



# Attendance Policy

Policy reviewed, updated and ratified by the GB	Sep 21
Date of next review:	Sep 24

## **1. Aims of the policy**

- To increase overall attendance to 97% or above
- To raise the profile of the importance of high level attendance among students, parents and other staff
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities for the gathering and analysing of attendance data
- To outline a systematic approach and procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality and intervention strategies
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.
- To eradicate persistent lateness
- To develop understanding of the legal processes for persistent lateness and absence

## **2. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance [guidance](#) 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

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

## **3. Attendance Procedures**

### **3.1. Registration**

- Every member of staff at Northwood School has access to the SIMS system and must register students that they have responsibility for

- This is used for recording attendance for the morning session, the afternoon session (as recorded in period 5) and lesson registration
- The registers are taken by 8.35am if a student arrives after this they will be marked late
- The code L is used (and amount of lateness specified in minutes) for lateness during registration and the code U for lateness beyond registration
- The school register is closed at 08:50 and 13:50
- The U code is used nationally, and means that the student was absent for the session
- This may result in further action by the school and Education Welfare Service

### **3.2. Unplanned Absence**

- It is vital that a parent contacts the school by telephone (01923 836363) by 8:30am to provide a reason for their child's absence. We expect the parent to contact the school on each day of an unplanned absence
- If no one is available to take the call, the parent must leave a voicemail clearly stating the name of the child, form group and reason for absence. If the parent requires a call back from the attendance officer, they must clearly state this in their message
- Absence can only be authorised where there is good cause. If no adequate reason for absence is provided, attendance will be recorded as unauthorised
- The decision and authority to authorise an absence lays with the school in accordance with The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1996
- Parents cannot authorise absence. Where deemed necessary, the school reserves the right to request medical evidence to support absence due to illness
- If a student's attendance percentage is below the national average, and further absence without appropriate evidence will be unauthorised.

### **3.3. Medical and dental appointments**

- It is an expectation that medical and dental appointments are taken out of school time
- Missing lessons, even for medical and dental appointments, has a detrimental impact on student progress and achievement
- The school recognises that it is not always possible to schedule appointments out of school time. In the rare occasion that a student must attend a medical appointment during school time, parents must notify the school in advance and provide evidence of the appointment
- Patterns of medical and dental appointments during school sessions over a period of time will result in further follow up investigation and action
- Regardless of the reason, all medical appointments are recorded as an absence, and will impact upon the student's overall attendance percentage
- When signing out/in for/following an appointment the attendance office must "flood fill" the attendance register with attendance code "M."

### **3.4. Lateness**

- The school day starts at 8.30am
- Once the school's gates are closed, students who are late will need to report to reception to sign in, giving the reason for their lateness
- Registers are marked by 8.35am. Students will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time
- At 8.50am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence for that session. This may mean that the parent could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists
- Every time a child is late 3 times they will receive a 40-minute Head of Year sanction
- If the child has a persistent late record the parent will be asked to meet with the Head of Year to resolve the problem. Parents can approach the Head of Year and/or Attendance Officer at any time if they are having problems getting their child to school on time

### **3.5. Following up absence**

- It is a safeguarding priority for us to know the whereabouts of all students
- Any unexplained absences will result in the first instance in an automated text message to the parent once registers are closed. It is an expectation that the parent will text or call the school following this message to speak with the attendance officer regarding their child's absence
- If we have had no response by 11:30am then the parent will be contacted by telephone. A voice message will be left if we have been unable to speak to a parent or carer
- If a child is absent from school for 3 days and the parent has failed to contact the school with a reason, the AHT will contact the parents

### **3.6. Reporting to parents/carers**

- The school will report student attendance to parents and carers every half term

### **3.7 Persistent Absence**

- A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Regardless of whether or not the absence is authorised
- Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and the parent will be informed of this immediately
- PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment
- All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an Action Plan and the plan may include:
  - Allocation of additional support through a Mentor or an LSA
  - Participation in group activities around raising attendance

