Blue Coat C.E. (Aided) Junior School

Attendance Policy

Academic Year

2026/27

Approved by:	L Grieve – Headteacher
	H Donkin – Chair of Governors
Last reviewed:	September 2026
Next review due by:	September 2027

Attendance Key Contacts

Please find the details of those with overall responsibility for attendance, attendance support and attendance improvement within our school below.

Name	Role	Contact details
Mrs L Grieve	Head Teacher	0191 386 5975
Mrs L Grieve	Senior Attendance Champion	0191 386 5975
Mrs J Bruce	Other senior leaders with responsibility for attendance	0191 386 5975
Mrs H Donkin	Governor with responsibility for attendance	h.donkin@durhambluecoat.net

If a pupil is going to be absent from school the person who should be informed is: Mrs Bruce or Miss Emerson in the school office by calling 0191 386 5975 or emailing bluecoat@durhamlearning.net

If a pupil, parent or family is having difficulty with attending school and requires advice, help or support then they can contact:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Mrs L Grieve	Head Teacher	0191 386 5975
Mrs N Snowdon	Deputy Head Teacher	0191 386 5975
Miss J Wilson	School Business Manager	0191 386 5975

Help & Support

Where help or support is needed with attendance the sooner school know about this, the quicker people can work together to support with this. Where needed this can involve other services to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Children Missing from Education

If pupil's whereabouts are not known following enquiries schools can legally remove pupils from the admission register (the school roll) after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. A pupil's place in school is at risk if whereabouts are not known. Children Missing from Education must be reported to the Local Authority and the matter may be treated as a safeguarding issue.

Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

Durham Blue Coat CE Aided Junior School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

Attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils. Improving attendance is everyone's business and a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners is required.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Specific roles and responsibilities have been published in the Working Together to improve school attendance statutory guidance.

We recognise the link between regular attendance and the well-being, development and achievement of our students / pupils. To benefit from the learning and pastoral opportunities and support we offer we expect all pupils to attend every session they are able to attend.

Communication with our parents and pupils is vital to working together to support attendance.

We ask that parents check the contact details, address and emergency contact information held by the school are up-to-date and changes are communicated to school as soon as possible. It is extremely important that school can contact parents in an emergency, keep parents informed of events and progress or discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

The school day

The school day is from 8.50am until 3.20pm.

Students must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.15 am. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 1.00 pm and will be kept open until 1.15pm.

Pupils must be in school for the start of registration to receive a present mark, otherwise another appropriate code will be used. Pupils arriving late for registration, but before the register has closed will be recorded as late (**Code L**).

The DfE states that pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration.

Pupils who arrive after the registers close will be recorded as a **Code U** unless the reason means another code is more appropriate. The U code is an unauthorised absence. It is still essential to come to school even if you are arriving after the registers close.

Arriving late to school can be disruptive and unsettling to the child and the rest of their class. Parents should contact Mrs Grieve if there are any issues which are affecting a pupil's ability to attend school on time.

If your child is late for school:
All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on SIMS.

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions parent/carers will be contacted either by phone or letter and asked to attend a meeting in school, to discuss the situation and see what support can be offered to improve their child's punctuality.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality a referral may be made to the local authority for action.

Term dates and planned Inset days
Term dates including inset dates, can be found on our school website under Parents → Holidays.
https://blue-coat-ce-aided-junior-school.secure-primarysite.net/holidays/

Leave of Absence in Term Time
Head teachers are expected to restrict leave of absence in term-time to the specific circumstances in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. There is discretion to consider exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts, circumstances and background behind the request. Permission must be requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with completing the form

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least one month before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office, or school website (under Parents → School forms). The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application is not made for leave, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

The DfE have stated that generally they do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

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

- Call the student's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may contact, social care or the police as they deem appropriate
- 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 student 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 education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the student's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the student 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 may issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention, as appropriate

On the first day of absence

If a pupil is to be absent for any reason, parents or carers are expected to contact the School on 0191 386 5975 or bluecoat@durhamlearning.net providing a reason for the absence. If a pupil is absent from school and there is no contact from parents/carers then school will contact home to find out why the pupil not in school.

