ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy was approved by Governors on 1st October 2026 and will be reviewed annually.

1 Introduction and Background

Improving attendance is everyone's business. Good attendance begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn. As our Christian vision states: '*Our school family promotes values, models positive interactions and delivers unfaltering care to instil healthy well-being, confidence, independence and ultimately a sense of belonging'.* We strive for all children to want to be at school and to feel safe, loved and valued and attendance is the key component in this.

Navenby CE Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school; and
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school**.**

For your children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a **legal parental responsibility** and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

2. Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. The school's attendance champion for promoting regular attendance in 2026-2027 is Mr Elliott. CPD is provided to all staff through the County's Attendance briefings.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters.
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance within the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target for attendance (95% in a given 6-week period).
- Celebrate excellent attendance on a termly basis and reward excellent or improving attendance through certificates, stickers and stationery.

3. Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Absences are only allowed for specific reasons. These include where your child:

- Is ill;
- Has an **unavoidable** medical or dental appointment
- Is taking part in a religious event;
- Has an **exceptional** family circumstance, for example, a wedding or funeral.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. If a child's absence causes concern, the school will endeavour to support families through formal meetings or Early Help intervention to discuss the issues. If unauthorised absence exceeds 10 sessions in any 10 -week period, then parents **may** be issued with a FPN (fixed penalty notice) warning letter from the school in a bid to improve attendance. If this is not successful, this type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily (eg sibling illness or birthdays)
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained (proof can be requested by the school)
- children who arrive at school too late to be marked present

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with, and support, that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as a School Nurse, an Educational Welfare Officer [EWO] or an Early Help Worker.

4. Terminology for types of absence

The County has a strategy called 'School Attendance Strategy: Attend to Achieve' in which they are banding children into categories based on their attendance. These are:

Boundary Description	
95-100%	As expected
91-94%	At risk of persistent absence
80-90%	Persistent absence
51-79%	At risk of severe absence
<=50%	Severe absence

Ideally, children should attend every school day therefore 100% is the expected level; however, 95% is considered as good attendance.

4.1 Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully with termly correspondence from the Headteacher. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

All PA pupils and their parents are offered additional support through the School. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities around raising attendance to improve attendance. From our vision: *Children are provided with support and security coupled with challenge and aspiration so **everyone can flourish** and achieve in God's name.*

4.2 Anxiety

Some children may experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.

The school will consider adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of pupils who are struggling to attend school, as well as making formal reasonable adjustments under section 20 of the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil has a disability. Any adjustments should be agreed by, and regularly reviewed with the pupil and

their parents. It is also acceptable to consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxious feelings about school attendance.

4.3 External Agency Support
Attendance is everyone's business so in some cases school may support a pupil with the assistance of a range of other agencies, such as Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS) and the Working Together Team (WTT).

4.4 Part-time Timetable
A part-time timetable is something the school will consider if this improves attitude towards attendance. We will always have the agreement of the parent the pupil normally lives with. We will have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parents to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary. There will be a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time at school. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part-time timetable for a prolonged period.

4.5 Safeguarding
If all avenues of support have been facilitated and the appropriate educational support or placements have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. We and the local authority will be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment. Further information is available in the statutory guidance on Keeping Children Safe in Education (Sept 2026).

5. Absence Procedures

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow these procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.00am. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call
- Call into school and report to the office staff.
- Call the school on each day that the absence continues
- If they have diarrhoea and vomiting, keep the child off school for a minimum of 48 hours from the last bout of sickness, including the illness day (NHS guidance).

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the school's attendance champion or a member of the senior leadership team;

6. The Education Welfare Officer [EWO]

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the EWO from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice [FPN] or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

7. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend

time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons; it can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect your children to be on the school site by this time.
- Electronic registers are marked by **9.05am** and your child will receive a late mark if they arrive at any time after this regardless of reason. The child must be brought to the main office for this to be recorded in the register. The late mark will show that the child is in school but did not arrive on time. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the School's Attendance Champion to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. If the problem persists this may mean that you could face the possibility of a FPN.
- We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to your children and celebrating good class punctuality.

