



# Attendance Policy

| Author                    | Date Reviewed | Next Review |
|---------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Castledyke Primary School | Autumn 2026   | Autumn 2028 |
|                           |               |             |
|                           |               |             |

# Contents

1. Policy Statement
2. Aims
3. Our Attendance Culture
4. What Good Attendance Means
5. Attendance and Safeguarding
6. Roles and Responsibilities
  - The Governing Body
  - The Headteacher
  - Senior Leaders / Attendance Lead
  - All Staff
  - Parents and Carers
7. Registration and Punctuality
8. Reporting Absence
9. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence
10. Term-Time Holidays
11. Attendance Monitoring
12. Persistent and Severe Absence
13. Our Graduated Attendance Approach
14. Attendance and SEND / Medical Needs
15. Attendance Celebrations
  - Weekly Attendance Celebration
  - Termly Attendance Certificates
  - National Average Attendance Certificate
  - 100% Attendance Certificate
  - Attendance Improvement Recognition
16. Castledyke House Team Attendance Challenge
17. Inclusion and Fairness in Attendance Rewards

18. Attendance and Punctuality Communication with Families
19. Working with External Agencies
20. Children Missing Education
21. Monitoring the Effectiveness of this Policy
22. Links to Other Policies
23. Legal and Guidance Framework
24. Our Castledyke Attendance Message

# 1. Policy Statement

At Castledyke Primary School, we believe that **every school day matters**.

Regular attendance gives children the best possible opportunity to learn, develop friendships, build confidence, participate in enrichment and develop the knowledge, skills and experiences they need to **Aspire, Achieve and Succeed**.

Our approach to attendance is built around four principles:

**Listen → Understand → Support → Expect**

We will listen to pupils and families, seek to understand the reasons behind absence, provide appropriate support to remove barriers and maintain high expectations for regular attendance.

We believe that attendance is **everyone's business**. Every member of staff has a role to play in promoting attendance, recognising improvement and responding appropriately when attendance becomes a concern.

Our approach is therefore both **supportive and aspirational**. We celebrate excellent attendance and improvement while working proactively with pupils and families when attendance is below the level we expect.

This policy has been developed in accordance with the Department for Education's statutory guidance **Working Together to Improve School Attendance**, most recently updated on 9 July 2026.

## 2. Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- promote excellent attendance and punctuality across Castledyke Primary School;
- ensure every pupil receives their full entitlement to education;
- create a culture where attendance is valued and understood as important;
- ensure attendance is monitored accurately and consistently;
- identify attendance concerns at the earliest opportunity;
- understand and address the barriers preventing pupils from attending regularly;
- provide appropriate support to pupils and families;
- recognise and celebrate good, improved and sustained attendance;
- reduce persistent and severe absence;
- work effectively with families, external agencies and the Local Authority where required;
- ensure attendance practice is consistent across the whole school;
- safeguard pupils by ensuring unexplained absence is followed up promptly;
- meet all statutory requirements relating to school attendance.

### 3. Our Attendance Culture

At Castledyke, we want pupils to understand that **coming to school every day matters**.

Our attendance culture is positive, relational and inclusive. We do not view attendance simply as a percentage. We seek to understand the child behind the data.

Staff will:

- welcome pupils positively when they arrive at school;
- recognise good and improved attendance;
- talk positively about the importance of being in school;
- identify patterns in absence and lateness;
- respond quickly when concerns emerge;
- work with families to understand barriers;
- provide appropriate support;
- maintain high expectations for attendance;
- ensure pupils returning after absence are welcomed back positively.

The DfE expects schools to combine high expectations with appropriate support and to analyse attendance data to identify patterns, trends and barriers.

### 4. What Good Attendance Means

There is no single attendance percentage that is appropriate for every individual child. Some pupils may have medical conditions, SEND, family circumstances or other barriers which affect their attendance.

However, our whole-school expectation is that pupils should attend **every day and on time unless they have a legitimate reason to be absent**.

As a school, we aim for:

- overall attendance to be at least in line with the national average and to demonstrate an improving trend where required;
- persistent absence to be below the national level;
- severe absence to be minimised;
- attendance gaps between different groups of pupils to be identified and addressed;
- punctuality to be consistently strong.

The current DfE definition identifies a pupil as **persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of possible sessions**. Severe absence is generally defined as missing 50% or more of possible sessions.

Ten per cent absence is equivalent to approximately **one day missed every two weeks across a full school year**, demonstrating why apparently small amounts of absence can have a significant cumulative impact.