- All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Participation Team

## **4. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

### **4.1. Approval for term time absence**

- Parents must ask permission for their child to be absent during term time, and it is at the Headteacher's discretion to decide whether or not the absence will be authorised
- Under the 2013 Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) regulations, the Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances
- Any school time holiday leave will be unauthorised although the Headteacher may authorise leave during term time in exceptional circumstances only
- Parents will always be informed if the requested leave is authorised or unauthorised
- If term time leave is unauthorised, or no application is made, school may refer to the Participation Team upon the child's return to school

### **4.2. Legal sanctions**

There are two options:

1. A Penalty Notice
2. Prosecution Penalty Notice

#### **Penalty Notice**

- The School will fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days
- The payment must be made directly to the local authority. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:
  - A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
  - One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
  - Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice

#### **Prosecution**

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or 3 months' imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures for more information)

## **5. Attendance monitoring**

- Each day, once AM registers are closed, all absences need to be recorded and coded correctly, any N codes are followed up with a truancy call and updated. Any lack of response from these calls can be supported and followed up by the pastoral team
- Each day the attendance officer should form, track and update an absence list, to be shared with staff
- Each day a missing register report needs to be run and teachers need to be asked to complete this at the earliest opportunity
- Each week the pastoral support team runs a report for students under 95%, issues the appropriate letters home and works with the Heads of Year/ tutors to help to support these students to improve their attendance
- Each week the pastoral support team runs a report for students under 90%, issues the appropriate letters and updates the persistent absentee list. They work with the Heads of Year to meet with the students and their parents. They support the attendance officer to ensure that all attendance documentation is collected and recorded for these students and work with the local authority following further instruction/guidance
- On a fortnightly basis the AHT runs a whole school report on attendance looking for trends across year groups and other key groups of students. Interventions and support strategies are put in place along with the relevant members of staff with the student(s) and their family
- Each month the following reports are shared with the Local Authority in accordance with legislation; persistent absentees, exclusions, on/off roll, irregular attendance or of continuous absences of more than 10 days that are not covered by a medical certificate

## **6. Children at risk of missing in education**

- The school must inform the local authority (LA) of any student who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.
- This could be a safeguarding issue so leaders should ensure that regular follow up contact is made with the LA if the whereabouts of the student is not known or communicated to the school
- If a vulnerable child cannot be contacted on the first day of absence a home visit should be completed, a non-vulnerable by the third day of absence
- This should continue until the information has been secured. Leaders should follow the guidance issued by the Department for Education:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

## **7. Sixth Form attendance**

- The attendance policy and principles for the sixth form are the same as that of the lower school.
- The minimum expected standard for attendance is 97%
- Attendance will be reported half termly

- Contact will be made home for any students whose attendance becomes a concern and support will be put in place through office hours and meetings

## **8. Monitoring of this policy**

This policy will be reviewed regularly by the Leadership Group and the Governing Body. The attendance policy should be updated annually to ensure changes in practice have been recorded in the document.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

*Ratified By the Governing Body: 30/09/21*

## **Appendices**

### **Roles and Responsibilities.**

#### **Form Tutors are required to:**

- Complete registers accurately and on time
- Discuss unexplained absence or incidences of lateness with students
- Inform the Head of Year when unexplained absences occur
- Ensure that attendance is discussed so that students with rising attendance are congratulated and students with declining attendance are spoken to briefly to ensure that there are no school related, social or personal issues
- Be aware of the contextual make up and vulnerable students within their tutor groups

#### **Classroom Teachers are required to:**

- Complete registers accurately within the first 10 minutes of every lesson, every day
- Update registers if a student is late, change the code to L and enter the minutes late when they arrive
- Email the attendance officer if a student is in the lesson but there is an incorrect pre-populated code on SIMS – do not write over a pre-populated code
- Email the truant line if a student is not in their lesson when they are expected to be there
- Support students who have been absent in their learning providing them with support and missed work when appropriate

