

Cumberland Infant School and Little Cumberland Pre-School

Attendance Policy



Approved by: Board of Governors	Date: 10.02.26
Review frequency: Every 3 years	Statutory requirement: Yes
Last reviewed: February 2026	Next review due: February 2029

1. Rationale

At Cumberland Infant School we recognise that for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including educational attainment and progress, wellbeing and wider life chances, good attendance at school is essential. Children who attend school regularly have better relationships and more consistent learning; thus they achieve more highly, making better progress and can develop higher self-confidence and esteem. The link between good attendance, standards of behaviour and attainment is clear.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special education need they may have. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional duty to ensure that their child attends that school regularly and on time.

Our school has a strong relationship with families, and we are committed to working in partnership to support parents and children who may experience any barriers to school attendance.

Therefore, ensuring good attendance and improving attendance is everyone's business.

Cumberland Infant School fully supports Portsmouth City Council and the Portsmouth Education Partnership with the 'Miss School Miss Out' campaign.

2. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to regular good school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos, and relational practice, that values education and the life chances it enables, including:

- Promoting the benefits that school attendance and education brings
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure children and young people have the support in place to attend school
- Working collaboratively to maximise school attendance
- Listening to and understanding any barriers that families may face
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school and lessons.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Parents and carers

- Make sure their child attends school every day and on time
- Inform the school of any absence before 9am on the day of the absence via email or a telephone call and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than one contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, medical or other non-urgent appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Support the school with their child aiming for 100% attendance every school year.
- Discuss with the school attendance officer, Leanne Hanns any potential planned absences to see if these can be avoided wherever possible.

Class teachers

- Class teachers are responsible for recording daily attendance accurately and submitting this information to the school office by 9am.
- Meet and greet children in the playground.
- Promote good/improved attendance with pupils at all opportunities.
- Liaise with the Attendance Officer on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence with the Attendance Officer/Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Support pupils after any absence to engage with their learning when they are back in school.

School Office staff

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Officer or Headteacher to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
- Ensure that pupils are accurately signed in/out during the school day.

The attendance officer

- Check that registers match the absence information.
- Monitor and analyse attendance data alongside the Headteacher on at least a weekly basis.
- Follow-up any non-attendance that is not accounted for.
- Benchmark attendance data alongside the Headteacher to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Report concerns about attendance to the Headteacher.
- Work with local authority staff and the Portsmouth Education Partnership to tackle and improve persistent absence.
- Advise the Headteacher when to consider referral for fixed-penalty notices
 - The attendance officer is Leanne Hanns and can be contacted via email lhanns@cumberland.portsmouth.sch.uk or telephone 023 9273 3161.

The Headteacher

- Take the lead for attendance across the school.
- Offer a clear vision to drive attendance improvement.
- Evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes.
- Have an oversight of data analysis.
- Report attendance information to the Governors.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Deliver targeted intervention and support to children and families.
- Ensure implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitor school-level absence data and report it to governors regularly.
- Support school staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Make referrals for the issuing of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.
- Support the work of the Portsmouth Education partnership Behaviour and Attendance Group.

The Governing Board

- Set high expectations for all leaders, staff, pupils and parents.
- Promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data.
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school and groups of pupils.
- Have oversight of staff training on attendance to ensure that it is regular and rigorous.
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

4. Attendance expectations and procedures

4.1 The attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the first session after lunch. It will mark whether every pupil is:

Present / Attending an approved off-site educational activity / Absent / Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

- Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day
- The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 9.00am.

- The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.
- The school day finishes at 3.15pm

The attendance register is a legal document and may be used in evidence in cases of prosecution for non-attendance.

4.2 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as an authorised absence as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. In cases where attendance is below 90% an appointment card/letter will be requested. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Upon leaving school the office will note that the child is offsite and the reason, e.g. dentist. The office staff will 'sign out' the child. Upon return the parent/carer and child will report to the office where the child will be 'signed in'.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time planned absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. As Headteachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. Go to section 5 to find out examples of which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any **leave of absence request form** (LOAF), accessible via the main office reception

a. Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by reporting it via email or by calling the school office staff.