## 5. Attendance and Safeguarding

Regular attendance is an important part of safeguarding.

Where a pupil is unexpectedly absent and the school has not received an explanation, the school will make appropriate contact with the family.

Unexplained absence will be followed up because the school needs to establish:

- that the child is safe;
- the reason for the absence;
- whether there are any emerging safeguarding concerns;
- whether support is required.

Patterns of absence may provide important information about a pupil's welfare, relationships, mental health, SEND or experiences outside school.

Staff must therefore report any safeguarding concerns arising from attendance to the Designated Safeguarding Lead in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

### The Governing Body

The Governing Body will:

- ensure that attendance remains a strategic priority;
- monitor whole-school attendance and persistent absence;
- challenge leaders regarding attendance performance;
- ensure that appropriate systems are in place;
- ensure that this policy complies with statutory guidance;
- receive regular attendance information from school leaders.

### The Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- have overall responsibility for attendance;
- ensure the school has an effective attendance strategy;
- ensure attendance procedures are implemented consistently;
- monitor whole-school attendance;
- analyse attendance patterns and groups;
- ensure appropriate interventions are implemented;
- work with the Local Authority and external agencies where required;
- ensure appropriate legal intervention is considered where support has not secured improvement.

## **Senior Leaders / Attendance Lead**

The Attendance Lead will:

- monitor attendance daily, weekly and termly;
- identify pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence;
- analyse attendance by pupil, year group and relevant pupil groups;
- monitor punctuality;
- ensure appropriate communication with families;
- coordinate attendance support;
- maintain accurate records;
- report attendance information to governors and leaders;
- coordinate attendance celebrations;
- monitor the impact of attendance interventions.

## **All Staff**

All staff are responsible for:

- promoting positive attitudes towards attendance;
- reinforcing the importance of attending school;
- welcoming pupils back following absence;
- recording attendance accurately where required;
- reporting concerns promptly;
- celebrating attendance improvements;
- following the school's attendance procedures consistently.

## **Parents and Carers**

Parents and carers are legally responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education.

Parents are expected to:

- ensure their child attends school regularly and on time;
- contact school on the first day of absence;
- provide accurate information about the reason for absence;
- work positively with the school where attendance concerns arise;
- avoid booking holidays during term time;
- inform school of circumstances which may affect attendance;
- engage with support offered by school or other agencies.

# **7. Registration and Punctuality**

The school will maintain an accurate attendance register in accordance with statutory requirements.

Registration takes place at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time and be ready to learn.

**School start time:** 8.45am - 9am

**Registration closes:** 9am

Arriving late can result in missed learning, disrupted routines and reduced opportunities for pupils to settle successfully into their day.

Persistent lateness will be monitored and may result in intervention with families.

Where a pupil arrives after the register has closed, the appropriate attendance code will be recorded in accordance with statutory guidance.

## **8. Reporting Absence**

Parents/carers should inform the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence, stating:

- the child's name;
- class;
- reason for absence;
- expected duration of absence where known.

The school may request further information or evidence where appropriate.

If no reason for absence is provided, the school will contact the parent/carer to establish the reason.

Repeated unexplained absence will be investigated.

## **9. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

The school will only authorise absence where it is satisfied that the absence meets the requirements of the relevant attendance regulations and statutory guidance.

Examples of potentially authorised absence include:

- illness;
- medical or dental appointments which cannot reasonably be arranged outside school hours;
- attendance at a regulated performance where appropriate permission has been granted;
- religious observance;
- other circumstances specifically permitted under attendance regulations.

Parents should not assume that an absence will automatically be authorised.

## **10. Term-Time Holidays**

Parents do not have an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Requests for leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, in accordance with statutory requirements.

Where leave is taken without authorisation, the school may request that the Local Authority considers a Penalty Notice.

Castledyke will work within the relevant Local Authority's Code of Conduct and statutory attendance arrangements.

## **11. Attendance Monitoring**

Attendance will be monitored at several levels.

### **Daily**

The school will:

- check attendance;
- follow up unexplained absence;
- identify immediate safeguarding concerns;
- record attendance accurately.

### **Weekly**

The Attendance Lead will:

- review whole-school attendance;
- review year-group and class attendance;
- identify pupils whose attendance is falling;
- identify persistent absence or pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent;
- review punctuality;
- identify patterns;
- coordinate appropriate action;
- celebrate positive attendance.

