The Winterton Federation
Attendance Policy

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Name of responsible Committee/individual:	Statutory - Governing board
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Related documents: All federation policies referred to are available on the federation website: https://thewintertonfederation.co.uk If English is not your first language, and you require assistance/translation, please contact the Junior school office.	The Education Act 1996; The Education Act 2002; The Education and Inspections Act 2006; The Education (Learner Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments); The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013; Annual updated Keeping Children Safe in Education document; Working together to Improve school attendance 2022 (updated September 2023); The DfE Children missing in Education 2016; The DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold. The following federation policies: Safeguarding and Child Protection; Behaviour; E-safety and computing; Complaints; Medical Needs; Data Protection.
Strategic alignment:	1.1 Objective: Achieve and maintain the best possible pupil outcomes. and 1.4 Objective: Continue to maintain a safe working and learning environment.

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At The Winterton Federation we endeavour to nurture unique individuals in a happy, safe, respectful and inclusive environment, where everyone is inspired to be the best they can be throughout their journey of life.

"Let your light shine so others may see your good deeds" Matthew 5:1

The senior leaders responsible for the strategic approach to attendance across the federation are Mrs Dawn Lovatt and Mrs Cheryl Baxter. Both can be contacted via: admin.wintertoninfants@northlincs.gov.uk or admin.wintertonjuniors@northlincs.gov.uk

The attendance officer responsible for initial contact regarding attendance is Mrs Chloe Linton. She can be contacted via: admin.wintertoninfants@northlincs.gov.uk or admin.wintertonjuniors@northlincs.gov.uk

Aims

Our federation aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence;
- ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- acting early to address patterns of absence.

We also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

At The Winterton Federation, we strive to give each child in our care the best possible education, which addresses their individual needs and helps them to reach their full potential. We believe that it is crucial to encourage excellent attendance and we aim to foster a positive relationship with our families.

Our overriding aim is that every child achieves a 100% attendance rate. This policy is applied fairly and consistently, and we always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Working Together to Improve School Attendance From the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibilities measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996;
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002;
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- The Education (Learner Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments);
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

This policy also refers to:

- Annual updated Keeping Children Safe in Education document;
- Working together to Improve school attendance 2024;
- The DfE Children missing in Education 2016;
- The DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

School Procedures

Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register. Attendance registers record the attendance of children who are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions each day. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- present;
- attending an approved off-site educational activity;
- absent;
- attending a medical appointment;
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

At the Junior school, pupils have a soft start from 8.45am to 8.55am on each school day. Any children arriving after 9.25am will be marked as late; anyone arriving after 9.25am will be marked as an unauthorised late.

At the Infant school, pupils have a soft start from 8.35am to 8.45am on each school day. Any children arriving after 9.15am will be marked as late; anyone arriving after 9.15am will be marked as an unauthorised late.

We are required to share daily attendance data with the Department for Education.

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible. A valid reason must be given for this absence, via telephone, app or in person. The answer phone provides a 24-hour service, enabling parents to contact either school at any time.

Absence due to a genuine illness will be authorised unless the school has concerns about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school will ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment confirmation or another appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If either school are not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness this absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Medical or dental appointments

We ask that all parents/carers try to make any medical or dental appointments outside of school hours. However, where this is not possible, confirmation of this appointment is required, and pupils should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents/carers should notify either school in advance of a medical or dental appointment.

Lateness and punctuality

If a pupil arrives late, a staff member will receive the child via the main entrance, and if appropriate, escort them to class. Parents are expected to leave their child at this point and are required to sign their child in to school using the visitor management system; a valid reason for being late must be entered into this system.

We identify and respond to ongoing punctuality issues in different stages, as shown in our attendance strategy. See appendix 2.

