



Nicol Mere Primary School

Nicol Mere Primary School Attendance Policy

Last Reviewed September 2026

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996, Equality Act 2010,
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024,
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance,
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (July 2026).

Contact Details

The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is:

Name: Mrs Sedman (Attendance Lead) Contact Details: l.sedman@nicolmere.wigan.sch.uk

We are committed to ensuring that systems and processes are in place regarding promoting attendance and would encourage parents to make contact with school as soon as possible if they have any concerns about their child.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body has overall responsibility for:

- The implementation of the Attendance Policy and procedures of Nicol Mere Primary School.
- Ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedure.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' (2018) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education procedure in place.
- The governing body will have regard to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026 and subsequent updates. Attendance is recognised as a safeguarding matter. Persistent absence, severe absence and unexplained absence may indicate safeguarding concerns and will be considered alongside wider safeguarding information.

The Head Teacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and procedures of the school and distributing these to parents.

Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for:

- Following the Attendance Policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.

- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school.

Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.

Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:

- "Absence" as:
Arrival at school after the register has closed. Not attending school for any reason.
- An "authorised absence" as:
 - An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
 - Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
 - Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
 - An absence due to a family emergency.
- An "unauthorised absence" as:
 - Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
 - Absences which have never been properly explained.
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
- "Persistent absenteeism" as:
Attendance of 90% and below.
- "Severe Absence" as:
A child that has an attendance of 50% and below.

Training of staff

- The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training. Teachers are given a list of vulnerable children to monitor.
- All staff are trained with the procedures.
- Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.
- Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Absence procedures

- Attendance is monitored on a daily basis. Every morning, a list of absent children is recorded and shared with the headteacher/attendance lead. This information is checked and any patterns of absence is identified. Any children who are at risk or vulnerable are tracked and monitored.
- Parents are required to telephone the school office before 10:15am on the first day of their child's absence and each following day of absence unless it has been agreed by the school that this is not necessary if the absence is or likely to be long term. This must not be an email or dojo message.
- A phone call home will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school. If no response, all numbers on the information sheet will be called following that a visit will be made home.
- If a reason has not been provided, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- At the end of every half term, information about a child's attendance will be provided for parents.
- Where attendance is a cause for concern, a letter offering support will be sent to parents. If attendance is below 90% parents will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss their child's attendance. Parents will be offered support and strategies put in place.
- Contact with sibling's schools will be made to discuss patterns of attendance.
- School will work alongside other agencies in supporting the families whose attendance falls into the category of 'persistent absence'.
- Pupil attendance information is submitted to the LA and the DfE termly.
- It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose, or sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of 38°C or above. Please read this link for further information Is my child too ill for school? - NHS (www.nhs.uk)

Medical Needs and Health Related Absence (evidenced from hospital)

Discussions with parents with children who have medical needs will take place to ensure support is put in place for the child.

- Additional lessons/ clubs will be offered to children to support learning missed.
- School will work with parents and any outside agencies to support the needs of the child.
- As a school we will adhere to the Local Authority policy [Education of pupils with medical needs \(wigan.gov.uk\)](http://www.wigan.gov.uk) This policy includes a graduated response, supporting inclusive practice across all settings to ensure children's continued links to their education provider when their health needs may impact their access to education.

Contact information

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.

Attendance register

The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational visit
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

Attending the school	
/\	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
99	Planned whole school closure

- When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e. g. induction days.
- All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.
- Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

Lateness

- Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- The doors open at 8.45 am.
- The school day starts at 8.50 am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.

- Registers are marked by 9.00 am, when the doors close. Pupils arriving after doors close must enter by the School Office and be signed in. A late mark will be recorded. Registers close at 9.30. If a child arrives school after this time, a U code will be recorded.
- After lunch, registers are marked at the beginning of the session.
- Punctuality will be reviewed every half term and where there is a concern, parents will be invited to a meeting to resolve the issues. If there is no improvement following this meeting, further action will be taken which may include referral to external agencies.

Term-time leave

- At Nicol Mere Primary School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- The Head Teacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time.
- If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the Head Teacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty fines.
- Parents who want to take their children out of school need to fill out a Pupil Absence Request Form. These are available from the school office or school website. Requests for leave of absence will be considered by the Headteacher and authorised only where exceptional circumstances apply.
- ***It is the policy of Wigan Local Authority that all absence for holidays during school time will be recorded as unauthorised absence unless there are extenuating circumstances.***

Penalty Notices

A penalty notice may be considered where there are 10 unauthorised sessions (5 school days) within a rolling 10-school-week period.

- First notice £80 if paid within 21 days or £160 within 28 days.
- Second notice within three years £160.
- A third offence within three years may result in prosecution or other legal intervention.

Early Identification and Intervention

Every pupil has a right to a full-time education and Nicol Mere sets high attendance expectations for all pupils. Nicol Mere will consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance.

For any child who is absent from school, it is essential to fully understand the reasons for this so that targeted, evidence-based interventions and support can be put into place. All staff have a part to play in promoting attendance. We recognise the importance of ensuring that key members of staff from across the school, including class teachers, attendance and SEND staff work in collaboration to consider and identify the holistic needs of the child and to overcome barriers to attendance. In accordance with the principles of early intervention, a graduated approach will be followed, utilising a range of school-based resources, evidence-based interventions and seeking advice and support from external services at an appropriate stage, where required.

