

An amazing place to learn!

from nursery to Year 6!

'When I visited Captain Shaw's, it just lifted me off my feet and nourished my heart. The students, young as they are, are sharp, inquisitive, familiar with current issues, full of optimism and keen to engage and make a difference. Thanks for a truly visionary, encouraging and informative visit.'

Pushpanath Krishnamurthy
International campaigner for Fairtrade and Climate Justice

'Oh my goodness! I am still buzzing from the amazing day we had with you and your wonderful school! I love the way you have designed your curriculum so that every lesson has a purpose and is part of an immersive experience, rather than just learning things in isolation.'

Gaye Holmes - Senior Presenter, Imoves



'The conduct of pupils at this school is **exemplary**. They demonstrate **warmth** and **kindness** towards each other. Pupils enjoy **respectful relationships** with the adults at school who care deeply for them.'

'Pupils respond well to the **high aspirations** that the school has of their achievement.'

'Pupils demonstrate a **high level of motivation** towards their learning. They **work exceptionally well together**. They are **well prepared** for each stage of their education.'

Ofsted 2023



Captain Shaw's C of E Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

2026-27

Our approach

High expectations, high support. We want children to want to come to school. When attendance becomes difficult, our first response is to listen, understand the barriers and work with children and families to remove them. Formal or legal intervention is used only where required and appropriate.

School	Captain Shaw's C of E Primary School
Senior Attendance Champion	Mr Terentius Jackson, Headteacher
Day-to-day attendance contact	Mrs Debbie Tyson, Office Manager – 01229 718279 – admin@capt-shaws.cumbria.sch.uk
Approved by	Headteacher under delegated authority, pending Governing Board ratification
Approval date	September 2026
Governing Board ratification	Autumn term 2026
Review date	September 2027, or earlier if statutory guidance changes



Serving the Common Good:

Seek what is best for everyone, beginning with the last, the least, the lost, the most vulnerable and the most forgotten.

1. Purpose and principles

At Captain Shaw's, good attendance begins with school being somewhere children feel safe, known, included and keen to learn. Regular attendance supports learning, friendships, wellbeing, belonging and children's wider development. We therefore have high expectations for attendance and punctuality for every pupil.

We also recognise that barriers to attendance can be complex and are often specific to an individual child or family. Some children will need additional support, adaptations or reasonable adjustments in order to attend successfully. Our approach is therefore based on high expectations alongside early, respectful and proportionate support.

Our attendance philosophy

Expect → notice early → listen and understand → remove barriers and support → review → formalise support where needed → use legal intervention only where appropriate.

This policy aims to:

- protect every pupil's right to a full-time education and promote regular, punctual attendance;
- make attendance everyone's responsibility and connect it with safeguarding, inclusion, SEND, wellbeing, curriculum and pastoral support;
- identify emerging patterns of absence or lateness early;
- work in partnership with pupils and families to understand and remove barriers to attendance;
- maintain high aspirations while adapting support to individual need;
- meet the school's legal duties for registration, attendance monitoring, information sharing and intervention; and
- ensure formal and legal measures are used fairly, consistently and only when appropriate.

2. Statutory framework

This policy has been reviewed against the Department for Education's statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance (July 2026). The school and governing board must have regard to that guidance.

It should be read alongside, in particular:

- the Education Act 1996;
- the Education Act 2002;
- the Education and Inspections Act 2006;
- the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, including the 2024 national framework changes;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions;
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs;
- Children missing education statutory guidance; and
- the Equality Act 2010.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Governing Board

The Governing Board will:

- recognise attendance as a whole-school safeguarding, inclusion and educational priority;
- set high expectations while ensuring support is adapted to individual pupils' needs;
- ensure leaders fulfil statutory duties and this policy is implemented effectively;
- review attendance information and challenge trends, including patterns affecting particular pupils or groups;
- ensure the school works effectively with Cumberland Council and other partners;
- ensure staff receive appropriate attendance training; and
- hold the Headteacher to account for attendance strategy, systems and outcomes.