Following up absence

The federation schools follow up all absences that have no valid reason or indeed that we have concerns about, to ascertain the reason for absence, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken

where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. The procedure is:

- Register closes - 8.45am for the Infants and 8.55am for the Juniors
- Attendance Officer checks all registers at 9am and identifies missing marks
- Text message sent to parent/carer of children not marked as present between 9.15am and 9.30am
- Attendance Officer calls home if no notification received from parent/carer by 10am
- Depending on circumstance, a home visit may be required, and a text message will be sent informing parents/carers we will be attending their home before a certain time that day.

Families who experience attendance difficulties are offered support from our Attendance Officer or in her absence, from another member of the federation attendance team. However, if there has been no improvement, further guidance of support/strategies are sought from the Education Inclusion Service.

All staff are aware that children being absent from school, particularly repeatedly and/or for prolonged periods and children missing in education, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect such as sexual exploitation, exploitation, criminal exploitation including involvement in County Lines (refer to the federation safeguarding and child protection policy). It may indicate mental health problems, risk of parental substance abuse, Female genital mutilation and so called, 'honour-based abuse' and the risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is essential to identify the existence of any underlying safeguarding risk and help prevent risk of aa child going missing in the future. Staff are aware of the federation unauthorised absence procedure and children missing in education procedure.

Reporting to parents/carers

If we are not concerned about a child's attendance, then we will report attendance to parents/carers in the written end-of-year report as well as during a child's parents evening meeting. If we do have concerns about a child's attendance, then the federation Attendance Strategy is followed to monitor attendance. See Appendix 2. All federation staff are responsible for attendance; and as a result, if any member of staff is concerned about a child's attendance, they should report this immediately to the attendance officer and enter this on CPOMS, so that relevant contact can be made with parents/carers.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Granting approval for term time leave of absence

The Executive Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be an 'exceptional circumstance'. Each application for a term- time absence is considered on an individual basis, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Executive Headteachers discretion.

Where parents/carers request term time leave of absence, a leave of absence request form **must** be completed and returned to school, even if this request is just for one school session. This form must be received by the school before the first day of the requested leave of absence; these cannot be completed and handed in retrospectively. Following the receipt of a completed application form, the Executive Headteacher notifies the parents/carers of their decision. Where the circumstance is exceptional and authorisation is given, the register will be marked with the appropriate coding for an authorised family holiday. Where the circumstances are not seen as exceptional, the register will be marked as an unauthorised family holiday. Where the leave is greater than 5 days, a referral may be made to the Education Inclusion Service.

Valid reasons for an **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments;
- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart;
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes only - this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground) 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.

The Winterton Federation attendance team work closely in collaboration with the Winterton Community Academy Inclusion Officer around attendance and procedures, particularly if there are siblings in all of the Winterton schools. If a child is absent from a TWF school and it is known that there are siblings/a sibling at WCA, a phone call is made to correlate absences. When appropriate, a joint home visit will be made with personnel from both TWF and WCA to ascertain next steps in line with policy and procedures.

Legal Sanctions (Fine Amounts and Rules)
The federation can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

First Offence: If issued with a penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 for each child, which rises to £160 if not paid within 21 days.

Second Offence (within a 3-year period): £160 will be charged per parent, per child, payable within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made within 28 days, North Lincolnshire Council may prosecute for the original irregular attendance under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Third Offence: a third penalty notice will typically not be issued within a 3-year rolling period; instead, the case moves direct to prosecution.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Executive Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- a number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year;
- one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission;
- where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

Strategies for promoting attendance
At the Junior school, class attendance is rewarded every week during the achievement assembly. The class with the highest attendance is awarded the attendance cup, a rosette, and are rewarded with an extra 5 minutes playtime. At the Infants' school, class attendance is rewarded every week during the achievement assembly. The class with the highest attendance is awarded the attendance bear, a rosette, and are rewarded with an extra 5 minutes playtime. Weekly class attendance is displayed, as well as the overall attendance percentages in each school hall.

