



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Version No: 2
Version Date: November 2018
Documents: Attendance-Policy-November-2018.pdf
Date Approved: 5th November 2018
Approved by: NWHS Board of Governors
Date of Review: November 2018
Date of next Review: November 2019

Outstanding Learning in Every Lesson, Every Day

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1. Amendment History

Author	Version	Reason	Date
D Berry	2	Policy updated.	5/11/2018

2. Linked Documents

Title	File Name	Location
Attendance and Punctuality Policy	Attendance-Policy-November-2018.pdf	School website and policies repository.

3. Aims

North Walsham High School (NWHS) is committed to maximising educational opportunities and achievement for all students. For students to gain the best from their time at NWHS, it is vital that they achieve excellent attendance and punctuality. We strive for 100% attendance for all students. NWHS actively promotes good attendance and discourages unjustified absence. NWHS recognises that promoting good attendance and punctuality prepares students for the disciplines of adult working life.

4. Guiding Principles

- NWHS emphasises that it is the responsibility of everyone in the School to improve attendance and punctuality.
- NWHS needs to ensure that all its students access a full-time education, which meets their needs and allows all to realise their potential.
- NWHS will strive to provide a safe and caring environment where each student can engage in all opportunities offered.
- NWHS will work with students and their families to ensure every student attends regularly and punctually.
- NWHS will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents/carers who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.
- NWHS has an effective system of communication with parents/carers together with appropriate agencies to provide mutual information and support.
- NWHS will continue to develop ICT-based attendance recording systems in order to provide accurate information and to use suitable tracking strategies to recognise any trends that can damage good attendance and learning.
- NWHS will support all aspects of the Education Act 2011 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017 by implementing this policy in a consistent manner.
- NWHS will have regard to the Equality Act 2010 and reasonable adjustments will be made for young people.

5. What you can expect from North Walsham High School

- We will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
- We will work closely with parents/carers where student's absence is cause for concern.
- We will support students to achieve good attendance and punctuality. We will support students returning to school after prolonged absence.

6. What North Walsham High School expects from its students:

- To attend regularly and on time
- To be punctual to all lessons
- To ensure that they register for all timetabled lessons and inform the School Attendance Office or School Reception where appropriate if they are not able to be registered.
- To ensure all messages and notes from parents/carers are taken to the School Attendance Office where these notes relate to student absence or requests for absence for any part of a school day.

7. What North Walsham High School expects from Parents/Carers:

- To ensure their child attends regularly, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
- To ensure their child attends every day the School is open unless they are too ill to do so.
- Not to keep their child away from the School for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation (see overleaf).
- Not to arrange holidays during term time.
- To immediately inform the School Attendance Officer or School Reception if their child is unable to attend (by 8.30am where possible), including the reason for absence and expected date of return.
- Confirm in writing on their child's return the reason for their absence.
- If no indication of a return date has been given, parents/carers should contact the School on each day of absence.

8. Registration

- The law requires the register to be taken twice a day – at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon session. At NWHS this is at 8.40am and 12:20pm.
- Students are expected to arrive by 8.35am in order to be ready for the start of lessons at 8.40am.
- Students are registered at the start of every lesson of the day.
- Registers close at 9.00am in the morning and 1:10pm in the afternoon, after which students will be marked as unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation has been received.
- The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes (see Appendix 1).
- Guidance on applying the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2016 can be found in 'School Attendance, guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' published November 2016 by the DfE.

9. Punctuality

- The School gates will close at 8.35am.
- Any student arriving after this time should sign in at Main Reception Desk giving their reason for being late, where a late slip will be issued to the student.
- Students arriving late to registration but before 9am without a satisfactory explanation will receive a C3 detention of 30 minutes on the same day or the following day.
- Students arriving after 9am without a satisfactory explanation will be given a C4 detention of 1hr on the same day or the following day.
- Where a detention has been issued on the same day, parents and carers will be informed of the detention during the day by text or phone call. If contact cannot be made, then the student will receive a letter for parents/carers informing them of the detention, to be completed on the subsequent day.
- Students arriving at first lesson without a late slip must be directed back to the Main Reception to sign in.
- Repeated lateness will be reported to parents/carers and a meeting will be arranged to discuss support and actions to be made to prevent this occurring.

10. Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the School has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the School can do this.

- Parents/carers should contact the Attendance Office (Direct Dial 01692 400082) or School Reception (01692 402581) on the morning of absence (preferably before 8.30am) giving a reason and an expected date of return. A note should follow this up on the child's return.
- Absence may be authorised for such reasons as:
 - Illness
 - Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
 - Exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement of a close family member
 - Days of religious observance (see Appendix 2)
 - Study leave
 - Exclusion
 - Involvement in a public performance
- Absence will not be authorised for such reasons as:
 - Looking after brothers/sisters/unwell parents/carers
 - Birthdays
 - Days out, e.g. The Norfolk Show
 - Shopping trips
 - Family holidays where permission has not been granted (please note, family holidays during term time will not normally be approved).
 - Special occasions, where the School does not agree that the absence should be granted.
- Medical/dental and other appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, students should, where practically possible, come to school before the appointment, sign out and return to school after the appointment. Evidence of a medical appointment is required and please provide appointment letters or cards. Absence due to illness will only be authorised if the medical evidence has been received (i.e. appointment card, doctor's note or prescription). If medical appointments are attended at the start of the day, causing the student to arrive late to the School, medical evidence (as above) must be provided or a late detention will be issued.
- Following an explanation from parents/carers regarding a student's absence, the School will decide whether or not it accepts the explanation and authorise/unauthorise accordingly.
- Absence, which hasn't been explained, will remain as unauthorised.
- Parents/carers should not take their children out of school for days out, to attend sporting events, etc.

11. How we respond to Absence/Lateness

- If a student is absent for morning registration and no contact has been received from a parent/carer to explain the absence, the School will contact parents/carers. We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will always do our best to contact parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of their child's absence. Contact will be via phone call, text or email. If no contact is possible, we may visit the student's home and if the student is not present or no contact can be made, we may inform the authorities as a safeguarding concern.

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- Where a message has been left by the school, a parent should contact the Attendance Officer or School Reception to inform us of the reason for their child's absence as soon as possible. The School asks that parents/carers ensure we have the most up to contact details at all times.
- If no response is received, the School will write to parents/carers requesting an explanation.
- All absence notes will be retained.
- Where a student's absence is cause for concern, the School will write to parents/carers and/or invite the parents/carers into school or visit parents/carers at home.
- Where no sustained improvement in attendance is demonstrated despite intervention, the Attendance to Achieve (A2A) process will be followed (Appendix 3). Fixed Penalty notices may be issued in line with the Local Authority's Code of Conduct. We will also pursue prosecution in line with the Local Authority's Code of Conduct if no improvement in attendance is sustained.

12. Persistent Absence

A student becomes a Persistent Absentee (PA) when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any student whose attendance has reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention. Intervention may be via:

- An action plan to improve attendance will be created which may involve referrals to other agencies alongside meetings between relevant School staff and parents/carers.
- Where parents/carers fail to co-operate with support and strategies provided by the School, further advice may be sought which could lead to legal sanctions being imposed.
- Fast Track legal proceedings (Appendix 5)

Persistent Absence data is communicated to the relevant Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

13. Leave of absence during Term Time

Any absence interrupts the continuity of student's learning. Government Legislation now states that only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence, please refer to the Department for Education for the latest guidance. Parents/carers must not take students out of school for holidays during term time.

Even where the circumstances are considered exceptional, please be aware that:

- Your request will not be authorised during exam periods (these could be throughout the year).
- Your request will not be authorised during the month of September.
- Your request will not be authorised for any student in Year 11.
- Your request will not be authorised if your child's attendance is below the school's attendance target for the 12 months prior to application.
- Your request will not be authorised if your child has unauthorised absences.
- Your request will not be authorised where a previous holiday has been taken.
- Your request will not be authorised where there are coursework deadlines or controlled assessments (these could be throughout the year).

