



Norwood Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Introduction

Norwood School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all of its pupils/students and recognises that this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based upon the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils/students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

Ours is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to achieve excellence. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day on which the school is open unless the reason for the absence is exceptional.

All staff (teaching and support) at our school have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all of our pupils/students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Leader

A senior member of our staff will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person, known as the Attendance Leader, will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils/students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body half termly. S/he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so Important:

Learning:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding:

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-

Attendance
Behaviour Management
Health and Safety
Access to the Curriculum
Anti- bullying

Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletters;
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment and rate of progress;
- Celebrate and reward good attendance;

The Law relating to attendance:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other exceptional cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never been properly explained;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time not authorised as an exceptional circumstance.

This type of absence can lead to the Peterborough City Council Attendance Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absence (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling within an agreed period of time for whatever reason. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parental support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we may also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be requested from the LA by the School:

A Penalty Notice can be issued if one of the following criteria can be met

- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a minimum period of any 8 school weeks (A maximum of 2 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year);
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive school days (4 consecutive sessions);
- Persistent late arrival at school after the register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or above;
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification;
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the **Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct** which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and before the close of registers at 9.00am;
- Keep school informed of any on-going absence days;

If your child is absent we will:

- Will telephone, text or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Will instigate our Safe and Well procedures should we not be successful in contacting you (please note that this may involve contacting the police to carry out a safe and well check visit to the parent/carers home).
- May invite you in to discuss the situation with us;
- Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of Penalty Notices issued to each parent/carers for each child.

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents/carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

The School Attendance Officer:

Parents/Carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council Attendance Service. S/he will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher/form tutor getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at **8.55am** and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by **9.00am** and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At **9.15am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your 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. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Leave of Absence:

Taking leave of absence without exceptional circumstance in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave of absence **must** be made in advance. In making a decision about whether to authorise this leave the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually.

It is important that you understand that we may **only** authorise such absences in **exceptional circumstances**.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four weeks' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

Deletions from Register

Under Section 8.-(1) (h), (i), (ii), (iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 should your child fail to return to school by the time that registration ends on the 20th day of absence the school is permitted to delete your child's name from their register.

This is possible if your child(ren) have not returned by the date specified because the following applies under Section 8 (h) - that he/she/they will have been continuously absent from school for a period of not less than 20 school days and

(i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6 (2);

(ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil(s) is/are unable to attend the school by reason of sickness, or any exceptional cause;

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school

Head Teacher – Mrs D Reynolds

Attendance Leader – Miss H Fletcher

Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote good school attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Appendix 1

Norwood Primary School – Attendance Policy - Internal School Procedures

Registration

1. The school will record and monitor attendance in accordance both with the statutory requirements and with the principle that regular, uninterrupted attendance is vital to a child's educational progress.
2. Registers will be called twice daily - Whole school morning session at 8.55am and at the very start of each year groups afternoon session. Any child arriving after the registers have been called will be recorded as late for that session. Registers close at 9.15am and any child arriving after this time will be marked as unauthorised absence for the whole session.
3. Teachers will complete the registers in accordance with the guidance contained in the staff handbook. The Head Teacher, working in liaison with the Admin Manager (with responsibility for Attendance), will inspect registers in order to ensure that these are being satisfactorily maintained and to ensure that any potential attendance difficulties are identified at an early stage.
4. Working in partnership with the Local Authority Attendance Officer, school will identify cases where a child's attendance data is of particular concern, relative to the time of year. The Head Teacher will then analyse the data and where appropriate make contact with the parent/carer to discuss strategies to support the improvement of the child's attendance.
5. If a child is absent the class teacher will not enter any code in the register, leaving the office to select the correct code for the absence.
6. At close of registers the Admin Manager will print out the required report of the MIS system and record reasons for each child's absence. This must be handed to the Head Teacher (or in their absence to the most senior member of staff on site) with any issues flagged up at this time.

Unexplained Absence

1. School operates a 'First Day Calling' process for any unexplained absences as follows
 - a. The Admin Manager will contact by telephone, before 9.15am, any parent/carer who has failed to inform the school of the reason for an absence
 - b. The Admin Manager will immediately inform the most senior member of staff on site of the situation
 - c. Should contact not be successful the Admin Manager will try all other contacts for the family provided on our MIS system
 - d. If all contacts have been tried and no successful outcome has been achieved then the most senior member of staff on site and a relevant colleague will carry out a safe and well visit.
 - e. If the safe and well visit does not inform the school of a justifiable reason and there are on-going concerns for the safety and wellbeing of the child/family then contact to the police will be made.
2. There is no fixed expected time scale for the above process as each situation and number of contacts will vary. The office will priorities upper KS2 children as these are the children that may be walking to school without parent/carer supervision.

Recording Absence

All absence notes from parents/carers should be dated and stored in the absence folder in the school office. Only notes concerning absences about which there are concerns/queries should be brought to the attention of the Head Teacher (who may then choose to speak to the parents/carers concerned himself/herself).

Working in Partnership

The Head Teacher will regularly collect attendance data and will use this data during meetings with the Local Authority Attendance Officer. These meetings will agree on attendance thresholds and targets and will identify tasks and follow-up actions for both the school and the attendance service.

In School Illness

1. Office staff will inform the Head Teacher / Deputy Head Teacher when a child is sent home due to illness, injury etc
2. Any injury sustained on school site will be recorded as per school policy and cases requiring external medical attention will be report to PCC.

Leave of Absence During Term time

1. Leave of absence should not be requested and will not be granted, unless it is for exceptional circumstances.
2. Any such request should be submitted in writing and handed into the school office.
3. A form will then be issued to the family requesting the leave with request relevant and pertinent information and also provides the family with an opportunity to provide evidence to support exceptional/unavoidable circumstance.
4. The initial letter, form and any provided evidence will then be issued to the Governor Attendance Panel and will
 - a. be seen by the Governor Attendance Panel, which will consist of 2/3 members of the governing body
 - b. look at each request on a case by case basis
 - c. outcomes shared with parent/carers with a clear reason for the decision
 - d. any appeal following the Panel's decision will be heard by further members of the Governing Body
- a. no further correspondence will be entered into following the any appeal as the decision is final

Working with Peterborough Local Authority

- Norwood School works in partnership with the Local Authority on all attendance matters and has fully adopted the working policies and practices of Peterborough Local Authority.
- Further information on such matters can be found at <https://www.peterborough.gov.uk/residents/schools-and-education/attendance/>