The federation works with parents to support regular attendance. Attendance data is monitored regularly to ensure any issues are addressed as early as possible. We acknowledge positive improvements in attendance.

Parents are informed about the importance of good attendance through:

- new parent/carer meetings;
- federation attendance leaflet;
- federation website;
- parents evenings;
- annual report;
- termly attendance letter;
- weekly class attendance data via both federation apps.

If parents/carers have any concerns they should contact the Attendance Officer, Mrs Chloe Linton.

Attendance monitoring

The federation attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis in addition to weekly monitoring of overall attendance data, in line with the federation attendance strategy, see appendix 2. The Winterton Federation uses Studybugs to enable a whole school approach to attendance, giving us in depth attendance analysis. Relevant school staff also access national and local pupil-level absence data via Studybugs. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

Persistent Absence

The persistent absence threshold is 10% within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistic releases.

In addition, the Winterton Federation digitally stores attendance data. It is used to track the attendance of individual pupils, whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- monitoring attendance figures for the whole federation on at least a termly basis;
- holding the Executive Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Executive Headteacher

The Executive Headteacher is responsible for:

- promoting good attendance;
- ensuring the policy is implemented consistently across the federation;
- monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors within the termly report;
- supporting other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issuing fixed penalty notices, where necessary.

The Attendance Officer/Attendance Team

The attendance officer is supported by the attendance team in all areas below and is responsible for:

- promoting good attendance;
- monitoring attendance data at the federation and individual pupil level;
- reporting attendance concerns to the Executive Headteacher;
- working with the Education Inclusion Service to tackle persistent absence;
- making calls and arranging meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues;
- advising the Executive Headteacher when to issue a fixed-penalty notice;
- keeping up to date with any changes in legislation and guidance regarding attendance;
- attending all relevant training and network meetings.

Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for:

- promoting good attendance;
- recording attendance electronically on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting this information via Arbor to the school office by 9am;
- report any attendance concerns to the Attendance Officer, and log on CPOMS;
- informing parents/carers about a child's absence at parent's evenings as well as in the child's annual report.

Teaching assistants

- promoting good attendance;
- In the absence of the class teacher, recording attendance electronically on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting this information via Arbor to the school office by 9am;
- report any attendance concerns to the Attendance Officer, and log on CPOMS;
- supporting the class teachers in their responsibilities.

Administration staff

- promoting good attendance;
- taking calls from parents/carers regarding absence and recording this on Arbor and CPOMS.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Attendance Strategy

Stage 1

- Record pupils with attendance under 96%, and record PA rate for all pupils.
- Letter 1 to be sent to parents/carers of pupils of concern with <96% attendance.
- Lates monitored and parents/carers notified of any concerns.

Stage 2

- Letter 2 to be sent to parents/carers of all pupils with <96% attendance where poor attendance has not improved and letter 1 has been sent.
- Lates monitored and parents/carers notified of any concerns.

Stage 3

- Letter 3 sent to parents/carers inviting them to meet with attendance officer to put an attendance support plan in place, where letter 1 and 2 have been sent. Any relevant external agencies are signposted or referred to.
- Lates monitored and parents/carers notified of any concerns.

Stage 4

- Letter 4 sent to parents/carers where support plans set, have not positively impacted on attendance levels. Invitation to a meeting to discuss concerns and ways forward with parent/carer, attendance officer and EIO.

Stage 5

- Referral made to Education Inclusion Service requesting attendance intervention.

Note: Consideration is given to cases where a known medical issue is the cause of absence and each of these cases are judged on their own merit.
Parents/carers are notified of attendance rates for all pupils within annual school report highlighting good and poor attendance.
Parents/carers are notified of attendance rates for all pupils at their parent's evening meeting with the class teacher.
Each case is looked at on an individual basis, and the Education Inclusion Service may become involved at stage 3 if required.
We provide information on persistent absentees to feeder schools for those pupils transitioning to Year 7.
We assess final data for the year and report to governing board.