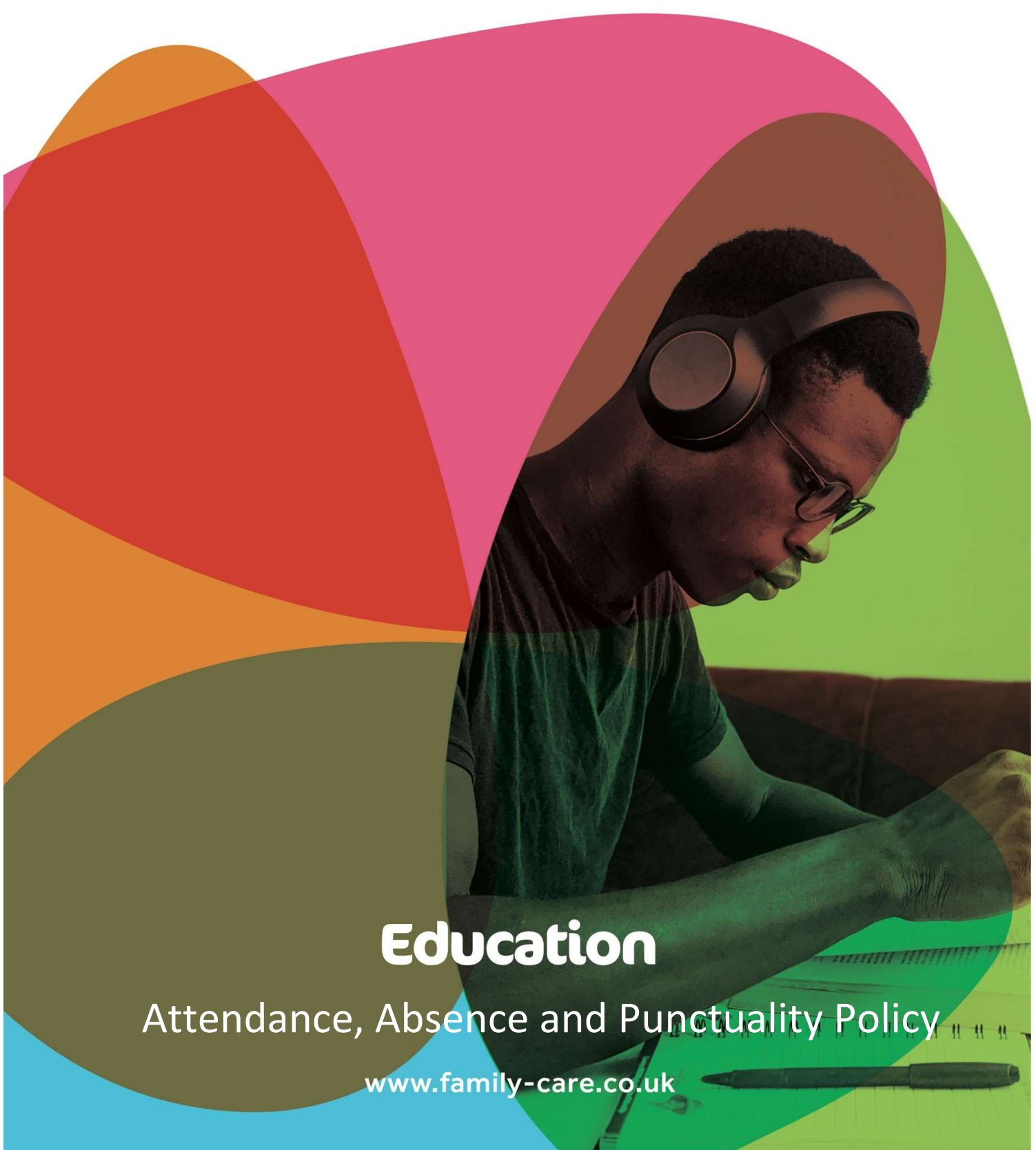


FamilyCare

Healing pasts • Building futures



Education

Attendance, Absence and Punctuality Policy

www.family-care.co.uk

Attendance, Absence and Punctuality Policy

Implemented/Reviewed: September 2026

Date of Next Review: September 2027



Introduction and Rationale

Family Care Education is committed to raising the achievement and aspirations of all our pupils. Good attendance and punctuality are essential if children are to take full advantage of school and gain the necessary skills that will prepare them for life. Parents are legally responsible for ensuring children of compulsory school age receive a suitable education. The school and the Local Authority work together to ensure that parents meet these responsibilities. Attendance issues are dealt with in the first instance by the school Attendance Officer. This may be followed by a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service, which provides an important link between schools and families. Promoting good attendance is a key part of the school's objectives.

Legislation and Guidance

This policy has been informed by the documents "Working together to improve school attendance", "Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance" and "Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance" These documents can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63dcfbffd3bf7f070ffc1e8d/Support_for_pupils_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance_effective_practice_examples.pdf

Responsibilities

School Responsibilities

- To ensure that early and appropriate contact with parents is made when a child is absent and no appropriate reason for the absence has been given. This will include first day response phone calls home to parents/carers. If we are unable to make contact it may be necessary to carry out a home visit (safe and well check).
- Early and sensitive action to be taken to try and resolve any problems that may be affecting attendance.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance data.
- Regular evaluation of attendance procedures and levels of attendance undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body.
- Regular home contact for all pupils whose attendance has fallen below 85%.
- Referral to the Education Welfare Service when there is still no improvement despite interventions. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent/carer receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.



Parent/Carer Responsibilities

- Encourage and support their child/children to attend on a regular basis.
- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 9 am to speak to a member of the team.
- You should contact the school each day of the absence unless agreed otherwise. If you do not supply us with this information, we have a duty to contact you so that we may be sure of the child's whereabouts as this is a safeguarding measure. Pupils who are not in regular attendance may receive a visit home from our Safeguarding Team. Messages sent via the school transport staff are not acceptable.
- Ensure that children arrive on time, dressed appropriately and well prepared for the school day.
- Children should arrive in school between 8.55-9.10am. After this time the pupils will be marked as late.
- Positively engage with the school and inform an appropriate member of staff of any issue that may prevent regular attendance.
- Ensure that unless absolutely necessary all medical and dental appointments etc. are made outside of school hours or during school holidays. Evidence of the appointment (letter or appointment card) must be provided for each absence. Where such appointments cannot be avoided, children should attend school prior to the appointment and return to school after the appointment. Failure to do so may result in all or part of the absence being unauthorised.
- Understand that holidays during term-time are at the discretion of the Headteacher and are unlikely to be granted. Time off must be requested by a formal request in writing.
- Provide accurate and up to date contact details and update the school if the details change.

Pupil Responsibilities

- Attend school regularly and on time, being well prepared for the school day.
- Inform the school of any problems or issues that may affect their attendance at school.

Roles regarding pupils' attendance

- The Headteacher will have overall responsibility for attendance.
- Day to day concerns surrounding attendance should be reported by staff to the Attendance Officer.
- Staff are responsible for marking the registers in accordance with the registration system operating in the school.
- The Attendance Officer in school shall keep the Headteacher informed about any referrals made and will also support the pupils and parents/carers in any appropriate way to improve attendance.
- The Education Welfare Service will carry out statutory duties in all respects. This may include the issuing of Penalty Notices as a means of trying to improve individual pupil attendance and/or punctuality, after appropriate consultation with the Headteacher and the Attendance Officer.



Types of Absence

Authorised absence

Some absences are allowed by law. An authorised absence is an absence with permission from the Headteacher/School Business Manager/Attendance Officer/other authorised school representative. These can include:

- Illness, provision of medical evidence may be requested.
- Religious observance.
- Funeral of a close family member.
- Medical appointments that cannot be made before or after school or during the school holidays.

Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is an absence without permission from the Headteacher/other authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

For example:

- Not attending school whilst awaiting school transport.
- Looking after a relative or other siblings.
- Taking a day off for a birthday.
- Going to have their hair done.
- Going shopping e.g. for new shoes.
- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily - waiting for a tradesman e.g. gas man.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark.
- Holidays taken without the permission of the Headteacher.
- Absences which occur on the same day of the week on a regular basis.

This list is not exhaustive. However, we appreciate that these are times when a particular problem causes your child to be absent. Please contact the Attendance Officer should you wish to discuss this further.