It is expected that an Application for Pupil Leave of Absence Form is submitted to the Attendance Officer or School Reception at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed absence. All factors that need to be considered must be stated on the request form.

14. Fixed Penalty Notices

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. 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence
2. 15% or more unauthorised absence within a six week period.

The School has the right to refer to Norfolk County Council to serve a Fixed Penalty Notice on parents/carers who insist on taking their children out of school without authorisation. Fixed Penalties require **each parent/carer to pay a fine of £60 per child** if paid within 21 days or **£120** if paid after 21 days but within 28 days (with effect from September 2013). Failure to pay within the specified timescale could result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure regular school attendance. This legislation also applies to any student taking leave of absence without prior notification to the School.

14. Re-integration following long-term absence

Where a student has been absent for a prolonged period of time, perhaps due to illness, the School will:

- Welcome the student back to the School and value their return.
- Provide support for the student in consultation with parents/carers to enable a successful return to the School.
- Ensure that all relevant staff are informed of the circumstances.
- Work with other agencies, where appropriate, to ensure a successful outcome.
- Consider a personalised programme of return if appropriate.
- Nominate a key member of staff to monitor and review the student's return, often the Attendance Officer.

15. Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

- It is the belief that all students are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is engaging and personalised to meet their needs. The curriculum is monitored and revised on an annual basis so that it meets the ability needs of all students.
- Students are regularly informed of their attendance levels and, if appropriate, how they can improve.
- Where appropriate, students whose attendance falls below the appropriate target for the School will be set a target for improvement and progress towards these targets will be regularly reviewed.
- Good and improved attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded.
- Students, parents/carers and staff are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the Attendance Officer at any time to discuss their child's attendance.
- Regular meetings will be held with the appropriate members of staff/external agencies to identify and support those students whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- Students who have been absent for extended periods of time will be supported as appropriate to re-integrate back into the School.
- Effective links are made with primary schools to facilitate the smooth transition to NWHS.
- Students' attendance will be reported six times a year in line with our Key Assessment Data.

16. Attendance Data and Targets

- The target for all students is to strive for 100% attendance. Only by achieving full attendance can students expect to achieve their full potential.
- Attendance data will be collected and analysed and used to inform the School's attendance practices and interventions.
- Individual student data will be analysed and monitored to enable early intervention.
- Attendance data is provided on a termly basis to the Local Governing Body.
- Attendance data and persistent absence data is communicated to the Local Authority and is published online.
- We will use a Cumulative Attendance Tracker to monitor attendance on a weekly basis.

17. Statutory Requirements, the Law and the Local Authority

- Registers are legal documents; regulatory requirements placed on schools regarding the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2016.
- Under section 576 of the Education Act 1996, parent/carers are responsible to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives a suitable full-time education.
- Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, a parent who fails to ensure their child attends the school at which they are registered, is guilty of an offence.
- The School works together with the relevant Local Authority to ensure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibility. There are a range of legal sanctions that may be imposed for dealing with unauthorised absence: Fixed Penalty Notices, Parenting Contracts and Orders, Education Supervision Orders or referral to the Magistrates Court which can recommend fines (up to £2500) or up to 3 months in prison.
- All sanctions are used to improve attendance and punctuality and reduce absence.

18. Staff Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the School have a role to play in improving attendance and reducing absence.

Subject teachers

- Welcome and value the attendance of all students to lessons.
- Will ensure all students are accurately registered.
- Will ensure that students know the register is being taken.
- Will identify student absence to lessons and take appropriate action.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.

Form Tutors

- Re-iterate the importance of attendance and the link with achievement.
- Will ensure they build positive relationships to identify concerns and facilitate early interventions.
- Will forward concerns to the Attendance Officer.

Student Support Leaders (SSLs)

- Will work with the Directors Of Learning (DOLs) and discuss absence and attendance weekly with students in their Year Group.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns in their Year Group and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will link pastoral issues with attendance and support the DOLs in tackling these issues.
- Will discuss absence and attendance weekly with students in their Year Group.

