



The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools

Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him.
They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.

Jeremiah 17: 7 - 8

The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools

Attendance and Absence Policy: Pupils

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Statement of intent

Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:
"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –
(a) to age, ability and aptitude, and
(b) to any special educational needs a child may have
Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."
- Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance and punctuality.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2015) 'Child performance and activities licensing legislation in England'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2022) 'Keeping children safe in education (2022)'
- DfE (September 2022) Working Together to Improve School Attendance

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behaviour Policy
- Child Protection Policy and Manual (2022)
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Pupils with Additional Health Needs Attendance Policy

Responsibilities and Expectations

The **governing body** has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's **Complaints Procedures Policy**.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The **headteacher** is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

The **Headteacher** is responsible for informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:

- Are being educated from home.
- No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
- Have an authorised medical note.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
- Have been permanently excluded.

We expect **pupils** to:

- Arrive punctually and participate in their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality with their children.

- Working with the school and outside agencies to improve attendance where necessary.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the school defines:

- **Absence** as:
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Not attending school for any reason.
- An **authorised absence** as:
 - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
 - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
 - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
 - An absence due to a family emergency.
- An **unauthorised absence** as:
 - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason e.g: shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
 - Absences which have not been properly explained.
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed (Middleham: 9:15 am; Spennithorne: 9:30am).
 - Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
 - Leaving school without a valid reason during the day.

1. Absconding Procedure

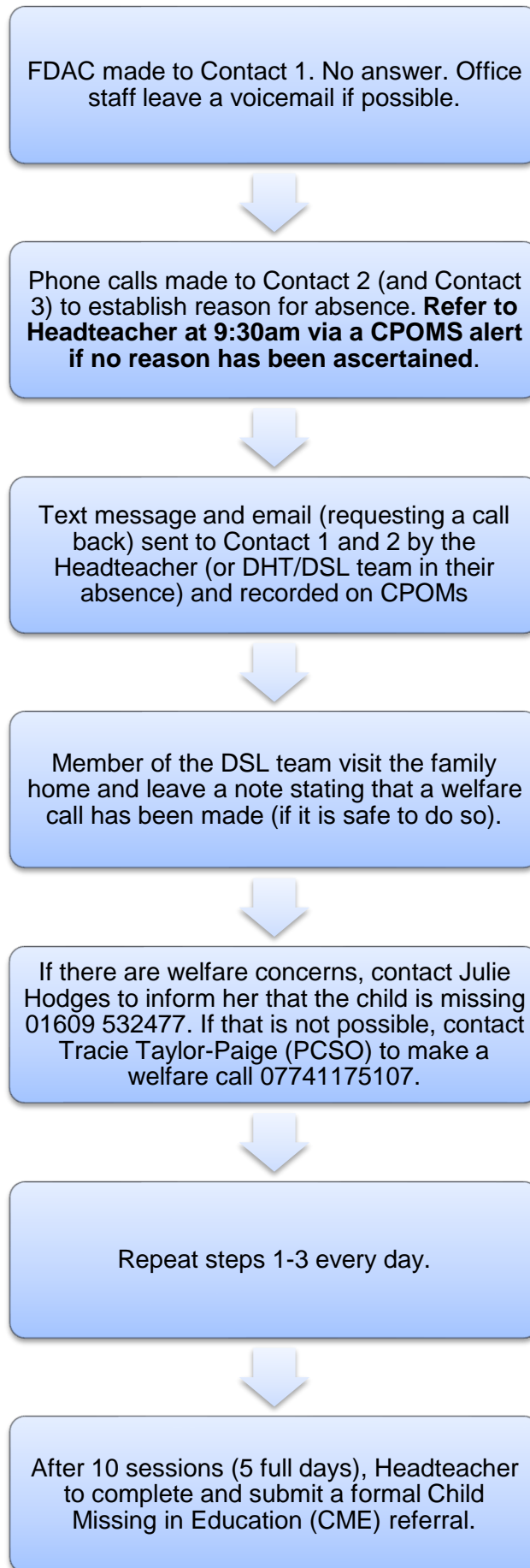
- 1.1. Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school.
- 1.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:
 - The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the **Headteacher** immediately.
 - The **office staff** will also be informed; they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search. **One line must be kept free at all times during the search.**
 - A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the **Headteacher**.
 - The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Group rooms
 - Offices
 - Any outbuildings
 - The school grounds
 - Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.

