Toftwood Infant and Junior School Federation Attendance Policy

September 2025

Summary of changes – for Sept 2025:

Section	Changes
2. Promoting Regular Attendance	Titles of roles updated
3.5 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils	Amended wording to better reflect that parents are expected to register their children at other schools temporarily.
4.3 Expected absence procedure for parents	School's will inform a pupil's allocated social worker or youth offending team worker of absences.
4.4 Support Systems	Additional suggested strategies and services added.
4.5 Attendance Rewards & Interventions	Additional examples included in table.
8 Statutory Framework	Keeping Children Safe in Education changed from 2023 to 2025
Appendix 1	Norfolk County Council: Penalty Notices regarding school absence – Guidance for parents updated for the academic year 25/26
Declaration	
[Insert Name, Insert Job Title] [Month of Review 2025]	

Toftwood Infant and Junior School Federation Attendance Policy

Policy Consultation & Review

This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office. We also inform parents about this policy when their children join our school and regularly thereafter through our school newsletter and other relevant opportunities.

We recognise the expertise our staff build by managing school attendance daily and we therefore invite staff to contribute to and shape this policy and associated attendance and safeguarding arrangements.

This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Board on at least an annual basis.

This policy was last reviewed and agreed by the Governing Board for the 1st September 2025. It is due for review on 1st September 2026.

Signature	JPedlow, Headteacher	Date: 22/7/2025
Signature	JWilson, Chair of Governors	Date: 1/9/2025

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1. Introduction

At Toftwood Federation we recognise that positive behaviour and good school attendance are essential in order for pupils to get the most of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing and wider life chances. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and can put them at risk of wider harm. There is a wide range of evidence as to the health and wellbeing benefits of school-age education.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly and on time. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) has produced statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. It is called "Working together to improve school attendance" and it includes a National Framework in relation to absence and the use of legal sanctions. Our School Attendance Policy reflects the requirements and principles of that guidance including the importance of understanding the potential vulnerabilities of children who are missing education or absent from school.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our Federation ethos to:

- Work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties at the earliest opportunity.
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding.
- Ensure every pupil has access to the suitable, full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school.
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school.

Our policy outlines the Federation's commitment to attendance. Our policy aims to provide clear guidance to all staff, parents & carers, pupils and governors/trustees about the responsibilities and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued.
- Raising and maintaining a whole school awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the Federation community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, prevention of bullying, behaviour, and inclusive learning. This policy also considers the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equality Act 2010, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and other relevant legislation.

2.Promoting Regular Attendance

We believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the strong connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Role	Name	Contact details
Senior Attendance Lead	**Joanna Pedlow**	**Infant School – 01362 692612** **Junior School – 01362 694919**
Designated Office Staff who monitor attendance	**Louise Morgan, Infant School** **Jodie Evans, Junior School**	**Infant School – 01362 692612** **Junior School – 01362 694919**
Named Governor/Trustee for Attendance and Safeguarding	**Jill Wilson**	**Infant School – 01362 692612** **Junior School – 01362 694919**

Improving school attendance is everyone's business, it is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of Federation staff.

To help us all to focus on this, the Federation Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents/carers.
- Form positive and supportive relationships with pupils and parents/carers.
- Ensure there is a Federation approach which reinforces good attendance, with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure the regulations and other relevant legislation are complied with.
- Ensure there is a named senior leader to manage attendance matters and allocate sufficient time and resource to them.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Education as required and on time.
- Report attendance and related issues through regular reporting to the Governors and link governor for safeguarding (including attendance).
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented.
- Ensure that key attendance information is collected, reviewed and discussed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence and support that can be put in place.
- Review support offered and put in place to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Ensure there is a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families where this is appropriate.
- Document all attendance support and intervention put in place by the Federation to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.

2.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Board recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the Federation's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Setting high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents so that children attend school every day and are safeguarded from harm.
- Identifying a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters and ensuring that there is a named senior attendance champion.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties by rigorously evaluating the effectiveness of the school's attendance procedures so that consistent attendance support is provided for all pupils.
- Ensuring the school engages and works effectively with the local authority Attendance Team and wider local partners and services to address barriers to school attendance.