#### **The Attendance/Welfare Officer is required to:**

- Monitor the completion of registers
- Record lates
- Ensure that relevant notification of absence is sent to families, including text messages and warning letters
- Input / check daily attendance figures
- Provide Heads of Year, Assistant Heads, and members of the Leadership Group with attendance information
- Contact parents on the student's first day of absence after registration has closed
- Ensure that all student absences are noted and absence notes received from parents
- Make regular checks on the efficiency of the registering and report to the Assistant Headteacher
- Work with the Pastoral Leads and Heads of Year to ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with
- Inform the Head of Year over student absence patterns where appropriate
- Administer correspondence, as outlined in the policy

#### **Pastoral Support Team will:**

- Complete CAF documentation
- Prepare documentation for Court cases
- Liaise with social care and external agencies
- Attend TAC and Core Group meetings and CP conferences



- Coordinate SAP panel schedule
- Assist in the co-ordination of SAP panel meetings and coordinate necessary invitations
- Undertake home visits
- Attend medical panels

**Heads of Year are required to:**

- Develop strategies to support where a pattern of poor attendance has been identified
- Organise with the tutor to contact families and issue attendance reports where appropriate
- Organise support for students where long absence is authorised in order to support with reintegration back into school
- Monitor attendance for their Year on an on-going basis, with a particular focus on contextual and vulnerable groups
- Lead fortnightly attendance accountability meetings with the AHT inclusion to determine appropriate actions with poor attendees
- Tackle internal and external truancy
- Meet tutors on a regular basis to ensure that attendance is being monitored appropriately through tutor time and that tutors are engaging with students on their attendance
- Ensure that students whose attendance meets the school's target are rewarded
- Ensure that actions to support families are implemented,

**The Assistant Head with responsibility for Inclusion is required to:**

- Set attendance targets and produce attendance data for the LG, governors, HOYs
- Regularly monitor attendance data
- Review the authorisation of absence
- Identify and monitor Persistent Absence (PA)
- Lead the arrangement of School Attendance Panel meetings (SAP)
- Request the initiation of CAFs
- Request Home visits
- Ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school
- Liaise with the appropriate bodies (including the Local Authority's agencies) where appropriate
- Ensure that a rewards system is in place for each school
- Deal with issues of inadequate registering
- Arrange appropriate training for staff

## Monitoring Attendance

Attendance	Actions	Local Authority Involvement
All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter to be sent home on a half termly basis with update of attendance figures</li> <li>• Achievement Assembly prizes for improved attendance</li> </ul>	
100%-97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents will receive half termly update congratulating them</li> <li>• Celebration in achievement assemblies</li> </ul>	
96%-90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents will receive a letter home outlining concerns. Informal discussion, phone call home to parent/carer</li> <li>• Not authorising absences without medical information</li> <li>• Follow up letters to be sent if there is an improvement</li> <li>• Follow up letters to be sent if there is a decline. Meeting/phone call with Head of Year/ tutor. Targets set with student - reviewed every 4 weeks</li> </ul>	
89% and below	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter for &lt;90%</li> <li>• Letter for warning to referral to participation team</li> <li>• School meeting</li> <li>• Home visit</li> <li>• GP enquiry letter</li> <li>• Targets set with student and family - reviewed every four weeks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance Panel Meeting</li> <li>• Court Assessment Meeting Decision</li> <li>• Court action and judgement - fine</li> </ul>

## Letters

### Letter to all parents

Dear Parent/Carer,

#### Attendance Matters

At the start of this academic year I wanted to take the opportunity to remind you of Northwood School's attendance expectations and our procedures and policies in relation to student absence

We all know attendance is important, but the impact of the pandemic has made attendance more important than ever.