- If the pupil has not been found after **10** minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified along with the police.
 - The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
 - The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- 1.3. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
 - 1.4. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
 - 1.5. The **Headteacher** will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
 - 1.6. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
 - 1.7. The **Headteacher** will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
 - 1.8. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the **Behaviour Policy**.
 - 1.9. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

2. Absence procedures

- 2.1. Parents will be required to contact the **school office** via **telephone** (Middleham: 01969 623592 or Spennithorne: 01969 623474) by **9:00am** at the latest on the first day of their child's absence and on every subsequent day thereafter (unless known when child will return e.g. 48 hours after D and V). A message can be left on the absence line (Option 1) or directly with the school office (Option 2).
- 2.2. Reasons for absence are flagged and recorded on SIMs as evidence for attendance monitoring.
- 2.3. A **first day absence call (FDAC)** will be made to the parent/carer of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school by **9:30am**.
- 2.4. The school will always follow up any absences in order to:
 - Ensure the **proper safeguarding action is being taken**.
 - Ascertain the reason for the absence.
 - Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
 - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school MIS system.
- 2.5. The school will inform the LA, on a **termly** basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation in order to escalate Fast Track procedures.

Process if no contact can be made:



3. Appointments

- 3.1. As far as possible, parents will be encouraged to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 3.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the **school office** (a comment will be made on SIMs to confirm this has been seen).
- 3.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the **school office** by a parent.
- 3.4. Pupils will be expected to attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

4. Attendance register

- 4.1. The designated staff members will take the attendance register **at the start of each school day** and at **the start of the afternoon session**.

Teachers and support staff record: / or - then save the register

- 4.2. The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way.
- 4.3. When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.
- 4.4. Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **three years**.

5. Family involvement

- 5.1. The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement.
- 5.2. The school will communicate openly and honestly with pupils and their families about their expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them.
- 5.3. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. children and families services. **Families can speak to someone about receiving support from Children and Families – Early Help Teams by calling 01609 534829 (Selby, Hambleton and Richmond areas).**

6. Lateness

- 6.1. The school will regard punctuality as of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 6.2. The school day starts at **Middleham 8:45am; Spennithorne 9:00am (prompt)**. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.
- 6.3. Registers are marked by **Middleham 8.55am/Spennithorne 9:10am**. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. The school office indicates how many minutes late the pupil is on SIMs.
- 6.4. The register closes at **Middleham 9.00am; Spennithorne 9:15am**. Pupils will receive a mark of unauthorised absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- 6.5. After lunch, registers are marked and saved within 10 minutes of entering the classroom.

7. Reducing persistent and severe absence

- 7.1. Persistent absence is defined as more than 10% missed sessions. This means attendance of below 90%.
- 7.2. Severe absence is below 50%.
- 7.3. The school will ensure it provides support to pupils at risk of persistent and severe absence in conjunction with all relevant external authorities where necessary.
- 7.4. The attendance officer will:
 - Foster strong relationships with families to offer low level initial support. Support and co-operation are always invested in comprehensively before any enforcement action.
 - Offer wraparound care free of charge to support punctuality and attendance. This may be targets for specific days where a pattern is emerging.
 - Monitor and analyse attendance data every three weeks to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence.
 - Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by following the school/LA attendance procedures – available by contacting the school office or the Local Authority (01609 798013)
 - Formalise early intervention with the NYCC early intervention letters.
 - Offer support from Early Help or other outside agencies (depending on the barrier to attendance).
 - Escalate to the Fast Track process if early targets are not met.
 - Send initial warning letter.
 - Convene an attendance panel meeting with the family and other professional.
 - Reconvene the panel to evaluate the impact.
 - Refer to PACE if attendance continues to decline.
 - Fixed Penalty, Education Welfare Order, Prosecution.

- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- 7.5. The **governing body** will engage in attendance-related issues via the termly Headteacher's report.
- 7.6. Where a pupil is at risk of persistent or severe absence, they are also at increased risk of harm. The school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. Children and Families services to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care.
- 7.7. The school attendance system will be used to give an accurate and informative view of attendance, reasons for absence and patterns within groups, including:
- Children in need
 - Looked After Children
 - Pupils who are eligible for income dependent Free School Meals
 - Pupils learning English as an additional language
 - Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities

The summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE May 2022) highlights the responsibilities for maintained schools and local authorities: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf

8. Religious observances

- 8.1. The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- 8.2. Parents will be required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

9. Rewarding good attendance

- 9.1. Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways
- Letters and postcards home
 - Stickers and certificates
 - School Newsletters

10. School strategy for using data to target attendance improvement

As poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early intervention is crucial. The key to this is regular data analysis to both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them. At The Federation of Middleham (VA) & Spennithorne (VC) CE Primary Schools we:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns and trends and deliver intervention and support in a targeted way to pupils and families. This should go beyond headline attendance percentages and should look at individual pupils, cohorts and groups (including their punctuality) across the school to help schools achieve their responsibilities under the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- Use analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).
- Identify the pupils who need support and focus efforts on developing targeted actions for those cases.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This includes analysis of pupils, pupil groups and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes and days of poor attendance.
- Benchmark their attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement using FFT.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Monitor in the data the impact of school wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented. The findings are used to evaluate approaches or inform future strategies using the attendance monitoring tracker.
- The Headteacher provides termly data and reports to support the work of the board or governing body.

11. Sporting and acting performances/activities

- 11.1. The school will ensure that all pupils engaging in performances/activities (whether they, or another person, receives payment or not), which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from NYCC which authorises the school's absence(s).
- 11.2. Additional arrangements will be made (by the third party) for pupils engaging in performances or activities that require them to be absent from school to ensure they do not fall behind in their education – this may involve private teaching. These arrangements will be approved by the LA who will ensure that the arrangements are suitable for the pupil.
- 11.3. The pupil will receive education that, when taken together over the term of the licence, amounts to a minimum of three hours per day that the pupil would be required to attend a school.
- 11.4. The above requirement will be met by ensuring a pupil receives an education:
 - For not less than six hours a week; and
 - During each complete period of four weeks (or if there is a period of less than four weeks, then during that period), for periods of time not less than three hours a day; and
 - On days where the pupil would be required to attend school if they were attending a school maintained by the LA; and
 - For not more than five hours on any such day.
- 11.5. Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school.

- 11.6. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the **Headteacher** to authorise the leave of absence for each day.

12. Term-time leave

- 12.1. The school will require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 12.2. Leave of absence request forms are available at the school office and need to be completed in as much advance as possible.
- 12.3. The **Headteacher** will be only allowed to grant a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance and the **Headteacher** will be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 12.4. For close family weddings and funerals, up to three days leave will be granted (one for travel, one for the day itself and one for travelling back).
- 12.5. The **Headteacher** will not authorise holidays during term-time, except under exceptional circumstances. A form must still be completed so that school is aware of the child's whereabouts and welfare.
- 12.6. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the **Headteacher**, they may be subject to enforcement action after 10 sessions (5 days) of cumulative absence across the academic year.
- 12.7. The **Headteacher** will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school during term-time. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the **Headteacher**.
- 12.8. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis.
- 12.9. Requests for leave will not be granted immediately before and during assessment periods.

13. Timings of the School Day

Spennithorne (EYFS, Year 1 & 2)

Morning Session: 9am – 12pm

Afternoon Session 1 – 3.30pm

The school day begins at 9am. At Spennithorne, the school playground is supervised by a member of staff from 8.50am, ten minutes prior to the start of school and it should be understood that children will not be supervised in the playground before that time. For those being transported from their registered school to their teaching school via the school bus, the bus leaves Middleham at 8.45am.

Middleham (Years 3 - 6)

Morning Session: 8.45 – 12pm

Afternoon Session 1 – 3.15pm

The school day begins at 8.45am. At Middleham, the school playground is supervised by a member of staff from 8.35am, ten minutes prior to the start of school and it should be understood that children will not be supervised in

the playground before that time. For those being transported from their registered school to their teaching school via the school bus, the bus leaves Spennithorne at 8.30am.

14. Young carers

- 14.1. The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity, as well as through their time at the school.
- 14.2. The school will take a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.
- 14.3. The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities (Carers Plus), will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

Monitoring and review

- 14.4. The school will monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 14.5. The school's attendance target is **97%**.
- 14.6. This policy will be reviewed **every year** by the **Headteacher and Governing Body**.