Lateness is recorded in minutes on our Arbor system.

8. Holidays in Term Time

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and so **all holiday requests will be unauthorised (as per DfE guidance)**. Applications for leave for exceptional circumstances must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school a maximum of 5 days in any academic year may be authorised. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. We urge parents not to apply for more than **one** period of absence in the school year, up to a maximum of 4 days.

We strongly recommend that parents gain consent from the school for any holiday in term time before making a booking.

Leave will not be granted automatically but will take into account:

- The age of the child
- The child's attainment and ability to catch up on lost work
- The child's attendance record
- The time of year in which it is proposed
- The nature of the leave requested
- The views of the class teacher

We will not agree leave during term time under the following circumstances:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (e.g. SATS).
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below the school's target of **95%** for any individual or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Exceptional circumstances in which absence may be authorised are:

- Attendance at weddings and funerals
- Moving house
- Attending counselling
- Graduations
- Religious observance

This is not an exhaustive list and each request will be considered on individual merit.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a FPN. The **minimum** level of attendance for any child at Navenby CE Primary School is 95% attendance. We will keep parents updated regularly on their child's attendance progress by means of a termly letter. Our target is to achieve better than this, however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling. Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Unauthorised absence is tracked and any unauthorised absence exceeding 10 sessions within a 10 week period will lead to a FPN being initiated to parents/carers with parental responsibility.

9. School Closure

The Headteacher will make every effort to ensure that the school remains open. However, in some circumstances the school may have to close. The Headteacher must always consider the health, safety and welfare of every person who uses the school site. If at any point to use the school building would be detrimental to a person's health, safety or welfare, then the Headteacher must close part or all of the school.

If a decision is made to close the school, the Headteacher will endeavour to inform parents with the details or any arrangements that have been put in place.

Absences due to adverse weather will be treated on an individual basis. In the event that severe weather is forecast or is developing, the Headteacher will consider either closing the school in advance of the school day, closing the school early, or opening the school later than usual. Any decision will be communicated to parents as quickly as possible and via the Arbor app.

10. Managing Staff Absence

It is vitally important that staff absences are managed effectively in school so that they do not impact on the pupils' learning. All staff will adhere to the following guidelines:

- Staff will contact the Headteacher and Bursar informing them of their absence; this should be done the day before so that effective arrangements can be made to cover roles and responsibilities in school.
- TAs should also contact their teachers (as well as a member of the SLT) by phone or email to inform them of their absence and MDSs should contact their line manager.
- Staff will inform the relevant people every day of their absence. If this exceeds 5 continuous working days then a doctor's note will be required.
- Where possible, and in discussion with the teacher and/or line manager, missed time should be repaid
- The Headteacher can authorise any 'one off' family items, such as children's sports days, on the understanding that the time missed is **paid back** in full, without fail, at a mutually convenient time with their teacher.
- There is an expectation that all staff are here for **95%** of the time thus showing that they have had a positive impact over time during the school year. All absences, for whatever reason, will be discussed during performance management interim and final reviews. This will be taken into account for anyone wanting additional hours/roles in school when they arise.
- Where staff have dependents relying on them for care if they are ill, the first three days of absence will be paid. Any additional time required after this within any given academic year will be unpaid.
- The school will follow the County's 'Absence Management Policy and Procedure' should it be necessary; instances when this could occur are staff absences which start to trigger either short or long term absence on a regular basis.

11. INSET Days

- All staff will attend the training days throughout the year. Where these hours exceed the hours worked by teaching assistants on a weekly basis, they will be able to claim for additional pay. Any absence from

INSET will be noted on the employee's record and discussed with them at performance management meetings.

12. Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend and staff have a duty to ensure that they are here to teach. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils in the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Policy Approved: Full Governors meeting 1st October 2026

Signed:

Chair of Governors…….. Mr J Kirby

Headteacher …….. Mr C Elliott