Research shows:

- The students with the highest levels of attendance are almost 5 times more likely to achieve 5 GCSEs at grades 5-9 including English and maths
- Students with a rate of attendance lower than 95%, have a lower 50% chance of gaining 5 or more GCSEs at grade 5-9 including English and maths
- Only 35% of pupils whose attendance is lower than 90% gain 5 or more GCSEs including English and maths.

Our school target for each student is to achieve 97% attendance as a minimum, we believe that every day and every lesson counts. We are grateful for all you do at home to encourage and support this. From now on we will be updating you on a half termly basis on your child's attendance.

You'll receive your first update just after half term. This first update will be based on attendance from 2nd September to October half term.

Attendance	Judgement	Impact
100%-97%	Excellent - National Expectation	Your child will have the best chance to achieve the best grades for their ability. in further education or the world of work
96%-90%	Below National Average - Cause for concern	An average of 95% is equivalent to a quarter of a year lost over five years An average of 90% is equivalent to half a year lost over five years
89% and below	Serious concern - major issue	An average of 80% is equivalent to one year lost over five years

Students should attend school every day unless they are genuinely unwell. Missing lessons, even for medical and dental appointments, has a detrimental impact on student progress and achievement. The school recognises that it is not always possible to schedule appointments out of school time. In the rare occasion that a student must attend a medical appointment during school time, parents must notify the school in advance and provide evidence of the appointment. Students **must** ensure they have signed in/out of school with Mrs Jackson in the school welfare office.

If a student is absent for any reason it is vital that you contact the school office on 01923 836363 **no later than 8:30am** on each day of the unplanned absence to provide a reason for absence. If no one is available to take your call, please leave a voicemail clearly stating the name of the child, form group and reason for absence. If you require a call back from the attendance officer, you must clearly state this in your message.

We would appreciate your support in promoting your child's attendance and ask you to work with the school if there is a need.

Please contact the school at any time if you have any questions or concerns.

Yours faithfully

Miss Rafferty  
Assistant Headteacher

## Half Term Letter about attendance

Dear Parent /Carer,

Re: «chosen forename» «chosen surname»

Each half term we write to you to update you on your child's attendance for this academic year. We have a minimum expected school target of 97% attendance.

Please find enclosed the attendance figures for your son/daughter for this academic year so far from the start of term to (DATE)

Attendance	Percentage attendance
Authorised	Total authorised absences
Unauthorised	Total unauthorised absences
Punctuality	Percentage Punctuality

We would appreciate your support in promoting your child's attendance and ask that you work with the school if there is a need.

Please contact the school at any time if you have any questions or concerns relating to this letter or your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Rafferty  
Assistant Headteacher

**Letter for below 97% - first time**

Dear «Parent/Carer»,

Re: «chosen forename» «chosen surname»

For a pupil to achieve their full academic potential, a high level of attendance is essential. Unfortunately, «chosen forename»'s attendance has fallen below the minimum expected attendance target of 97%.

Attendance	Percentage attendance
Authorised	Total authorised absences
Unauthorised	Total unauthorised absences

Attendance percentage	Learning days lost per academic year
95%	10 days - 2 weeks
90%	19 days
85%	29 days - almost 6 weeks
80%	38 days
75%	48 days - almost 10 weeks

We understand that there have been occasions this year when ... **name of child**..... has been absent as a result of illness or some other genuine reason.

All pupils have the opportunity to build on their attendance between now and the end of this academic year and we will discuss ... **name of child**..... attendance target with them regularly.

If you feel you need some support to help improve their attendance, please do not hesitate to contact the school.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Rafferty  
Assistant Headteacher

## Letter for attendance continuing to below 97% after one month

Dear «Parent/Carer»,

Re: «chosen forename» «chosen surname»

Since we wrote to you on «date», «chosen forename's» attendance has failed to improve significantly. It is still below our target minimum expectation of 97%.

