



Attendance Policy 2025 – 2026

The Governing Body of our School is responsible for ensuring the **annual review** of this policy and procedures.

The Attendance Policy will be reviewed **annually in June** at the Full Governors meeting.

Head Teacher: Mrs Catherine Dennison

Chair of Governors: Mr Darren Foote

Date: **November 2025**

Review Date: **June 2026**

Review & Amendments Page

The information in the table below provides details of the earlier versions of this document and brief details of reviews and, where appropriate amendments which have been made to later versions.

Version No.	Version Description	Date of Revision
1	Original	January 2023
2	Addition of; • "Working Together To Improve School Attendance" September 2022 • Summary of Responsibilities September 2022 • BCJS Annual Action Plan	September 2023 Shared at FGB October 2023
3.	Updated in line with Cumberland Pledge	December 2024
4.	Shared with Governors & ratified	January 2025
5.	Decision to review this policy annually in June so it can be shared with new parents starting in September and be in place for the start of the new academic year.	December 2025
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Black Combe Junior School Attendance Policy

"Improving school attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex both within and beyond the school gates, and are specific to individual children and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn."

"Working Together to Improve School attendance DfE August 2024"

Our Mission Statement:

This policy shows our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024*, and *Cumberland Council's School Attendance Strategy* through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Ensure the safeguarding, child protection and welfare of all our pupils
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality
- Achieve an attendance for all children that is in line with national average data, apart from those with significant health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the expectation and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality.
- Work in close partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Access and Inclusion team so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Establish a rigorous system and routine of monitoring attendance to ensure consistency and identify issues early.
- Establish key roles of all staff, especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

Cumberland County Council Attendance Handbook

The Governors of Black Combe Junior School are responsible for approving and the annual review of this policy and procedures.

Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL)	Catherine Dennison
Deputy Designated Safeguard Lead (DDSL)	Nathan Dodd
Safeguarding Governor & Attendance	Rachel Sheard
Attendance Lead	Catherine Dennison

Approved By:	
Name	
Position	
Signed	
Date	
Review Date	

Legal Framework:

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024* and school attendance *Parental Responsibility Measures 2023*. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.

Black Combe Junior School responsibilities:

Catherine Dennison is responsible for attendance at Black Combe Junior School.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Ensuring parents/carers are aware of the school policy
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Class Teacher

The class teacher is responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office every morning and afternoon
- Promoting good attendance within the classroom
- Creating a calm, safe environment where everyone feels valued

The Parents / Carers

The Parents/ Carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and is on time for registration at 08:50am.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 08:50am on the day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Inform a member of school staff of any reason or problem that may hinder their child from attending school
- Do not take your child out of school for non-urgent matters (hairdressers, shopping, birthdays)

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise (including the parent choosing to educate their child at home).

Definitions:

For the purpose 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.
- Only the Headteacher can authorise absence.

If a child is ill or unable to attend school for any reason, the parents should provide an explanation for the absence. For repeated or regular periods of illness, the school will request medical evidence prior to authorising absences.

An unauthorised absence as:

Any absences that is deemed not to be an acceptable reason for missing school. Unauthorised absences from school carry the risk of prosecution under Section 44 or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

Persistent absenteeism as:

- Missing 10% or more of schooling across the year for any reason.
- Persistent absence equates to 38 sessions (19 days) absence across an academic year.
- If the child's absence falls below 90% and there is no sustained improvement despite intervention from school then consideration for a referral to the Access and Inclusion Officer should be given.

Recording Attendance

Attendance Register

We will keep an electronic 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 second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made.
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment.

See DfE *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024* for the full list of attendance codes or refer to pages 27-31 on Cumberland Council Attendance Handbook.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made. The school day starts at **8:50am** and ends at **3:30pm**. Pupils must arrive in school by **8:45am** on each school day. Learning starts at 08:55am.

The register for the first session will be taken between 8:50am and 9:00am and will be kept open until **9:15am**. The register for the second session will be taken at **1:00pm**.

Unplanned Absence

The pupil's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via telephone on **01229 772862** or recording it on **Weduc**.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a medical 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 will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents 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.

For any planned absences, parents must complete an absence request form. These can be obtained from the school office or downloaded from the school website. This should be completed and submitted before the absence is due to take place.

Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Persistent lateness will trigger further intervention, including letters home and a formal meeting.

Those who are late after registration closes and therefore absent will follow the same path as any other unauthorised absence and contributes to the 10-sessions of absence over 10 weeks national threshold.

Following Up Unexplained Absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may complete a home visit and contact any outside agencies who may be involved with the family.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained - this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent.
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an attendance officer.
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's youth offending team officer, or social worker.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance.
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the school will refer to the Local Authority.