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- Will identify any absence trends or concerns in their Year Group and will raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will work with identified students in their Year Group, setting targets to improve attendance and monitoring progress towards those targets.

Attendance Officer

- Will ensure that all absence notes or verbal messages are collected and filed appropriately.
- Discuss attendance with parents/carers at every opportunity.
- Will work with other members of staff to share information and support students and their parents/carers to improve attendance.
- Will monitor registration on a daily basis.
- Will receive calls and messages from parents/carers regarding student absence.
- Will contact parents/carers regarding student absence.
- Will identify absence trends or concerns and raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual students.
- Will deal with all attendance data on a daily basis.
- Will hold Attendance Panel meetings to facilitate early intervention.
- Will issue the Cumulative Attendance reports to the Senior Leadership team on a weekly basis and provide a daily data update of all absence and lateness.
- Will identify absence trends or concerns and raise these with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers and liaise with relevant members of staff.
- Will work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual students.
- Will attend and lead all Fast Track meetings.
- Will issue Fixed Penalty Notices and conduct all legal matters regarding attendance

Directors of Learning (DOLs)

- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly, by use of the weekly Cumulative Attendance report.
- Will discuss absence and attendance concerns with SSLs and set targets for improvement.
- Will promote attendance through assemblies.

Assistant Head Teacher/Attendance Lead SLT

- Will take the lead on raising the profile of attendance throughout the School, including improving attendance and reducing persistent absence.
- Will monitor absence and attendance regularly.
- Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will liaise with the appropriate members of staff.
- Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified and provide support to improve their child's attendance.
- Will support students to improve their attendance.
- Will work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual students.
- Will provide data to the Head Teacher, Senior Leaders and the Governing Body on a regular basis.
- Will attend and support the Attendance Officer in Fast Track meetings

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The Head Teacher and Senior Leaders

- Will ensure that the School attendance policy is implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Will ensure the whole School ethos promotes excellence in attendance and punctuality.
- Report to the Governors on attendance
- Monitor the curriculum to develop ways of improving the provision of educational experience.
- Utilise attendance data to inform strategic planning

This Policy will be reviewed every year.

Appendix 1**DfE ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS
(adopted September 2006, and amended Feb 2013)**

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING	FOR STATISTICAL PURPOSES
/	Present (AM)	Present	
\	Present (PM)	Present	
B	Off-site Educational Activity	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence	
D	Dual Registered – at another educational establishment	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence	
F	Extended family holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence	
G	Family holiday (NOT authorised by the school <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence	
H	Family holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence	
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence	
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
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 supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
Q	Present in School but outside of normal timetabled lessons	Present	Present
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	
S	Study leave	Authorised absence	
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Authorised absence	

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U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence	
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity	Counted as physically present
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances	
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (Enforced Closure)	Not counted in possible attendances	
Z	Pupil not yet on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances	
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Not counted in possible attendances	

Appendix 2

Religious Observance

Authorised absence may be granted for religious observance, for example, Eid. The Department for Education definition is as follows:

“Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.”

If the religious body has not set the day apart, there is no requirement for the School to approve the absence or grant leave of absence.

Individual religions and their religious observance are too numerous to detail in this document. Parents should contact the School to request leave of absence for all religious observance.

Appendix 3

Fast Track to Attendance Panels Information to Families

Fast Track to Attendance Meetings

Information for families



**Helping to improve attendance, achievement,
and enjoyment at school**



Norfolk
County Council

**Attendance Team | Education, Quality
Assurance and Intervention Service**

If you are having difficulties with your child's attendance, please speak to their school.

If you have any queries regarding this leaflet please contact your child's school in the first instance.

We are committed to ensuring that all children and young people receive a good education and we know that full school attendance is vital to ensure that they can achieve their full potential. This is underpinned by our vision for all children and young people of Norfolk:

‘We believe that all children and young people have the right to be healthy, happy, and safe; to be loved, valued and respected; and have high aspirations for their future’.

What does the law say?

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on all parents to ensure that their children receive an efficient, full-time education. Parents who are seen to fail in their duty can be brought before the Magistrates Court.