- Regularly reviewing attendance data, discussing, challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensuring high aspirations are maintained for all pupils and processes for support are adapted to the individual needs of pupils including those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker or youth justice worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Ensuring all school staff receive adequate training on attendance and that relevant staff have access to opportunities to share and learn from good practice in other schools.
- Ensuring that attendance data is shared with the Local Authority or Department for Education as required and on time.
- Reviewing the school's Attendance Policy on at least an annual basis, ensuring that the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.

In addition this, all staff will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to **all** pupils and their parents.
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents.
- Contribute to a Federation approach, which reinforces positive school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- Comply with regulations and other relevant legislation.
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site.
- Ensure that registers are recorded accurately and in a timely manner.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families.

Staff responsible for attendance will work to further develop relationships with families to bring about improved attendance. This may involve seeking multi-agency support.

The staff responsible for monitoring attendance will support positive attendance, respond to concerns, and promote improvement in attendance by:

- Monitoring and analysing pupil attendance information/data.
- Providing a daily update of absentees with reasons to the SLT and DSL so any concerns are swiftly recognised, and patterns and areas for further consideration are highlighted.
- Undertaking attendance meetings and/or discussions with the Designated Safeguarding Leads and other relevant staff members, including the Family Support Worker and administrative staff responsible for maintaining the registers.
- Implementing the identified strategies for promoting excellent Federation attendance.

- Implementing the identified strategies for tackling unsatisfactory attendance.
- Managing individual pupil records.
- Coordinating individual action plans for pupils causing concern, including the instigation of an Early Help Assessment and Plan and/ or the implementation of a parenting contract/ attendance plan where required.
- Ensuring first day calling procedures are adhered to if a child is absent from school without contact from parents/carers.
- Ensuring any unclear absences are followed up upon, eg if the schools have reason to believe a family may be on holiday when they have informed the school their child is unwell.
- Making referrals to appropriate external agencies when required.
- Carrying out visits to the family home where there is a concern, lack of information, no reason or an unclear reason for absence, information that leads the Federation to believe the family may be on holiday or the absence may not be as reported to the schools as part of their safeguarding duty.

Toftwood Federation requests that parents:

- Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress.
- Ensure their child has regular, punctual attendance at school.
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment.
- Contact the schools if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return, following this with supporting evidence wherever possible.
- Avoid unnecessary absences; for example, by making non-emergency medical and dental appointments outside school hours.
- Ask the schools for help if their child is experiencing difficulties with any aspect of their schoolwork or home and family life.
- Inform the schools of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance.
- Support the schools by becoming involved in their child's education, forming a positive relationship with school, and acknowledging the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.
- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance and punctuality.
- Attend all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues and offer support.

Pupils will:

- Be aware of how important it is to attend school and be on time at an age appropriate level. This will be communicated to them by school staff and parents/carers.
- Know they can speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.

- Remember to have good learning behaviours and to try to achieve a place on the Excellent Learner boards in class, as well as staying on the Steps to Success board (Y1-6).
- Remember it is important to wear and bring equipment needed for school each day, such as wearing PE kit on PE days (Years 1-6) and bringing reading books and home learning in when required.
- Remember to come to the school office if they are late and arrive after the gates close promptly at 8.55 am each morning. This will help the schools monitor attendance, keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance and is vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

3. Understanding Types of Absence

Any absence affects the routine of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning journey and ability to progress. Any pupil's absence or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of other pupils. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school, without a good reason, creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'. Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation, and it is accepted as such by the school. The decision to authorise absences is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

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

"Regular" attendance as:

- Attendance at every session the school is open to pupils unless their absence has been authorised

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such 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 or unavoidable cause

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted such as:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- 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 taken during term-time, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, including any arranged by other family members or friends.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.
- Any other absence in term time which has not been agreed.

This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

3.1 Persistent and Severe Absence

A pupil is defined by the Government as a **'persistent absentee' (PA)** when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Over a full academic year this would be 19 school days (38 sessions) missed. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as '**severely absent' (SA)**. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and, as such, are likely to need more intensive support.

The attendance of all pupils at our schools is monitored to identify children who are PA, or are on track to becoming PA. Where emerging concerns are identified we will instigate appropriate and timely interventions as outlined in our policy. Referrals may also be made to external agencies for targeted support.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice for parentally condoned absence, consideration of an Education Supervision Order or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

3.2 Leave of Absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are times where a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child due to 'exceptional circumstances'. At Toftwood Federation, leave of absence is only granted at the discretion of the Headteacher and shall not be granted unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. The Federation will respond to all applications for leave of absence in writing.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence during term time must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least a month before the planned leave (see Appendix 2). Toftwood Federation will treat each application individually and discuss with you the circumstances of the application before a decision is made. If a written request for leave of absence is not completed and the leave is taken without a request being submitted, it will be marked as unauthorised. Retrospective requests will not be considered and will also result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. In such cases the school may make a referral to the Local Authority to request that a penalty notice fine is issued or consider prosecution.