### **Termly**

School leaders will:

- analyse attendance trends;
- compare attendance with national data;
- analyse attendance for relevant groups;
- review persistent and severe absence;
- evaluate interventions;
- report to governors;

- identify priorities for the following term.

The DfE expects leaders to analyse attendance closely at whole-school level and for different groups, identify causes of poor attendance and intervene early to remove barriers.

## 12. Persistent and Severe Absence

A pupil is considered persistently absent when they miss **10% or more of possible sessions**.

When attendance approaches or reaches this level, school will consider:

- the individual attendance pattern;
- reasons for absence;
- whether there are underlying barriers;
- SEND and medical needs;
- safeguarding considerations;
- family circumstances;
- the pupil's views;
- previous interventions;
- appropriate support required.

Where a pupil is persistently absent, school will work with the pupil and family to develop an appropriate plan to improve attendance.

The DfE expects schools and local authorities to provide additional targeted support where absence reaches 10% or more, with a focus on removing barriers and re-engaging pupils rather than moving immediately to punitive action.

Severe absence will receive particularly close attention and may require support from a range of agencies.

## 13. Our Graduated Attendance Approach

At Castledyke, we use a graduated approach.

### Stage 1 – Universal Support

For all pupils:

- clear attendance expectations;
- regular communication with families;
- positive relationships;
- attendance education;
- weekly celebrations;
- recognition of good and improved attendance;
- monitoring of attendance and punctuality.

## **Stage 2 – Early Intervention**

Where attendance begins to cause concern:

- attendance is monitored more closely;
- staff speak with the pupil;
- parents/carers are contacted;
- barriers are explored;
- practical support is offered;
- attendance targets may be agreed.

## **Stage 3 – Targeted Support**

Where attendance does not improve:

- a meeting may be arranged with parents/carers;
- an attendance support plan may be developed;
- additional school-based support may be provided;
- external agencies may be involved;
- attendance may be monitored over an agreed period.

## **Stage 4 – Formal Intervention**

Where attendance remains a concern despite appropriate support, or where support is not engaged with, the school may consider formal action in partnership with the Local Authority.

This may include:

- an attendance contract;
- a Notice to Improve where appropriate;
- a request for a Penalty Notice;
- referral to the Local Authority attendance service;
- other legal interventions where appropriate.

The purpose of escalation is to secure regular attendance and ensure that pupils receive their entitlement to education.

# **14. Attendance and SEND / Medical Needs**

Castledyke recognises that some pupils experience barriers to attendance because of SEND, medical conditions, emotional needs or other individual circumstances.

We will not make assumptions about why a pupil is absent.

Where appropriate, the school will:

- listen to the pupil;
- work with parents/carers;

- liaise with relevant professionals;
- consider reasonable adjustments;
- review provision;
- identify barriers within school;
- consider whether additional pastoral or SEND support is required;
- develop an individualised attendance support plan where appropriate.

Good attendance expectations remain important for all pupils, but the route to achieving them may need to be different for different children.

Our approach is therefore **equitable rather than identical**.

## 15. Attendance Celebrations

We believe that attendance should be recognised positively.

Celebrations form part of a wider attendance strategy and do not replace the need to understand and address barriers to attendance.

### Weekly Attendance Celebration

Each week, attendance will be celebrated through our school celebration processes.

Recognition may include:

- the class with the highest attendance;
- classes demonstrating significant improvement;
- pupils demonstrating improved attendance;
- pupils who have shown particular commitment to attending regularly;
- recognition of good punctuality;
- celebration of whole-school attendance achievements.

Where appropriate, the weekly winning class will receive the class trophy to display for the week..

The emphasis will be on **celebrating success and improvement**, not shaming pupils whose attendance is lower.

## 16. Termly Attendance Certificates

At the end of each term, pupils will have the opportunity to receive attendance certificates.

### National Average Certificate

Pupils whose attendance is **at or above the current national attendance average** will receive a termly certificate.

The national comparator used will be the most appropriate current DfE published national attendance figure available to the school.

### **100% Attendance Certificate**

Pupils achieving **100% attendance for the term** will receive a special 100% attendance certificate.

### **Attendance Improvement Recognition**

Where appropriate, the school will also recognise pupils who have made **significant improvements in their attendance**, particularly where they have overcome barriers or worked hard to improve their attendance.

This is important because an attendance percentage alone does not always show the effort or progress made by an individual pupil.