In Education law, a parent is defined as:

- The natural parents of a child, whether they are married or not.
- Anyone who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child.

This can include parents therefore with whom the child does not normally live with or wider family members who share day to day care of the child.

Types of Absence

Absence can be **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Absence can be **authorised** by the school if one of the following four circumstances apply:

1. Sickness or unavoidable cause (an unavoidable cause relating to the child, not the parent)
2. Leave of absence (granted by the Headteacher)
3. Day of religious observance (for the religion followed by the parents)
4. The child is entitled to Local Education Authority provided transport to school and this is not being provided

For long or frequent periods of sickness absence, it is likely that your child’s school will require you to provide medical evidence to authorise the absence and may ask you to give them permission to contact your child’s GP.

A school may also agree to authorise an absence in exceptional circumstances. This will be the decision of the Head Teacher or Principal.

An **unauthorised** absence is any absence for which the school has not given permission or where the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason for the absence which is acceptable to the school.

This includes un-agreed holidays during term time.

What is the purpose of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel Meeting?

The purpose of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting is for you and your child to meet with school and relevant agency members to identify the reasons for absence and to work together to improve attendance.

What will happen at the Fast Track to Attendance Panel Meeting?

The reasons for absence will be identified and different strategies to improve attendance will be considered. A supportive action plan will be agreed and an attendance target will be set.

Whilst the intention of the Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting is that attendance will improve, consideration will be made to legal action if attendance targets are not met. This could include prosecution in the magistrates' court.

What happens next?

A Review Fast Track to Attendance Panel meeting will be arranged and at this meeting the action plan and attendance will be reviewed. A new action plan will be agreed. If the attendance target is met, the Review Panel can recommend that no further action is required.

However, the school will continue to monitor the attendance of your child and will notify the Local Education Authority if attendance deteriorates. This could still result in legal action being taken. If the attendance target is not met, the Review Panel will recommend to the Local Education Authority that legal action is taken.

Appendix 4

Prosecution checklist completed by EWO

- Pupil's full name
- Pupil's date of birth
- Details of Ethnicity and Language used in the home Who has legal parental responsibility?
- Father's full name, address and telephone numbers, including mobile
- Father's date of birth
- Mother's full name, address and telephone numbers, including mobile Mother's date of birth
- Description of both parents (necessary for cases where arrest warrant is issued) Are there any other adults in the house?
- Have you tried to contact all appropriate adults in the case? Evidence of different types of communications, i.e. copy letters, telephone calls, home visits, minutes of meetings etc., including if the family have not co-operated.
- Evidence that targets for improved attendance having been set and not achieved and that parents have been made aware that legal action could be taken against them
- Have the parents made any comments regarding the potential prosecution?
- Complete the Pre-CAF checklist
- Has a CAF been completed? If not please evidence your reasons.
- Have other agencies been consulted regarding the prosecution? What are their views
- Have referrals been made to other agencies? Please evidence
- Are there any Special Educational Needs? If so, evidence needed that the case was prioritised for Educational Psychologist support.
- Are there any behavioural issues? If so evidence needed that school has tried to address any bullying issues raised, action plans, pupil support plans, alternative programmes etc. Are there any mental health issues with the child? If so was the case signposted to support agencies? please specify.
- Are there any proven mental health issues with the parent? If so please specify.
- Are there any other family issues, i.e. substance misuse, domestic violence, ASB etc. Evidence of contact with other agencies required, please specify which agencies are/or have been involved and which are currently involved.
- Are there any Health & Safety issues relating to risks to staff visiting the home, i.e. aggressive adults, animals etc.

- Copies of registration certificates, current and previous year
- List of all siblings, DOBs, schools and print-outs of attendance.
- Has the feelings of the child been ascertained regarding this possible prosecution and reasons for poor attendance?
- Have any issues been raised regarding school transport? If so how was this resolved.
- Is a significant amount of absence apparently due to illness? If so what investigations have been made to ascertain whether or not the illness is genuine.

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All interventions must be recorded and evidenced.