When absence is granted by the Headteacher, the parents will need to agree a date of return. If a pupil fails to return on the expected date and contact is not received from, or made with the parents, school will seek advice from the Local Authority. This could result in possible children missing from education procedures being instigated.

3.3 Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. For example, if an appointment is a 11am, the child would be expected in school beforehand and afterwards. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected by an adult and supporting evidence shared. Supporting evidence may include a hospital letter, appointment card or message/email from a medical provider. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site unaccompanied.

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the Federation's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we will speak to parents/carers regarding our concerns and look at what support can be put in place to ensure their

child's regular attendance at school. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child has an emerging pattern of non-attendance, we will discuss the reasons for absence with the child's parent/carer. We will invite parents/carers to attend a school-led Attendance Support Panel as an appropriate early intervention strategy. As part of this support, we may seek consent from parents and the pupil as appropriate to make a referral to the 5-19 Healthy Child Programme team and/or to liaise with the child's healthcare professional.[1]

Where a pupil has a verified and chronic health condition, we will aim to work with parents to ensure children have access to education and provide appropriate support in line with Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school and Norfolk County Council policies via the Medical Needs Service. We will also consider whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is required.

3.4 Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Toftwood Federation acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

3.5 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) pupils are among the lowest achieving groups of pupils at every key stage in education, although some GRT pupils achieve very well at school. We recognise that there are many complex and interwoven factors that may influence the educational attainment of GRT pupils. At our school, we have high expectations of all pupils, regardless of their background whilst recognising the lifestyle and cultural traditions of GRT communities. In line with The Education Act 1996, Section 444(6) the school will authorise the absence of a pupil who is a mobile child[2] and is unable to attend school because:

- the parent is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require him to travel from place to place,
- that the child has attended at a school as a registered pupil as regularly as the nature of that trade or business permits, and

[1] This is in accordance with the NSCP Joint Protocol between Health Services & Schools in respect of the management of pupil absence from school when medical reasons are cited

[2] A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place.

- if the child has attained the age of six, that he has made at least 200 attendances during the period of 12 months ending with the date on which the proceedings were instituted

This provision applies *only* when the family has no fixed abode and are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits. In these circumstances, parents have a duty to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When a family is trading or otherwise conducting their business in or around Norfolk, if a family can reasonably travel back to their base school (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time. Toftwood Federation will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when he or she is not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended Toftwood Federation in the last 18 months. Parents are expected to register their children at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at Toftwood Infant School or Toftwood Junior School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

To ensure we can effectively support all our pupils, we ask that parents:

- Advise the school of their forthcoming travelling patterns as soon as these are known and before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates.

4. Our Procedures

4.1 Register Keeping and Recording

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- Present;
- Absent;
- Present at approved educational activity; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

4.2 Expected absence procedure for parents:

A parent has a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. If a child is unavoidably absent from school parents are expected to contact school by telephone call on the morning of the first day of absence and on each subsequent day, identifying the reason for absence and the expected date of return. If no contact is received, then absence protocols will be instigated.

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

Parents/carers are asked to call the office for the school your child attends and leave a message on the absence reporting line stating details of your child and the reason for absence including name, class and details of the reason for absence. Please note, if a child is unwell details are required and not just information such as a child is 'unwell'. Tapestry and Class Dojo should NOT be used to share information about absences.

If any further information is required a designated member of staff will make contact with parents/carers.

If no contact is received and a child is absent from school, then absence protocols will be instigated.

Senior Attendance Lead for the Federation – the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school	Joanna Pedlow	Infant School 01362 692912 Junior School 01362 694919
Designated staff members at each school who parents/carers should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis	Louise Morgan, Infant School Jodie Evans, Junior School	Infant School 01362 692912 Junior School 01362 694919
Federation Family Support Worker who parents/carers can contact for support in any area, including challenges that can have an impact on attendance such as sleep, bedtime routines, morning routines etc.	Karen Bates	Infant School 01362 692912 Junior School 01362 694919

If your child is absent, the following actions will be initiated by the school:

We will check all messages received on the absence line and add these to the child's attendance record. The Headteacher makes a decision as to if this is authorised.