Appropriate assessments will be important to help understand the underlying reasons that may be contributing to attendance difficulties. This may be an assessment that focuses on

the individual child's needs and will include the views of the child as well as parents/carers and identify strengths (what is working well) and needs (what is working less well).

Assessments undertaken may identify that a child is experiencing underlying emotional based needs that are contributing to non-attendance. As a school we will access appropriate guidance developed by Wigan Local Authority in respect of this: Emotionally Based School Attendance – best practice tool. This is a whole school framework with a graduated approach to support the early identification and intervention of children who may struggle to cope in school/attend school.

Information from assessments will inform a SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Targets) action plan with focussed targets developed in partnership with families, and other services as appropriate. For example, Start Well and Social Care may have a part to play in the delivery of support and intervention to promote engagement and attendance. SMART plans should be personalised to effectively meet a child's needs and improve attendance and wellbeing outcomes.

Regular reviews of support and attendance plans are essential to monitor the impact of interventions and to adjust these accordingly. If, despite targeted support and intervention, attendance and wellbeing concerns persist, we may seek further advice and support from external services including mental health services, specialist teaching and education services.

The school will work closely with social workers, the Virtual School, Early Help and other professionals to support attendance for children with a social worker, looked after children and previously looked after children. The school recognises that anxiety and mental health difficulties can affect attendance and will provide a graduated response.

Reduced Timetables

Any reduced timetable will only be used in exceptional circumstances, be time-limited, regularly reviewed, agreed with parents/carers and include a plan for reintegration to full-time education.

Missing children

Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the Head Teacher.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Head Teacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Head Teacher.
- The school building and grounds will be systematically searched.
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises.

- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified and a house visit will be made.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will record the incident on the school's nominated system, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- The Head Teacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- The Head Teacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

Children Missing Education

(Children Missing Education (CME) and Pupil Mobility Policy - Wigan Council)

The definition of Children Missing Education refers to all children of compulsory school age that are not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise. Children who fall under this category are:

- Children persistently absent from school (90% or less attendance)
- Children severely absent from school (50% or less attendance)
- Children that have been permanently excluded and have not secured suitable education within 6 days.
- Children who have particular social, emotional, and mental health needs, which means that they do not attend school full time (we would recommend this is opened as an early help)
- Children on a reduced timetable (these pupils must be referred to the local authority and a robust plan with regular reviews must be in place to support a return to full time education).
- Children with medical or mental health needs which prevent them accessing education full time. 3 Equality Act 2010 (legislation.gov.uk) 5
- Children with complex needs where identifying a suitable education has been delayed.
- Children who have been electively home educated where the provision is unsuitable resulting in CME and/or School Attendance Order
- Children who have been removed from a school roll without a known destination.
- Children that are new to the education area and require a school place. Specifically:
 - Children new to the country
 - Children that have not taken up a school place within 20 school days of it being offered
 - Children of compulsory school age who have not applied for a school place in reception.
 - Children new to area and not secured a school place within 20 school day.

- Children Looked After placed in or out of Borough with no suitable educational placement.
- Children who are returning from custody and a school place has not been found for them.
- Children from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller background and alternative provision has been made.

Children who fall under the category of Children Missing Education will be monitored and appropriate actions will take place according to the procedures put in place within this policy. As well as this, a termly meeting with the local authority attendance lead to discuss attendance of these children.

The school will continue to follow current Wigan Council Children Missing Education procedures and statutory guidance. Where local procedures are updated, the latest version will apply.

Religious observances

- The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days of absence required for religious festivals.
- Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

Appointments

- As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Where this is not possible, evidence of the appointment must be provided to the school office.
- If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent.
- Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

Young carers

- The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

Rewarding good attendance

- Following parental surveys with parents and a parent attendance group set up, it was decided a reward system would be set up to acknowledge and celebrate 100% attendance.
- At the end of each academic year, the school acknowledges 100% attendance and a certificate is presented during a celebration assembly. Each child who has achieved 100% attendance within an academic year are awarded with a prize.
- Those children who have 96% attendance or higher will receive a reward.
- Each week, the class with the best attendance will receive 'golden time' as a reward for excellent attendance.
- Children who have improved their attendance will be awarded with a certificate.

- The school will recognise significant improvement in attendance, punctuality and engagement with attendance support. Recognition systems will take account of genuine medical conditions and exceptional circumstances.

100% attendance	A prize will be given to each child Certificate in whole school assembly
96% above	Certificate Reward
90% - 95%	Monitor and reward improvements Phone call from class teacher Letter home
85% - 89%	Meeting with Attendance Lead/SLT Monitor and reward improvements Early help – set targets Consider legal advice
Below 55%	Meeting with Head teacher Monitor and reward improvements Legal advice taken

Monitoring and review

- The school monitors attendance and punctuality on a daily basis. Formal register reviews take place each half term.
- Parents will receive half termly updates of their child's attendance.
- Nicol Mere Primary School strives for 100% for all pupils. The whole school attendance target is 96%.
- This policy is reviewed every three years by the governing body; the next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2028.
- Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all members of staff and parents.

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