Leave of Absence/Holidays during term-time

Family care education is committed to the raising of pupil's levels of attainment and it is clear that improving attendance and reducing levels of persistent absence are the most important factors in achieving this goal. As a result of this, we follow the Local Authority's Code of Conduct and guidance.

The Headteacher is the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any leave taken which is recorded as unauthorised absence by the school may be referred by the Headteacher into the Local Authority and penalty notices may be applied.

Guidelines in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025' places high emphasis on schools being vigilant to 'children missing in education'. A child's continued absence from school, without notification, is a safeguarding concern. The school will initiate safeguarding procedures in this instance.

Persistent Absence: A student is classified as persistently absent if they miss 10% or more of their possible school sessions. This is roughly equivalent to missing 1 day or more every 2 weeks, or around 6 days each term.



Severe Absence: A student is considered severely absent if they miss 50% or more of their possible school sessions. This means they are missing half or more of their school days.

Understanding a pupil's barriers to attendance

Family Care Education understands that for many of our young people who all have EHCPs education as a whole can be challenging. Some of our young people have had multiple school placements and some have missed large amounts of education.

A pupil's attendance difficulties are usually symptoms of deeper issues. To deal effectively with persistent or severe absence, we attempt to get a better understanding of exactly what's going on with the pupil and their family and then create a bespoke plan to tackle the individual barriers they face.

When a pupil joins us with historical attendance difficulties or there is a developing drop in attendance Family Care Schools will follow the same steps to prevent or manage persistent or severe absence.

Take immediate action

We will look out for patterns in absence and flag concerns about any individual pupil whose attendance has declined or whose pattern of attendance has noticeable changed.

Identify who will be the key touchpoint for the pupil, and for their family

To communicate effectively with the pupil and the family, we will need to identify a member of staff to be a 'trusted adult' for each. These may be the same person, or different people. This need **not** be a senior member of staff.

Their role is to:

- Act as a conduit for communication between the school and the pupil and/or the family
- Meet with the pupil and/or their family as often as often as is needed, depending on the family circumstances
- Build a relationship with the pupil and/or the family
- Regularly report back to the person leading on the case
- Record any insights they glean on the pupil's barriers to attendance in the evidence gathering document.

Evaluate the pupil's wellbeing

We will ask staff whether they have noticed any signs or symptoms in the pupil of mental health issues, especially anxiety. Anxiety plays a significant role in emotionally-based school avoidance (EBSA), which is a common cause of persistent absence.

Anxiety can present very differently in different people, but in general staff should look out for pupils who:

- Withdraw, either from specific lessons, activities, or from their social group
- Self-exclude by acting out
- Show physical signs of anxiety
- Are self-harming
- Demonstrate repetitive behaviour

Invite the parents/carers into school to talk

Family Care Education recognises the important of collaboration with all our parents and carers.

Inviting parents/carers into school or arranging to visit them at home can often help in supporting the young person in managing their attendance challenges. The young person can see the joined up working and is more likely to build trust.



Creating a plan (Appendix 1)

Once data is collected, we will create a plan which can be shared with the pupil, the staff and the parents/carers.

This plan will contain the following:

- Pupil details
- Parent details
- Details of any other professionals involved
- Attendance data
- The reason for the plan
- What are the key risks of the child not being in school
- Details of provision of work, daily contact, safe and well checks
- Review dates and information.

Should there be no improvement in attendance over the agreed timescales Education Welfare must be involved.

Appendix 1: See Below



Pupil Name		Plan Start Date:
DOB		Review Date:
Parent/Carer		If the plan is altered at the review a new start date should be in place with amendments also noted on the original
Address		
Contact Number/s		
Key Teacher		
Agency 1 name/contact		
Agency 2 name/contact		
Agency 3 name/contact		
Agency 4 name/contact		
		2023/24 Attendance:
		2025/2026 Attendance:
REASON FOR PLAN (The key reasons the plan has been implemented)		
RISKS/CONCERNS TO PUPIL		
PLAN (This should include the contact activities/safe and well checks and provision of work)		
Plan sign off: (Member of SLT)		
Proprietor sign off:		
INFORMATION FROM REVIEW: (Should include details and attendance data)		