The first day calling procedures will be activated for all pupils who are not in school after close of register at 9:20 and where no reason for absence has been received.

- We will telephone and/or text you on the first, and every subsequent day of absence, if we have not heard from you. We may even do a welfare check at the family home.

It is your responsibility to contact us.

If we are unable to make contact with parents/carers by telephone and/or text, **we will follow our first day calling procedures** -

- All of the child's named emergency contacts will be telephoned.
- We will send a text to parents/carers asking them to phone us about the absence in a given timescale
- If we cannot contact a parent or emergency contact, a home visit will be carried out by designated staff.
- Where there are any other concerns, including concerns about the nature of the absence, a home visit may still be carried out for safeguarding reasons even when contact is made.
- We will also inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if there are unexplained absences from school in line with statutory requirements. We will also inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker if their name is to be deleted from the school register.
- We may also contact others who may know where the family is but may not be on the list using our knowledge of the family
- We may call the police if a child is absent and we cannot contact anyone suitable to ensure the child is safe
- If we carry out a home visit and no one is in, we will leave a letter to explain this. This is also the case where we have reason to believe an absence may be because of an unauthorised holiday or leave of absence

In certain circumstances the schools may also:

- Visit the home of the pupil
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement
- Refer to an external agency/ support service to offer support, guidance, and advice
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or consulting with the Children's Advice and Duty Service (CADS) or the police, where there are safeguarding concerns.

If a pupil leaves the schools without permission staff will contact parents by telephone.

4.3 Late Arrival at School

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can lead to irregular school attendance patterns. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed and risk missing vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

At Toftwood Fedeartion all pupils are expected to arrive on time for every day of the school year. The school day begins at 8:55am. We advise all parents to ensure their child is on site prior to this and our school gates are open from 8:40-8:55am. The school register will be taken at 8:55am. All pupils arriving after this time are required to report to the main office with their parents, who will be expected to provide a reason for their absence/late arrival. If their arrival is before 9:20am it will be recorded as late - L code (Late before the close of register).

The school register will officially close at 9:20am. All pupils arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session - U code (Late after the close of register). This is categorised as an unauthorised absence for the session. Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent lateness record, you may be asked to meet with Mrs Pedlow/other designated members of staff, but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our pupils and, as a school, we celebrate good class and individual punctuality.

Please note: L or U codes will be used if a pupil arrives after the close of the afternoon register for the PM session.

4.4 Support Systems

At Toftwood Federation we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school staff of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

Strategies we may use to support you include:

- Phone calls from attendance/office staff, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or a member of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) team
- Phone calls and supportive discussions with the Federation Family Support Worker

- Consultation with the Local Authority Attendance Team and the Federation allocated Attendance Officer
- Forming an Attendance Support Plan at an Attendance Panel meeting
- Onward referral to an external agency who may be able to help/support families
- Consider initiating the Joint Medical Protocol
- To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils (if appropriate) to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance.

Support offered to families will be child-centred and supportive, putting the child(ren) at the heart of the process.

4.5 Attendance Rewards & Interventions

DAYS ABSENT	Percentage of attendance	Percentage of attendance	Support from attendance lead, Office staff, DSLs and FSW and/or external agencies
	99 – 100%	99 - 100% 96 - 98%	• *Warm welcome every day on the gates by SLT and other key staff* • *Offers of support if regular days are missed eg Mondays* • *Offers of support if siblings are regularly off together as this would be unusual for illness reasons* • *No engagement from parent considers use of legal intervention*
	96 – 98%		
	92 – 95%	92 - 95%	• *Monitoring letter sent once a child hits 92% with a monitoring period and offer of a supportive discussion* • *Monitoring period of a set number of weeks* • *Support offered* • *Attendance support panel arranged if attendance does not improve within the monitoring period*

			• *No engagement from parent considers use of legal intervention* • *Consider the Joint Medical Needs Protocol if parents/carers report repeated illnesses.* •
	Under 90%	Under 90%	• *School, Student, and family develop PA/at risk of PA plan* • *Intent to Fast Track if required* • *Involvement from LA and external agencies with consent from parents* • *Attendance support panel* • *No engagement from parent considers use of legal intervention* • *Consider the Joint Medical Needs Protocol if parents/carers report repeated illnesses.* *Only authorise absences with supporting evidence*
	Under 50%	Under 50%	• *Formal support such as attendance contracts will be in place* • *Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement* • *No engagement from parent considers use of legal intervention*

Our ambition is for as many children as possible to have 100% attendance, but we know with illnesses this may not be possible.