Attendance	Percentage attendance
Authorised	Total authorised absences
Unauthorised	Total unauthorised absences

It is extremely important that this is dealt with as early as possible to prevent poor habits forming. We wish to help «chosen forename» to improve «his/her» attendance and would be happy to talk with you and arrange a meeting if required.

We will continue to monitor «chosen forename's» attendance over the next few weeks. If their attendance declines further, we may need to inform the Schools Education Welfare Officer.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.

Yours faithfully,

Miss Rafferty  
Assistant Headteacher

## **Letter for improvement in attendance**

Dear «Parent/Carer»,

Re: «chosen forename» «chosen surname»

Since we wrote to you on «date», «chosen forename» «chosen surname's» attendance has improved. I just wanted to write in recognition of this and thank you for your support.

Attendance and punctuality are very important factors for student outcomes, wellbeing and preparation for life after school. Please pass on my congratulations to «chosen forename» and thank you for your continued support.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Rafferty  
Assistant Headteacher



**Letter for below 90%**

Dear «Parent/Carer»,

Re: «chosen forename» «chosen surname»

Since we last wrote to you, «chosen forename's» attendance has continued to decline.

Attendance	Percentage attendance
Authorised	Total authorised absences
Unauthorised	Total unauthorised absences

When looking at the reasons why «chosen forename» has been absent from school we noticed that the majority of absences were linked to illness and/or medical reasons.

Due to the level of illness and/or medical absence, Should any further absences occur, the school will require evidence to confirm that your «son/daughter» is being supported by a doctor. Some examples of evidence that could be used include: prescriptions, appointment cards, Doctors note etc. You may also choose to complete the Medical Consent form enclosed which gives your consent for us to contact the Doctor directly and return it to XXXX here at the school.

If this evidence is not supplied when «chosen forename» returns after an illness or medical absence, then we will record their absence as an 'unauthorised' absence. This may lead to the involvement of the Education Welfare Officer and possible legal action.

Obviously we do not want the situation to reach this point and would ask that you support us to ensure «chosen forename's» attendance improves and that your child receives the opportunity to cover the curriculum as fully as possible.

Should you wish to discuss this matter before such action is necessary please contact Mrs White on 01923 836363.

Yours sincerely

Miss Rafferty  
Assistant Headteacher

## Letter for warning of referral to Participation Team

Dear «Parent/Carer»,

Re: «chosen forename» «chosen surname»

I am writing to express further concerns for «forename's» attendance

Attendance	Percentage attendance
Authorised	Total authorised absences
Unauthorised	Total unauthorised absences

I must remind you that under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is your duty as «forename's» parent/carer to ensure that they receive a full time education suitable for their age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The school is not aware that you are making any alternative provision for «forename's» education nor of any other lawful reason why << forename>> is not attending regularly as required.

It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Act to fail to secure the regular attendance at school of a child who is a registered pupil at the school. On conviction, the magistrates' court may impose a fine of up to £2,500 or imprisonment for up to 3 months, or both. In addition, you would obtain a criminal record.

I therefore now write to advise you that unless there is an immediate and sustained improvement in «forename's» attendance, the matter will be referred to the Participation Team who may initiate legal proceedings.

Yours sincerely,

Miss Rafferty  
Assistant Headteacher

## Letter for unauthorised absence

Dear «Parent/Carer»,

Re: «chosen forename» «chosen surname»

According to our records «chosen forename» has been absent for the periods shown below and we do not as yet have an explanation for this.

As you will be aware we are legally required to record any absence from school and as a result are requesting that you enter the reason for «chosen forename's» absence next to the dates on the slip below and return it to the main school office for the attention of the Head of Year/ Assistant Headteacher.

Or alternatively, please respond within a week by email to [office@nwschool.org.uk](mailto:office@nwschool.org.uk) - stating the following: Pupil name, class, date and the reason for the absence.

If we do not receive an explanation for this absence within a week from the date of this letter we will have to code the absence as unauthorised.

Yours sincerely

Miss Rafferty  
Assistant Headteacher