3.2 Senior Attendance Champion / Headteacher

The Senior Attendance Champion is Mr Terentius Jackson, Headteacher. He is responsible for:

- setting the school's vision for maintaining and improving attendance;
- ensuring effective day-to-day attendance systems are in place and followed;
- monitoring and analysing attendance, absence and punctuality data and reporting to governors;
- identifying pupils or groups requiring additional support and evaluating the impact of support;
- leading more detailed attendance conversations with pupils and families where needed;
- co-ordinating support, reintegration plans and reasonable adjustments;
- liaising with Cumberland Council's School Attendance Support Team and other agencies;
- ensuring appropriate information is shared with the local authority, including statutory notifications;
- working with the SENCO and parents where SEND, health or disability creates barriers to attendance; and
- considering when formal support or legal intervention is necessary and proportionate.

3.3 Office Manager

- receive and record absence information from families;
- follow up unexplained absence promptly on the first day;
- maintain accurate contact details and attendance records;
- alert the Headteacher/DSL promptly where absence raises a safeguarding concern; and
- support routine communication with families about attendance and punctuality.

3.4 Class teachers and all staff

- complete registers accurately and promptly at the required times;
- promote the benefits of regular attendance and punctuality without shaming or blaming pupils;
- notice changes in attendance, engagement or presentation that may indicate a barrier or safeguarding concern;
- share concerns promptly with the Headteacher/DSL; and
- support agreed adaptations, reintegration and attendance plans.

3.5 Parents and carers

Parents and carers are expected to:

- ensure their child attends every day the school is open, on time, unless there is an allowable reason for absence;
- telephone the school on 01229 718279 before 8.45am, or as soon as practically possible, on the first and each subsequent day of unexpected absence;
- give the reason for absence and, where possible, the expected return date;
- provide more than one emergency contact number and keep contact information up to date;
- arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours where possible and minimise time out of school when this is not possible;
- request any leave of absence in advance and provide relevant information; and
- talk to school early if attendance or punctuality is becoming difficult so that support can be considered.

3.6 Pupils

Pupils are expected to attend regularly and on time. They will be encouraged to tell a trusted adult if something is making attendance difficult.

4. The school day, registration and punctuality

The school keeps an electronic admission register and attendance register. The attendance register is taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session, at the same time for all registered pupils in that session. National attendance and absence codes are used.

The school day and current session times are published on the school website. Registers close after the published start of the session. A pupil arriving after registration begins but before the register closes is recorded as late (L). A pupil arriving after the register has closed, without another authorised reason, is recorded using the appropriate unauthorised late code (U).

Occasional lateness can happen. Where lateness becomes a pattern, the school will speak with the family to understand what is getting in the way and agree practical steps to improve punctuality.

5. Day-to-day absence procedures

5.1 Unexpected absence

Parents should telephone the school office before 8.45am, or as soon as practically possible, on each day of unexpected absence. If the school has not received an explanation, the Office Manager will make first-day contact. If contact cannot be made, or the circumstances raise concern, the matter will be escalated to the Headteacher/DSL and safeguarding procedures followed as appropriate.

5.2 Illness

In most cases, a parent's notification that their child is too ill to attend will be accepted. The school will not routinely require medical evidence. Reasonable evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of illness, or where prolonged or repeated illness means further information would help the school understand the child's needs, make reasonable adjustments or record absence accurately.

Where illness is long-term or recurring, the school will work with the family and relevant professionals to identify barriers and plan appropriate support. Where there are reasonable grounds to believe a pupil will miss 15 consecutive school days, or 15 days cumulatively in a school year, because of illness, the school will notify the local authority as required.

5.3 Medical and dental appointments

Routine appointments should be made outside school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, parents should notify the school in advance and the pupil should miss the minimum amount of school necessary. The appropriate national attendance code will be used.

6. Leave of absence

A leave of absence can only be granted in the circumstances permitted by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. For maintained schools, leave for exceptional circumstances must be requested in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives.

The Headteacher will consider each request individually, taking account of the specific facts, circumstances and context. The school will not operate a blanket policy that automatically grants or refuses leave where the regulations require individual consideration. A family holiday would not normally constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Other categories of authorised or unavoidable absence, including religious observance, regulated performance, medical appointments, illness, exclusion without alternative provision, and circumstances where attendance is prevented by an unavoidable cause, will be recorded using the relevant national code.

7. Supporting attendance: high expectations and high support

When attendance begins to cause concern, our first task is to understand why. Absence can be a symptom of wider difficulties within or beyond school. We will work with the pupil and family, respectfully and without assumption, to identify barriers and agree what may help.

Depending on need, support may include:

- a conversation with the pupil and family and a clear shared plan;
- adjustments to routines, arrival, lunchtime, transitions, uniform or access to a trusted adult;
- pastoral, SEND or wellbeing support;
- reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010 where a pupil is disabled;
- work with health, social care, transport, early help or other services;
- support through the pupil's EHC plan, including discussion with the local authority where attendance is falling because of needs identified in the plan;
- a time-limited reintegration plan following significant absence; and
- more formal attendance support with Cumberland Council where voluntary support has not been sufficient.

Important

Support is not a lowering of expectations. The ambition remains regular attendance and access to full-time education; the route and support needed to achieve this may be different for different children.

8. Pupils with SEND, health needs and other vulnerabilities

The school will be particularly mindful of pupils who find attendance harder because of SEND, disability, physical or mental ill health, caring responsibilities, social care involvement or other vulnerabilities. Staff are not expected to diagnose health conditions, but will work with families and relevant professionals to understand needs and remove barriers.

The school will, where relevant:

- consider and review reasonable adjustments and in-school support;
- ensure provision in an EHC plan is accessible and inform the local authority where attendance falls or barriers relate to the pupil's needs;
- involve the pupil in planning and review, in a way appropriate to age and communication needs;
- consider safeguarding implications of absence and follow Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- work with the Virtual School Head and social worker where required for children with a social worker;
- recognise and consider the needs of young carers; and
- avoid using attendance processes in a way that discriminates against a pupil because of disability or another protected characteristic.

9. Part-time timetables and remote education

Every pupil of compulsory school age is entitled to a full-time education. A part-time timetable will therefore only be used in very exceptional circumstances where it is in the pupil's best interests and is needed temporarily to meet individual needs. It will not be used to manage behaviour.

Any temporary part-time timetable will:

- be agreed with the parent with whom the pupil normally lives;
- form part of a wider support, health care or reintegration plan;
- have a clear ambition, agreed attendance times, regular review dates and a proposed end date;
- remain in place for the shortest time necessary;
- involve the social worker where the pupil has one; and
- be discussed with the local authority where the pupil has an EHC plan.

Remote education is not a routine substitute for attendance. In line with DfE guidance, it will only be considered as a last resort where attendance is not possible but the pupil is able to continue learning, and normally as part of a plan to support reintegration.

10. Monitoring and using attendance data

The school monitors attendance, absence and punctuality regularly at whole-school and individual-pupil level. In a small school, percentages for very small groups can fluctuate considerably, so numerical analysis is combined with close knowledge of individual pupils and emerging patterns.

The school will:

- review attendance and absence data at least half-termly and more frequently where concern arises;
- benchmark appropriately against national and local information while interpreting small-cohort data carefully;
- identify pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence and act early;
- consider patterns relating to SEND, disadvantage, social care, young carers and other relevant cohorts without making assumptions about individuals;
- use attendance information alongside safeguarding, pastoral and SEND information;
- evaluate whether support is improving access and attendance; and
- report attendance information and significant patterns to the Governing Board.

11. Persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of possible school sessions. Severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more. The school will not wait for a pupil to reach these thresholds before offering support where an emerging pattern is evident.

Where absence is persistent, severe or at risk of becoming so, the school will:

- consider safeguarding first;
- meet with the pupil and family to listen and understand barriers;
- agree and review a plan with clear actions and responsibilities;
- provide or facilitate wider support where appropriate;
- work with Cumberland Council's School Attendance Support Team and other partners;
- formalise support where voluntary arrangements have not been sufficient; and
- consider legal intervention only in accordance with the statutory framework and the individual circumstances.

12. Formal support and legal intervention

The school's approach is support first, but parents have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance where their child is registered at school. Where support is not appropriate, has not been successful, or has not been engaged with, the school and local authority may need to use formal or legal measures.

Depending on the circumstances, these may include:

- formal attendance support or an attendance contract;
- a Notice to Improve;
- a penalty notice;
- an Education Supervision Order;
- attendance prosecution; or
- a parenting order.

12.1 National Framework for Penalty Notices

All state-funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate when a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. Reaching the threshold does not mean a penalty notice will automatically be issued: each case must be considered individually.

Where support is appropriate, a penalty notice should normally only be considered after support has been provided and has not worked or has not been engaged with. For some unauthorised absence, such as an unauthorised holiday, support may not be appropriate before consideration of a penalty notice.

Under the national framework, a first attendance-related penalty notice is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second notice to the same parent for the same pupil within three years is £160 with no reduced rate. A third attendance-related penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within three years of the first; other legal intervention must be considered instead.

12.2 Notices to Improve

Where the national threshold has been met, support is appropriate, and support has not been successful or engaged with, a Notice to Improve may be used as a final opportunity to engage with support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is considered. It will set out the attendance concern, support offered, expected improvement, the improvement period and the possible consequences if sufficient improvement is not made.

The school will follow the current Cumberland Council code of conduct and processes when requesting or supporting formal legal intervention.

13. Promoting attendance

We do not rely on punitive messages or rewards alone to secure attendance. Our strongest attendance strategy is to provide a calm, safe, respectful and engaging school where children are known well, relationships are strong, learning is purposeful and pupils feel that they belong.

We promote attendance by:

- making the benefits of being in school clear to pupils and families;
- providing an ambitious, inclusive curriculum and positive relationships;
- recognising effort, participation and belonging without stigmatising pupils whose attendance is affected by circumstances beyond their control;
- communicating expectations clearly and consistently;
- responding early when patterns change; and
- working in partnership with families rather than waiting for difficulties to escalate.

14. Safeguarding and children missing education

Absence can be an important safeguarding indicator. Unexplained, repeated or prolonged absence will be considered in the context of the school's safeguarding duties. The school will make required notifications to Cumberland Council and follow children missing education procedures where applicable. A pupil's name will only be removed from the admission register where a lawful ground under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies.

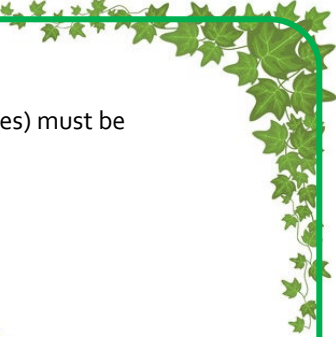
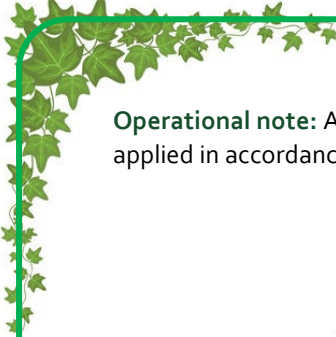
15. Policy review, communication and links

This policy will be published on the school website, shared with families when pupils join the school, and drawn to parents' attention at the start of each school year and when significant changes are made. It will be reviewed at least annually and sooner where legislation, statutory guidance or the school's attendance context changes. The school will seek pupil and parent views where this would improve policy or practice.

Appendix 1: Attendance codes – operational summary

The school uses the national attendance and absence codes set out in the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and the current DfE statutory guidance. The summary below is for operational reference; the regulations and current DfE guidance take precedence if codes are amended.

Code	Summary
/	Present – morning session
\	Present – afternoon session
L	Late before the register closes
U	Arrived after the register closed, where no other authorised reason applies
I	Unable to attend because of sickness
M	Leave of absence for a medical or dental appointment
C	Leave of absence for other circumstances
C1	Leave for regulated performance/employment abroad
C2	Leave for a compulsory-school-age pupil on an agreed temporary part-time timetable
J1	Leave for an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
G	Unauthorised holiday
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Unauthorised absence in other circumstances
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Educational visit or trip
P	Approved sporting activity
W	Work experience
B	Other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered – attending another school



Operational note: Administrative and exceptional-circumstance codes (including Y and Q sub-codes) must be applied in accordance with the current DfE guidance and regulations.