- The initial follow-up on absenteeism rests with the Attendance Officer and Headteacher.
- If the Attendance Officer notices a child is regularly absent, this is brought to the Headteacher's attention.
- If this shows that attendance is less than 90%, attendance is monitored and the child is added to the school attendance watch list.
- If there is continuous absence, the Headteacher will discuss the attendance issue with parents/carers in the first instance.
- If attendance fails to improve, the Headteacher will arrange a meeting with the parents/carers, informing them of the school's concerns and reminding them of their statutory responsibility.
- If the child's attendance does not improve, the school will ask for medical proof of absences and send a MED 1 letter. If this is not provided the absences will be marked as unauthorised and the parents will be informed.

- When the child's attendance does not improve further and the parent/carer consistently does not provide medical evidence if required a MED 2 letter will be sent and the absences will be marked as unauthorised without informing the parents.
- Once the child has 15 unauthorised absences in a term, excluding holidays, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority's School Attendance Team for further action to be taken against the parent/carer.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Some pupils, such as those with long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, may face greater barriers to attendance than others. We will work with parents to still share high expectations for school attendance but also to offer additional support and make reasonable adjustments where necessary.

b. Lateness and punctuality

If a pupil arrives late after the register has closed for a session, the appropriate code applies to the whole of that session.

Procedures for lateness and punctuality

- Children are expected to arrive at school punctually at 8.45am.
- Once the school gate is closed at 9am, children come into school via the office.
- Our Administration Officer will sign them in giving a reason for being late.
- If lateness persists, arrival times are monitored and the Headteacher will talk to the Parent/Carer to see if there is a problem that we can help with.

c. Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- In the event of absence, the school should be informed via email or telephone by the parent/carer by 9am of the first day of absence. The detail of the absence is recorded with the relevant code on the schools MIS system- Arbor.
- If the parent has not contacted the school by 9.30am, the Attendance Officer will contact the parents/carers by telephone to seek an explanation.

- If there is no reply, she will text or email them to ask for an explanation for their child's absence.
- If there continues to be no reply to the Child's other emergency contacts will be telephoned to investigate the unexplained absence to ascertain the reason and check the safety of the child and their family.
- If we are still unable to contact them, we will use other information held in school to check on the child's wellbeing. As part of the induction process, we ask parents/carers for the contact details of someone outside of the family home that we can speak to in these circumstances.
- If no response has been received by midday the Attendance Officer will inform the Headteacher or in her absence the Deputy Headteacher, to consider if there are safeguarding issues around the child's absence.
- At this point, if there is considered to be a risk, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher may contact the Local Authority Attendance team, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) or the Community Police Team to ask for advice.
- If this is not considered to be a safeguarding issue around the child the Attendance Officer will send another text or email asking for an explanation.
- If there has been no response by the end of the day the Headteacher and another member of staff will visit the child's home to find out the reason for absence and why the parent/carer has not contacted the school.
- If there have been no concerns around safeguarding and a child returns to school with no explanation of his/her absence, a letter requesting a reason for absence will be sent and followed up until a reply is received.

If a child fails to attend school for **two** consecutive days and we are unable to contact the parents via phone, email or a home visit we follow the Local Authority's Child Missing in Education procedure.

d. Moving and transferring schools

If a child moves to another school, contact is awaited from the new school and then the child's records are sent on to them. If the child has safeguarding records, these are securely transferred separately, and confirmation of receipt is requested. However, if a child leaves the school without informing us, after **two** week's absence, if we are still unable to contact the parent/carer, the school will follow the Local Authority Child Missing in Education procedures. If a child leaves the school and informs us and we have not been contacted by the child's new school after **a week** we will contact the parent/carer and the new school if known.

e. Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through their annual report and at parent evenings.

f. Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A part-time timetable will always be in place for the shortest time necessary and not treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents.

The local authority must be notified of any part-time timetables and the plan for return to full time education. They should never be open-ended. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat this absence as authorised.

g. Exclusion

Exclusion is very rare but if exclusion is necessary, the LA guidelines will be used. If a lengthy period of exclusion is required reintegration will be planned and monitored.

h. Alternative provision

Any pupils who attend alternative provision are dual registered but remain the responsibility of the school. We will regularly check the attendance, behaviour and progress of dual registered pupils and raise any concerns about absence with the alternative provision and/or parents as necessary, in line with our safeguarding responsibilities.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year. The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any **leave of absence request form** (LOAF), accessible via the main office reception. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. If no explanation is received absences cannot be authorised.