Our target for the academic year 24-25 is 95% minimum based on 23-24 figures.

- ***We will update families of our attendance on newsletters and our current attendance for each school***
- ***We will promote the importance of attendance on newsletters and at meetings with parents/carers and refer to this if necessary at parent consultations and in parent/carer communications***
- ***Governors are updated termly with attendance information***
- ***We offer support in a range of ways***

- ***We will raise concerns with parents through informal discussions/phone calls and offers of support at a very early stage of absences,letters, supportive meetings and multi agency meetings.***

We will investigate and offer support to any pupils who are on track to be persistently absent (PA) and will not wait until attendance is below 90%.

4.6 Part-time timetables

All schools have a statutory duty to provide full-time education for all pupils and we are committed to every child's right to a suitable, full-time education offer. In very exceptional circumstances, we may decide to implement a temporary, reduced timetable where a pupil's individual needs indicate they cannot currently access a full-time education and it would not be in their best interest to do so. We will not use a part-time timetable to manage a pupil's behaviour. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution and will have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. We will never put a part-time timetable in place without written agreement from parent/carer and/or other professionals working with the family as appropriate. This intervention will only be used as part of a comprehensive package of support for the pupil where it is safe to do so; it will be reviewed regularly in partnership with the child, parent and any other relevant professionals working with the family.

In line with Norfolk County Council guidance, we will notify the Attendance Team of all part-time timetables as soon as a plan has been agreed.

5. School Attendance and the Law

The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 introduced a National Framework in England. By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

5.1 National Framework for Penalty Notices

There is now a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England, of 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period. The 10 sessions of absence do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence (G, O and/or U coded within the school's registers). The 10-school week period can span different terms, school years or education settings.

Sanctions may include issuing each parent (for each child) with a Penalty Notice for £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days (for the first offence). A second Penalty Notice issued within a three-year period will result in a fine of £160 per parent, per child. If a third offence is committed the matter may be referred to the local authority for consideration of prosecution via the Magistrates Court. If prosecution is instigated for irregular school attendance, each parent may receive a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

For further information see the Norfolk Code of Conduct for issuing fixed penalties regarding school attendance.

There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure or recreation, or to take part in protest activity in school hours. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school."

We will work with parents and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

6. Deletions from the Register

At Toftwood Federation we will add and will only delete pupils from our school roll in line with the Pupil Registration Regulations. In most circumstances, we will know in advance about pupils leaving our school; this will be planned and discussed with the parent in advance of the pupil leaving. At Toftwood Federation we will always work with families to gain information about the pupil's next school and/or address before the pupil leaves to reduce the risk of pupils becoming a child missing education through lack of shared information.

We follow Norfolk County Council's Child Missing Education procedures and will inform the Children Missing Education Team of all removals from our school roll no later than the date the child is removed in line with statutory responsibilities.

If a child is removed from roll to home educate, we can only de-register the child if we receive, in writing, the parent's intention to educate their child other than at school. The pupil will be de-registered on receipt of such a letter and Norfolk County Council will be informed of the removal from roll as outlined above.

We will follow Norfolk County Council's Children Missing Education procedures when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown, the school will carry out joint enquiries with Norfolk County Council to establish the whereabouts of the child.

7. Related Policies

To underpin the values and ethos of our school and our intent to ensure that pupils at our school attend school regularly and reach their full potential the following policies and our procedures are integral to this approach:

- safeguarding including child protection
- medical needs
- admissions
- behaviour and the prevention of bullying (including exclusions)
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning

8. Statutory Framework

This policy has been devised in accordance with the following legislation and guidance:

- Working together to improve school attendance, DfE (August 2024)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- School attendance parental responsibility measures, DfE (January 2015)
- Children missing education, DfE (September 2016)
- Keeping children safe in education, DfE (September 2025)
- Working together to safeguard children, DfE (December 2023)

9. Appendices

The following pages contain appendices relevant to this policy.