Appointments should be made outside of school time where possible. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. Attending school before an appointment is advised. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they should do.

Periods of extended absence

Parents are expected to contact school for each day of absence or at least 48 hours after first absence and every day after this.

No reason for absence provided

If there is no contact from home, school will try to contact all other emergency contacts on file. If unsuccessful, school may carry out a home visit to check on the welfare of the child.

If the school do not receive a reason for any absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised. Regular absence and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Where 10 or more unauthorised absences are recorded in any 10 rolling school week period the school must consider whether a penalty notice may be appropriate for irregular attendance and, if so ,the matter will be referred to the local authority.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We want to support all our pupils to ensure they can access their education and will take a support first approach. This will sometimes require communications and conversations to better understand the circumstances which may lead to absence.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

We are committed to promoting and incentivising good attendance.

- We submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- We build strong relationships and work jointly with families;
- We give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters, website, letters home;
- We complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absences
- We celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance.

Attendance data

At Durham Blue Coat CE Aided Junior School we rigorously analyse attendance data on a 3 weekly basis to ensure that individual families are identified early and support can be offered. Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data helps school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual students or cohorts who need it most

Attendance data is used to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level).

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

We will regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils and cohorts that require support with their attendance. This will be at a whole school, year group, form/class and individual pupil level. We will look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.

We will also consider pupil cohorts such as those who have free school meals; special educational needs or disabilities; pupil premium; children with a social worker; children in are etc to identify where additional support may be required.

We will use the information to inform what we do to support and aid discussions between staff, pupils and families.

We will monitor the data to understand the impact of what we do.

We will communicate information to parents, staff and other professionals such as early help, TAF and social care services when necessary.

Absence concerns

Parents may identify concerns about school attendance early if there is a change in their child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns should be shared with school so that everyone can work together to ensure that school attendance does not decline. The earlier concerns are identified and shared, the quicker they may be resolved.

Persistent absence

Pupils who miss 10% or more of their sessions at school are persistently absent. Letters will be sent home and parents invited into school for a meeting to put an attendance support plan in place when attendance is becoming a concern so that parents are kept updated.

Severe absence

Pupils who miss 50% or more of their sessions at school are severely absent. School will work with pupils, parents and partner services and agencies to provide additional support through a more formal, planned approach in conjunction with the Local Authority.

National framework for penalty notices and other legal intervention

To improve consistency of practice across the country there is a national framework for penalty notices.

At the point where there are 10 unauthorised absence sessions recorded in any 10 rolling school week period, schools must consider if:

- further support is appropriate.
- support is appropriate but is not being engaged with.
- support is appropriate but is not improving attendance.
- support is not needed, such as in cases of term-time leave of absence.

If support is appropriate, it should continue.

If support is appropriate but is not improving attendance or is not being engaged with, then a referral for consideration of legal intervention should be made to the local authority. This can include, but is not limited to, a Notice to Improve, an application for an Education Supervision Order, Fixed Penalty Notice or Offence Investigation Interview (PACE caution).

If support is not appropriate, such as where a holiday in term-time has taken place, a referral for a penalty notice will be made. (DCC - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct)

Penalty notices offer the opportunity to deal with an irregular attendance offence without the need to go to court. Penalty notices are issued at a rate of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

There is an escalation policy which means that if a second notice is issued within a three-year period, the second notice will only be payable at the rate of £160. Further offences will not be eligible for the offer of a penalty notice and parents may be prosecuted in court. (DCC - Penalty Notice Leaflet)

If penalty notices are not paid, then a prosecution for the original irregular attendance offence will take place.

If convicted at court under section 444 of the Education Act for failing to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil at school, a parent may be fined up to £1000 for each offence. If there is evidence that a parent knowingly failed to secure the attendance and there is no reasonable justification for this, they can be fined up to £2500 and/or face up to 3 months in prison, be subject to probation supervision or have a curfew imposed as maximum sentences.

This policy is supported by our policies on:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

APPENDIX A

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high aspirations of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include and early help or whole school family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance thorough statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

APPENDIX B – Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school

M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Student is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Student is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school

Y1	Transport not available	Student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Student is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Student's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given

		would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	Student has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays