Area:	Mackenzie Thorpe Centre	north east autism society	
Title:	Attendance Policy		
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1. Policy Statement

Mackenzie Thorpe centre is committed to providing a full, effective and efficient education to all learners that we support (The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7) (Keeping children safe in education,1st September 2025 and Children missing in education, 8th September 2025) and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will provide an environment where all learners feel valued and welcome.

For learners to reach their full educational achievement a high level of attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children and young people. Every opportunity will be used to convey to learners and their parents or families the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

This policy contains within it the procedures that Mackenzie Thorpe centre will use to meet its attendance targets.

2. Principal / whole school responsibilities

2.1 The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Senior Management Team and Trustees
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual learners
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- The Principal is Corrina McEwan and can be contacted via email address Corrina.McEwan@ne-as.org.uk

2.2 Vice-Principals are responsible for attendance

Their responsibilities include:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The Vice-Principals responsible for attendances are Kirstie Howe and Borris Ebbing and can be contacted via
- Email address Kirstie.Howe@ne.as.org.uk and Borris.Ebbing@ne-as.org.uk

2.3 The Safeguarding and welfare officer

The safeguarding officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated Vice-Principal responsible for attendance and the Principal
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence.
- The Safeguarding and family liaison officer is Emma Box and can be contacted via email address Emma.box@ne-as.org.uk

2. 4 Class teachers

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.30am and 1.30pm daily.

2.5 School Administration staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Vice-Principals or Safeguarding officer to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

2.6 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence by 9 am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3. Attendance Procedures

Any learner who is absent from School at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of the building]. Only the Principal or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

3.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all learners onto this register.
We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every learner is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment
See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.
We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a learner is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a learner is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Learners must arrive at school by 9am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 9.10am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm. We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

3.2 Unplanned absence

The learner's parent/ carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff on main reception number. If parents/ carer cannot get through, then this needs to be communicated to admin staff via the school admin email address …….

- We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the learner's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or another appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the learner's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the learner should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. The learner's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

3.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A learner who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed it will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed it will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- The school will use the [U] code for arrivals 30 minutes after the start of the session
- The safeguarding officer will identify learners who are persistently late and contact parents/ carers to offer support and put support plans in place. We are aware that transport can be issue because of how learners arrive and this is taken into account.

3.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts by 12pm, the school will ask the safeguarding officer and vice-principal to carry out a welfare check to the registered address. If no contact can be made then following may be notified - social services, local authority, police.
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

3.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly written reports. If attendance is a concern then contact via phone call, email and where applicable home visits will be implemented sooner than termly reporting.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Approval for term-time absence

The principal will only grant a leave of absence to a learner during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the learner is authorised to be absent.

- The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.
- Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via school admin office or the school website.

The principal may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence. Valid reasons for **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 learner's parents belong.

4.2 Term time absence for holidays

Any request for leave of absence due to holidays in term time will not be authorised. The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure and recreational circumstances, and therefore there is no entitlement in law to time off in term time. Young people who are absent from school fall behind in their learning. They miss out on school events. Many find it difficult to catch up. In addition, school staff have to divert their attention away from other young people to support those who have fallen behind due to a holiday-related absence. Aycliffe school understands that Autistic learners may find busy holiday periods more stressful and consideration will be given but will not be authorised in relation to school reporting.

4.3 Legal sanctions

The Local Authority may issue Notices to Improve and penalty notices or refer to court for prosecution in line with the National Framework where absences were unauthorised and support has been provided but not worked or engaged with or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g., an unauthorised holiday in term time).
A penalty notice is an out-of-court settlement intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence. This can be a combination of any type of unauthorised absence, all taken within any 10-school-week period that may span different terms or school years (e.g., 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).
From Autumn Term 2024, the Local Authority will only issue 2 penalty notices to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period and any second notice within that period is charged at a higher rate:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution.

5. Identified learners with specific medical, therapy or Special Educational needs, who have a high level of absence,will be supported by the following strategies:

- Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence
- Recording absence as authorised
- Working with the Local Authority to record such absences as authorised to reflect attendance as goodas can be expected for these learners.
- Provide home visits where appropriate.
- Recognise that some learners are not ‘available for learning’ and work with the LA and other agencies to allocate appropriate provision which may not be within our school.

6. Attendance monitoring

Mackenzie Thorpe centre has robust monitoring procedures which can be tailored for individual needs.

6.1 Monitoring attendance

Mackenzie Thorpe centre will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual learner level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Learner-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority levels through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

- The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the Trustees.

6.2 Analysing attendance

Mackenzie Thorpe centre will:

- Analyses attendance and absence data regularly to identify learners or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these learners and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

Mackenzie Thorpe centre will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with learners (where applicable) and families.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies.

6.4 Reducing persistence and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a learner misses 50% or more of school.

Mackenzie Thorpe centre will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of learners whom the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- The school procedures for targeting unathorised absences include letters home, telephone calls, welfare visits, attendance support plans, parent/ carer meetings, contact with the local authority.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by Corrina McEwan . At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Executive board.

8. Support

Mackenzie Thorpe centre will:

- Build relationships with learners and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School-based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

9. A Welcome Back

It is important that on the return from an absence that all learners are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the learner is helped to adjust to the daily routine; catch up on missed work and be brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other learners.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

10. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility 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 (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024
- Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

- Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance
- Support for pupils where mental health issues are affecting attendance (Effective practice examples)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following registration is effective from the 19th of August 2024 - 'Working Together To Improve School Attendance 2024'

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.
C1	Leave of absence	The pupil should be participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence – Part-time timetable	For compulsory school-age pupils who are on an agreed part-time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	The pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made.
I	Illness	The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J1	Leave of absence	The pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ admission to another educational institution.
M	Medical/dental appointment	The 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	Parents travelling for occupational purposes.	The pupil is a mobile child due to the parent travelling from place to place for business/trade.
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend due to a lack of access arrangements made by the local authority
Y1	Unable to attend due to lack of transport	Where the school or local authority normally provides transport which is not available; and the school is beyond reasonable walking distance.

Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	The pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed	Where the whole school was planned to be open but remained closed unexpectedly
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	If the pupil is in police detention or on remand to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Pupil travel to or attendance at the school would be contrary to restrictions set by the secretary of state for health
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	The 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	The school is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	The pupil arrived late and after 30 minutes from the start of the session

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
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