Appendix 1: Norfolk County Council: Penalty Notices regarding school absence – Guidance for parents

Regular school attendance and parent's legal responsibilities

At Toftwood Federation our aim is to collaborate with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This guidance is to remind all parents about the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government is clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The important legal information

The Government have introduced a single national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England. This threshold is **10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period**. These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years.

In line with national guidance, the Local Authority (LA) retains the discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met. This might apply for example, where parents have taken several term time holidays below the national threshold. The LA also retains the discretion to consider going straight to prosecution where appropriate.

A maximum of 2 penalty notices per parent, per child can be issued within a rolling 3-year period. This period will start from the issue of the 1st penalty notice. The national framework also sets out the escalation process which applies to such penalty notices. If the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within 3 years, another tool should be used. In Norfolk, where a pupil's attendance has met the national threshold for a third time within 3 years and the parent/s have already been issued with 2 penalty notices within that period, consideration will be given to prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, which can result in a criminal conviction and fine of up to £2,500.

A parent includes any person who is not a natural parent but who has parental responsibility for the child **or** who has care of the child, as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Penalty notices will usually be issued to the parent/s with day-to-day responsibility for the child's attendance or the parent/s who have allowed the absence (regardless of which parent has applied for a leave of absence).

The first penalty notice issued to a parent for a child will be charged at £160 to be paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice, the second penalty notice to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the first offence, is charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days. **There is no reduced sum available in this instance**.

Part payments or payment plans are not acceptable, and fines must be paid in full within 21 or 28 days, at the rate specified within the penalty notice. There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

Requests for leave of absence

Working together to improve school attendance advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a

case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government 'does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.'

Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise schools will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Headteachers are not obligated to reconsider authorising leave if an application was not made in advance.

Support with ensuring regular school attendance

If you require any support with ensuring your child's attendance, please contact the school office in the first instance.

Appendix 2: Example leave of absence request form.

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME
Important information for parents – please read before completing this form Working together to improve school attendance advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday as the Government 'does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance'. Requests for leave must be made in advance, otherwise we will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Headteachers are not obligated to reconsider authorising leave if an application was not made in advance. Our aim is for every pupil's attendance to be 100% unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence. If you require any support with ensuring your child's attendance, please contact the office in the first instance.
I have read the above information and wish to apply for leave of absence from school for:

Child's Full Name:	**Date of Birth:**	**Class:**

Parent/Carer Details (please list all parents)			
First Name:		**Surname:**	
Date of Birth:		**Relationship to the child:**	
Address and postcode:			
Telephone number:			
First Name:		**Surname:**	
Date of Birth:		**Relationship to the child:**	
Address and postcode:			
Telephone number:			

Siblings: Please provide the name of any siblings and the school that they attend

Child's Full Name:	**Date of Birth:**	**School:**

Details of the absence			
Date of First day of absence:		**Date of last day of absence:**	
Total Number of days absent:		**Expected date of return to school:**	

Please provide the reason for this request including supporting evidence:

Please read the following statement and sign to indicate you understand the this:

I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress. I understand that a penalty notice may be issued if this request is denied, and my child is absent during this period. I understand that a fine will be payable per parent, per child.

I have read and understood Norfolk County Council's information regarding penalty notices for absence from school and the action they may take.

Signed:		**Full name:**		**Date:**	
Signed:		**Full name:**		**Date:**	

To be completed by the school:			
Date request received by the school:		**Total number of days requested:**	
Child's Name:		**Application Authorised or Declined?**	
Reason for school's decision:			
In the case of a term time holiday please confirm which parent took the holiday:			
Headteacher:			
Signed:		**Date:**	

