from the head teacher in advance should they wish to take students out of school. If leave, or part of the leave, is taken which has not been authorised, a penalty notice may be issued.**

**The penalty notice is for £60, for each parent of each child, if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid after this date but within 28 days.**

**Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular attendance at school. If you are found guilty of the offence you may be fined up to £1,000, and you will receive a criminal record.**

**On this occasion I have decided not to request that the Local Authority issue a penalty notice against you. You should consider this letter as a warning and any further leave of absence without prior permission will lead to such action being taken against you.**

**Yours sincerely**

**(PNS7 - ABSENCE NOT AUTHORISED – PENALTY NOTICE LETTER)**

**Name  
Address etc.**

**Dear (Name of Parent/s)**

**Penalty notice for leave of absence**

**It has come to my attention that .....has been absent from school for ..... days from .....  
to ..... This leave of absence was not authorised by the school.**

**The school's Attendance Policy makes it clear that parents must seek permission for leave of absence in writing from the head teacher in advance should they wish to take students out of school. If leave, or part of the leave, is taken which has not been authorised, a penalty notice may be issued.**

**The school will be arranging for a penalty notice to be issued against you. The penalty notice request will be processed by Kirklees Council in due course on behalf of the school.**

**The penalty notice will be issued to each parent of each child. Each penalty notice will be for £60 if it is paid within 21 days, and will increase to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.**

**Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular attendance at school. If you are found guilty of the offence you may be fined up to £1,000, and you will receive a criminal record.**

**Yours sincerely**

**(PNS8 - DID NOT RETURN BY DUE DATE – WARNING LETTER)**

**Name  
Address etc.**

**Dear (Name of Parent/s)**

**Penalty notice warning – leave of absence**

**It has come to my attention that .....did not return from the authorised leave of absence by the agreed date. This means that .....days of this absence have been treated as unauthorised.**

**The school's Attendance Policy makes it clear that parents must seek permission for leave of absence in writing from the head teacher in advance should they wish to take students out of school. If leave, or part of the leave, is taken which has not been authorised, a penalty notice may be issued.**

**The penalty notice is for £60, for each parent of each child, if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid after this date but within 28 days.**

**Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular attendance at school. If you are found guilty of the offence, you can be fined up to £1,000, and you will receive a criminal record.**

**On this occasion I have decided not to request that the Local Authority issues a penalty notice against you. You should consider this letter as a warning and that any further unauthorised leave of absence will lead to such action being taken against you.**

**Yours sincerely**

**(PNS9 - DID NOT RETURN BY DUE DATE – PENALTY NOTICE)**

**Name  
Address etc.**

**Dear (Name of Parent/s)**

**Penalty notice for leave of absence**

**It has come to my attention that .....did not return from the authorised leave of absence by the agreed date. This means that .....days of this absence have been treated as unauthorised.**

**The school's Attendance Policy makes it clear that parents must seek permission for leave of absence in writing from the head teacher in advance should they wish to take students out of school. If leave, or part of the leave, is taken which has not been authorised, a penalty notice may be issued.**

**As you did not request permission for the entire leave of absence, the school will be arranging for a penalty notice to be issued against you. The penalty notice request will be processed by Kirklees Council in due course on behalf of the school.**

**The penalty notice will be issued to each parent of each child. Each penalty notice will be for £60 if it is paid within 21 days, it will increase to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.**

**Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular attendance at school. If you are found guilty of the offence you may be fined up to £1,000, and you will receive a criminal record.**

**Yours sincerely**

**(PNS10 - LEAVE NOT REQUESTED – PENALTY NOTICE LETTER)**

**Name  
Address etc.**

**Dear (Name of Parent/s)**

**Penalty notice for leave of absence**

**It has come to my attention that .....is currently absent from school and this leave of absence was not requested.**

**The school's Attendance Policy makes it clear that parents must seek permission for leave of absence in writing from the head teacher in advance should they wish to take students out of school. If leave, or part of the leave, is taken which has not been authorised, a penalty notice may be issued.**

**As you did not request permission for this absence, the school will be arranging for a penalty notice to be issued against you. The penalty notice request will be processed by Kirklees Council in due course on behalf of the school.**

**The penalty notice will be issued to each parent of each child. Each penalty notice will be for £60 if it is paid within 21 days, it will increase to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.**

**Failure to pay the penalty notice could result in the Local Authority starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of not ensuring your child's regular attendance at school. If you are found guilty of the offence you may be fined up to £1,000, and you will receive a criminal record.**

**Finally, you also need to be aware that if your child fails to return to school following 20 days of absence, he/she is at risk of losing their school place.**

**Yours sincerely**

**Appendix E**

School and Parent Individual Care Plan

The aim of this contract is to work together to improve school attendance and to avoid the need for referral to the Attendance and Pupil Support Service and possible legal action (penalty notice / prosecution).

Name of Pupil:	
Date of Birth:	
Date of Meeting:	
Meeting attended by:	
Overall attendance:	
Unauthorised attendance:	
Lateness:	

Discussions / Issues:
The parent / carer will:
The pupil will:
The school will:

The target for attendance during the next \_\_ weeks is \_\_%

This plan will be reviewed at the school on:  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

If this agreement is not followed and the target attendance figure is not met the referral will be made to the Attendance and Pupil Support Service.

Signed: ..... (parent / carer)

Signed: ..... (school)