There are two main categories of absences:

Authorised absence: when the school has accepted the explanation offered as a satisfactory reason for the absence, or approval has been given in advance. For example:

- Illness/sickness, medical appointment (medical evidence of appointment required), attending a funeral
- Religious circumstances (where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong)
- Participation in sporting competition, artistic performance, or examination
- Circumstance linked to parent in HM Armed Forces (MOD advice)
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes

Unauthorised absence: when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school following a parental request. This includes:

- parents giving their children permission to be absent from school e.g. shopping for uniform, birthdays, visiting other family members
- absences which have not been explained or a satisfactory explanation received

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information has been presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child has been unwell but on return to school there is compelling evidence that they have been on a family holiday.

If a holiday or leave of absence for 5 days or more is requested the school can ask the Local Authority School Attendance Team to serve the parent/carer with a fixed penalty fine.

Escalation of procedures

Legal sanctions

The school through the local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by the local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may consider:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without authorisation
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- If the payment has not made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting good attendance

To promote attendance the class with the best weekly attendance will be presented with the 'Fantastic Attendance (F.A) Cup during our Friday Celebration Assembly and on our website. Attendance updates will be included in newsletters to parents.

Our aim is to encourage families to ensure children regularly attend school.

We support families by:

- Providing information on the school website regarding absence related to illnesses.
- Encouraging families to contact the Headteacher to listen to, understand and discuss any barriers, worries or concerns.
- Recognising there are other factors affecting children's attendance such as poor sleep, change in family circumstances, ongoing medical conditions etc.
- Providing access to SENCo, Mental Health Support Team, Parenting Surgeries, Family Support plans, school nursing team and other agencies.
- Engaging in city-wide priorities and initiatives such as the Portsmouth Education Partnership Education strategy and relational practice work.

We promote good attendance at our school by:

- Ensuring that good attendance is everyone's business.
- Incentives to encourage good attendance by awarding the FA (Fantastic Attendance) cup in Celebration Assembly every Friday to the class with the highest attendance and publishing this on our website.
- Aiming for 100% attendance and working tirelessly to achieve this.
- Celebrating improved attendance.
- Regular updates for parents and carers in newsletters and the school's channels of communication such as our website and Facebook page.

7. Attendance data and monitoring

Timing	Actions
Daily	Attendance Officer records non-attenders daily and is aware of children on our Persistent absentee watch list and which children we are monitoring closely and if she needs to inform the Headteacher.
Weekly	Arbor data is read and used to update the Persistent Absentees watch list to monitor an increase or decrease in

	attendance and if further action is required.
Half-termly	Headteacher monitors vulnerable group's attendance to identify any discrepancies or a decrease of attendance of certain groups.
Termly	Headteacher reports to governors of the school's overall and national attendance figures and the attendance of all vulnerable groups, explaining any concerns and the support that is in place.
Annually	Headteacher reports to governors of overall attendance and the attendance of all vulnerable groups comparing to last year's school and national attendance figures to identify and act on any patterns.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to the Headteacher to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and **severe absence** is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE [working together to improve school attendance](#) (May 2022), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

9. Links with other policies/documentation

This policy specifically links to the following policy and/or documents:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour and relationships policy
- DfE [School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities](#) (May 2022)
- DfE [Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities](#) (May 2022)
- DfE [Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities](#) (Published May 2022, Applies from Sept 2023)
- PCC [Children Missing Education \(CME\)](#) (Sept 2016)
- DfE [Keeping Children safe in Education](#) (Sept 2022)
- [Ofsted School Inspection handbook](#) (Sept 2022)

10. Policy monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Purpose
Present	
/	Present for morning session
\	Present for afternoon session
L	Late arrival before register is closed
Attending a Place Other than the School	
B	Attending any other approved educational activity – not sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered at another school
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
P	Participating in a sporting activity
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
W	Attending work experience
Authorised absence	
C	Leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness – physical or mental health related and no alternative provision made
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination

T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	
	Absent – Unable to Attend School Because of an Unavoidable Cause	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption due to travel	
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	
	Absence - Unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school	
N	Reason for absence not yet established	
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	
	Administrative	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	
#	Planned whole school closure	