

North Norfolk Academy Trust

Attendance Policy (Primary Schools)



North
Norfolk
**Academy
Trust**



Preparation for life's journey

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Owner: Marc Goodliffe

Lead: Marc Goodliffe

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

School attendance is subject to various education laws and our attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

Although the majority of this policy is with respect to children of statutory school age, the procedures for pupil absence are applicable to all Early Years pupils too.

Our target for annual attendance at each school is 96%.

This policy has been formed with reference to the DfE guidance *School attendance parental responsibility measures; Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police*, January 2015.

Associated Policies

Safeguarding Policy
Positive Behaviour Policy
Equality Policy

Promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child.

The Home/School agreement contains details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them.

The application of this policy is monitored by the Governing Body. Attendance is a set item on the Headteacher's or Head of School's Report to the governing body each term. Attendance for all schools within the Trust is reported termly to the NNAT Board of Trustees.

Leave of absence in term time

Leave of absence during term time is discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The school will consider any application for leave of absence and will only agree to authorize the absence in exceptional circumstances; parents must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school for the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the headteacher 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

will be recorded in the first instance as 'No reason yet provided for absence', but will only be authorised when the headteacher is satisfied.

The coding for any absences are in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education and defined below.

Registers

Registers are electronic, using our Management Information System. Registers should be completed by the member of staff responsible for the class or the person who is deputizing for them. Registers are a record of attendance and an essential part of any emergency evacuation procedure, so must be completed accurately within registration time.

If a child is not in school for the registration period, they must be recorded as 'N' (No reason yet provided for absence) unless the absence was already approved. If a child arrives after the end of registration, it is the responsibility of the school secretary to record the child's attendance.

At each school, the registers remain open for 15 minutes from the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Lateness

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late before registers close.

Any pupil arriving after the registration period is marked as having an unauthorised absence, unless there is an acceptable explanation, e.g. school transport was delayed. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

It is the responsibility of the school secretary to record the attendance of children who are not at school after registers are taken.

Absence Procedures (applies to all children in all phases)

First day of absence

If there has been no contact by the close of registers, parents will be contacted by text message or phone call to request a reason for absence.

Second day

If a child is absent for two days **and** there has been no contact from the parent/carer, parents will be contacted by text, requesting that they contact the school about the reason for the absence. If there is no response, the school secretary will telephone in the afternoon.

Third and fourth days of absence

If a child is absent for three days and there has been no contact from the parent/carer, the headteacher or head of school will telephone parents during the morning. If there is no response, an email and text will be sent requesting that they contact the school immediately about the reason for the absence. If there has been no response, the third day process will be repeated.

Fifth day of absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for five consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Staff for the local area. The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

If at any point the headteacher or head of school has a concern about the safety of an absent child, they must contact Children's Advice and Duty Service immediately with a safeguarding concern.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Absence notes

Notes, including emails, received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Frequent Absence

Within the schools it is the responsibility of the head teacher or head school to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible.

The head teacher will arrange to meet with the parents to discuss the pattern of absence and an attendance plan might be required.

Persistent Absence

An attendance plan will be considered for pupils whose attendance level falls below 90% to support their return to full attendance. The attendance plan will be set up by the head teacher or head of school.

The attendance plan will include engagement with all parties who can support the pupil's attendance.

Fixed Term Penalty Notices

We implement the Local Authority's policy on Fixed Penalty Notices. Full information can be found on the [Norfolk Schools Website](#) and is included in appendix 2. At the beginning of each school year and on admission, parents are provided with the Attendance Policy.

Attendance Awards

The schools recognizes 100% attendance at the end of every term by the presentation of a certificate.

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This includes:

- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Approved education off site

If a pupil is receiving education off site or is attending at a school where they are dual registered with, the school will liaise with the other education provider to check on attendance.

Record preservation

We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for 3 years after the last entry.

Individual pupil records of attendance will be printed out each year and archived in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

Register Security

Registers are kept electronically and are secure.

Appendix 1

The registration system

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorized absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity

W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2

Fixed term penalty notices (Norfolk County Council guidance)

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996. Parents can be issued with a fixed penalty notice in relation to their child's unauthorised absence from school.

This guide is produced to answer any questions parents may have.

The legal context

Under Section 444 of the Education Act, an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are a registered pupil, and the absence is not authorised by the school. Only headteachers can authorise absence and the only legal reasons for absence are:

1. That the absences are with leave (ie that they have been agreed by the headteacher)
2. That the absences are because of sickness or unavoidable cause. Parents may be asked to provide evidence to support absences due to ill health, this can be through a copy of an appointment card or prescription or information from a medical practitioner.
3. That the absences fall on days of religious observance for the religion to which parents belong
4. That the child is entitled to free transport to school and the County Council has failed to provide this

If absences do not fall into any of these four categories or the school has not been informed of reasons for absence, absences will be marked as unauthorised. Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced powers for issuing fixed penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations came into force on 27 February 2004. These were updated with amendments in 2007, 2012 and 2013.

In Norfolk, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Norfolk Local Protocol (May 2014).

A school can refer a case to the County Council to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice for either:

1. Fifteen percent or more unauthorised absence for reasons other than a term-time holiday within a six week period
2. Ten consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time (for absences from 1 September 2017)

Other legal interventions are available and your child's school can provide you with more information if it is required.

Failure to pay a fixed penalty notice reverts back to a Section 444 1 Education Act 1996 offence and you will face prosecution in the Magistrates Court.