Reporting to Parents

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels at least once a term. This will be through messages, emails and termly data reports.

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

Refer to page 8 in Cumberland Council Attendance handbook for further information.

BCJS Attendance Monitoring			
	Strategy	When	Who
Monitoring of whole school attendance	- Attendance data - SEND - Identification of concern (individual pupils)	Weekly	Admin & HT
Identified Individual	Identification of patterns	Weekly	Admin & HT
Monitoring of 'late arrivals'	Identification of patterns	Weekly	Admin & HT
Attendance Certificates & prizes	Seasonal rewards - selection boxes, Easter eggs, Tesco vouchers, book vouchers	Termly	Admin & SBM
Sharing data with parents / carers	- Termly letters (Colour Coded) - Parents Evenings - End of year reports	Half Termly /Termly	Admin & CTs
Identification of concern	Meeting with parent. Discuss any issues, concerns, outline legal responsibilities		HT
Attendance Plan	- Formal meeting with parents. Targets agreed. Timeline established. Reminder of legal responsibilities. - Possible EHA		HT
Attendance Plan (Part 2)	- Formal meeting with Governor & parents (HT may not be present for whole meeting) - Involvement of LA Inclusion Officer - Definite EHA		HT Governor LA

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for Term-time Absence

The Headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024*

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited transition timetable (part time timetable)
- 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. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as unexpected or unavoidable events.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is highly unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances, and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school website or central office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes - this covers Roma, English and Welsh Romani people, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school.
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority.
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

For further information on specific codes refer to pages 26-31 of Cumberland Councils Attendance Handbook.

Enforcement

Our school will make use of the full range of potential enforcements. Refer to page 18-25 of Cumberland Council Attendance Handbook. ***Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.*

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Good attendance and improved attendance are rewarded at **Black Combe Junior School**. We do this by;

- Sharing positive attendance letters
- Attendance celebration assembly, certificates and prizes termly

The school will work collaboratively with the Access and Inclusion Team at Cumberland Council to help to support pupils and parents in achieving good attendance.

Supporting Pupils who are Absent or Returning to School

Pupils Absent Due to Complex Barriers to Attendance

We work particularly closely with pupils and parents where there are more complex barriers to attendance. If a child is struggling or refusing to attend school, parents should inform us immediately.

To support more complex barriers to attendance we:

- Will invite the parent and pupil into school for a meeting.
- If the pupil cannot/will not attend a meeting at school, we will visit the family home.
- Depending on the barriers identified, the child's tutor/teacher will be informed and be part of any reintegration plans.
- Consider temporary transition timetables. Depending on need, the aim of these is always for students to be back in school full time as quickly as possible, however we recognise that this can support a phased return into school.

Pupils Absent Due to Mental or Physical Ill Health or SEND.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority. Reasonable adjustments can be made to support students in school.

Where there is a prolonged physical or mental illness, the Access and Inclusion Team at the Local Authority will be requested to support with education.

Pupils Returning to School After a Lengthy or Unavoidable Period of Absence.

To support a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence attendance we:

- Will invite the parent and pupil into school for a meeting or attend the family home.
- Consider temporary transition timetables. Depending on need, the aim of these is always for students to be back in school full time as quickly as possible, however we recognise that a pupil may need a phased return into school.

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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with *DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school.
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance.
 - Explain the help that is available.
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence.
 - Review any existing actions or interventions.
- Communicate with parents via WEDUC, email, phone call or letters to inform them of attendance updates.
- Visit the family home to communicate and meet with parents.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence.
- Implement enforcements, where necessary

Links with Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy

BCJS Annual Attendance Plan			
Term	Action	Who	
Autumn Term			
September	INSET - Training on register codes and register responsibilities	Admin	
September	All families receive Attendance Policy Flyer	Admin	
September	Attendance Policy shared on WEDUC	Admin	
Throughout the Term	Attendance monitored - any concerns shared with HT	Admin, CT & HT	
October Half Term	Attendance data analysed Shared within HT's report to Governors	HT	
Parents Evening	Data shared with parents	CTs	
December (End of Term)	Attendance Certificates Share on WEDUC	Admin & HT	
Spring Term			
Throughout the Term	Attendance monitored - any concerns shared with HT	Admin, CT & HT	
February Half Term	Attendance data analysed Shared within HT's report to Governors	HT	
Parents Evening	Data shared with parents	CTs	
April (End of Term)	Attendance Certificates Share on WEDUC	Admin & HT	
Summer Term			
Throughout the Term	Attendance monitored - any concerns shared with HT	Admin, CT & HT	
May Half Term	Attendance data analysed Shared within HT's report to Governors	HT	
Annual End of Year Reports	Data shared with parents	CTs	
July (End of Term)	Attendance Certificates Share on WEDUC	Admin & HT	