## **17. Castledyke House Team Attendance Challenge**

Attendance will also contribute to our **Castledyke House Team system**.

Our four House Teams are:

- Ash
- Maple
- Oak
- Beech

The House Team system is designed to promote:

- teamwork;
- belonging;
- responsibility;
- positive choices;
- encouragement of others;
- collective achievement.

Attendance will contribute to House Team celebrations because **being present and participating in school is part of being an active member of our school community**.

House points may be awarded for:

- strong weekly attendance;
- improved attendance;
- excellent punctuality;
- whole-class attendance achievements;
- supporting and encouraging others to attend;
- positive contributions to the school community.

Where possible, the system will reward **improvement and teamwork**, rather than simply giving the most points to pupils who have the highest attendance.

This helps ensure that pupils facing genuine barriers to attendance can still contribute positively to their House Team.

The House Team system will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it remains inclusive, motivating and consistent with our attendance aims.

## **18. Inclusion and Fairness in Attendance Rewards**

Castledyke recognises that some pupils may experience unavoidable absence because of:

- long-term medical conditions;
- disability;
- SEND;
- hospital appointments;
- significant family circumstances;
- other circumstances outside the pupil's control.

We will therefore ensure that attendance celebrations do not disadvantage pupils because of circumstances that they cannot reasonably control.

In particular:

- pupils will never be publicly shamed for absence;
- attendance data will be handled sensitively;
- improved attendance will be celebrated;
- pupils with barriers to attendance will be given opportunities to succeed;
- House Team rewards will include teamwork and improvement;
- staff will consider the individual circumstances of pupils when celebrating attendance.

Rewards are one element of our strategy; they are not the basis on which decisions about support or safeguarding are made.

## **19. Attendance and Punctuality Communication with Families**

We will communicate attendance information regularly with parents/carers.

Communication may include:

- attendance information through school systems;
- letters;
- telephone calls;
- meetings;

- newsletters;
- celebration assemblies;
- parent/carer information;
- individual attendance updates.

Our communication will be positive wherever possible while remaining clear when attendance requires improvement.

We will explain the impact of absence in terms that families can understand, including missed learning, missed social opportunities and the cumulative impact of repeated absence.

## **20. Working with External Agencies**

Where appropriate, Castledyke will work with:

- the Local Authority attendance service;
- health professionals;
- social care;
- SEND professionals;
- Early Help;
- educational psychology services;
- other relevant agencies.

Multi-agency working will be considered where barriers to attendance cannot be addressed effectively by school alone.

## **21. Children Missing Education**

The school will follow statutory guidance relating to children missing education.

Where a pupil's attendance pattern raises concerns about their whereabouts, educational provision or safeguarding, the school will follow appropriate procedures and liaise with the Local Authority.

## **22. Monitoring the Effectiveness of this Policy**

The Headteacher and Attendance Lead will evaluate the effectiveness of the policy through:

- whole-school attendance data;
- persistent absence data;
- severe absence data;
- punctuality data;
- attendance of key pupil groups;
- attendance trends over time;

- intervention outcomes;
- parent and pupil feedback;
- staff feedback;
- Local Authority feedback;
- governor monitoring.

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner if there are changes to statutory guidance.

## 23. Links to Other Policies

This policy should be read alongside:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy;
- Behaviour Policy;
- SEND/Inclusion Policy;
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy;
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures;
- Equality Policy;
- Pupil Premium Strategy;
- Admissions Policy;
- Educational Visits Policy;
- Complaints Policy.

## 24. Legal and Guidance Framework

This policy has regard to the following legislation and guidance:

- Education Act 1996;
- Education Act 2002;
- Children and Families Act 2014;
- Equality Act 2010;
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended;
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- **Working Together to Improve School Attendance – DfE statutory guidance**, updated July 2026;
- **Children Missing Education – DfE statutory guidance**;
- relevant Local Authority attendance procedures and Code of Conduct.

The DfE's current statutory attendance guidance sets out the responsibilities of schools, trusts, governing bodies, parents and local authorities and the legal interventions available where support does not secure regular attendance.

## 25. Our Castledyke Attendance Message

At Castledyke, we want every child to understand:

**Every day counts.      Every lesson matters.      Every child belongs.**

We will celebrate pupils who attend well, recognise those who improve and work alongside families to overcome barriers.

Our aim is not simply to achieve a high attendance percentage.

Our aim is to ensure that every child is present, safe, included, learning and able to make the most of their time at Castledyke Primary School.