Appendix 3: Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

Attendance Policy Quick Guide for Parents

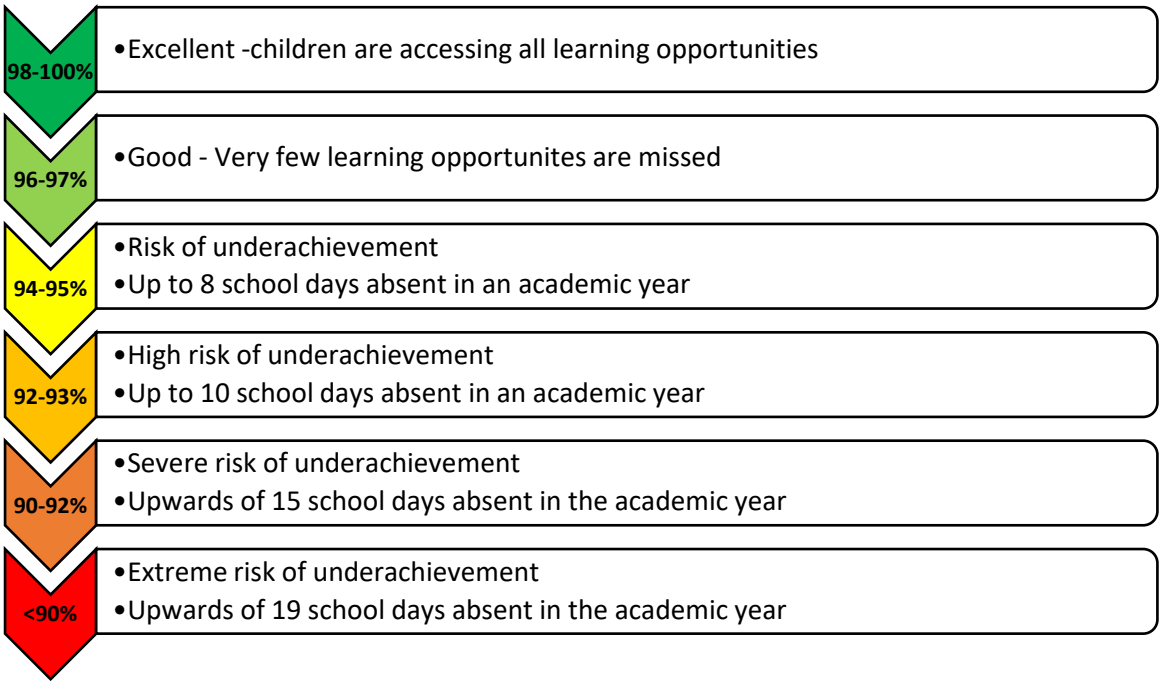
Parents should call the relevant school office and use the option to report an absence.

Please leave us your child's name, class, who you are in relation to the child and the reason for their absence and when you expect them to return.

We expect pupils to attend school for 100% of the academic year. You can support your child to have excellent attendance by taking these steps:

- Ensure your child arrives on time for school every day and is ready to learn. Arriving after registration is recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils must be in school by **8.55 am**
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.
- If your child appears to be only slightly ill, send them in to school. We have staff who will contact you if their condition deteriorates.
- Book any medical appointments outside of school hours. If this is unavoidable, please book for as late in the afternoon as possible and inform the school of appointments in advance.
- Supply a copy of the appointment card or hospital letter if your child has an appointment during school hours.
- If they have medication issued by a medical professional, we can administer this and you need to fill in a form available form the office.

If your child becomes reluctant to go to school or you need help, please contact the school immediately; we are more likely to be able to work together to solve any problems if we act early.



'On the day' absences: what should I do if my child is not 'fit' to go into school?

On each day your child is unfit to come to school, please report this absence by phoing the school office and choosing the absence line option OR notifying the school via Compass. In any answering machine message you must leave your child's full name, class, your name and relationship to the child and give the specific reason for absence. The information you give will be recorded on our official register.

Leave of Absence

There may be exceptional circumstances where you need to request a leave of absence for your child. Please use our 'Leave of absence request' form to make these types of requests. The form should be submitted in advance of the leave of absence, via either infantoffice@toftwoodfederation.co.uk or junioroffice@toftwoodfederation.co.uk

You will receive a written response, to advise if the request has been granted or declined. The Headteacher makes this decision in line with their responsibilities around attendance.

Punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive on time for school in the morning and for every lesson during the day. Your child is late to school if they are not in the playground gates by 8.55am

The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence

to support children's attainment and social and emotional development. I hope we can count on your support in this matter.

Please contact **the school office in the first place** you require any suport with ensuring your child's regular school attendance. They will then put you in touch with the relevant staff member.

Senior Attendance Lead: the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school	Mrs Pedlow	Contactable via either school office
The school office absence lines Please note there is an answer phone out of opening hours with the option to leave a message	Miss L Morgan Mrs Evans	01362 692612 Option 1 01362 694919 Option 1
Family Support Worker Any SLT member	Mrs Bates Mrs Pedlow, Mrs Bell, Mrs Rudd, Miss Ray, Miss Morgans	01362 692612 0r 01362 694919 familysupport@toftwoodfederation.co.uk Via the school office or at the playground gates for an informal chat