



Norton Church Of England Primary School

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Introduction

Our Attendance Policy is designed to promote outstanding attendance for all pupils across the school. We understand that there is a proven critical link between attendance and academic and social outcomes for our pupils. It is the desired outcome of this policy that it supports the development of our pupils into academically successful young people of good character with a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning.

Our Attendance Policy takes account of the guidance set out in "Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities" published by the Department of Education in September 2014.

This policy takes account of key relevant legislation including;

The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
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 policy complies with the Gloucestershire County Council Penalty Notice Protocol which, under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, empowers designated LA officers, Head Teachers (Deputies and Assistants authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school (as from February 2004).

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/school-attendance-and-exclusions-and-welfare/attendance-and-absence-from-school/>

This policy takes due regard to all the requirements of the Human Rights Act and all Equal Opportunities legislation.

Aim

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve 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. It is our aim that we support all our pupils so they can continue to attend school even though they may be facing challenging personal circumstances.

We are an inclusive school with high expectations for all our pupils.

We expect that;

- every teacher accepts responsibility for promoting and encouraging 100% attendance;
- all staff are consistent in their approach to attendance and work within the framework set out in this policy and liaise closely with the Headteacher to ensure good attendance;
- every pupil is made aware of the importance of attendance through lessons and assemblies where the school's high expectations are set out;
- every parent and carer accepts the shared responsibility for their child's regular and punctual attendance at school.

The Attendance Policy will ensure;

- that all pupils will be supported in their right to enjoy and access a broad and balanced curriculum by attending school regularly;

Through our curriculum we teach our Christian values: courage, friendship, peace, forgiveness, thanks and truth so that our children are prepared spiritually, morally and culturally for life in modern Britain.

- that pupils are recognised for 100% attendance and judiciously supported when their attendance is not good.
- that all staff across the school will work together within a single clearly defined framework to challenge poor attendance and to support good or outstanding attendance.

Rationale

Our policy is that all of our pupils have the potential to achieve at or beyond their indicated potential and we endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

Parents and pupils play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. This policy seeks to ensure that parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting 100% school attendance and punctuality for all.

For a pupil to reach their full potential a high level of school attendance is essential. We understand that research indicates that;

- there is a direct link between under-achievement and attendance below 95%; regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically;
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with;
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying;
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. We believe that high attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Policy in Practice

This policy reflects the fact that the school cannot legally authorise any leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances (see Appendix A for Exceptional Absence Form). The Department for Education (DfE) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences. These include;

- a child is ill or receiving medical attention;
- days of religious observance, notified in advance
- absence due to family circumstances (e.g. bereavement, serious illness);
- other absences, such as approved sporting activities that can be authorised and there will be events affecting families, some unforeseen, which will necessitate absence from school; professional discretion will need to be used in these cases as to whether the absence can be authorised.

As a school we believe that the work to promote outstanding attendance for all pupils starts with proactive high quality pastoral care. The Headteacher and the Attendance Officer seek to identify early issues that will affect pupil's attendance and work in partnership with parents and pupils to support attendance.

As a school we reward 100% attendance while challenging and supporting pupils whose attendance could be better.

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Indicative Actions for Attendance-Threshold at 100%

- Attendance analysed on a weekly basis

Indicative Actions for Attendance less than 100%

- The Headteacher and Attendance Officer identify any unusual patterns of attendance and make personal contact with families of pupils who the school has concerns about.
- Letters of concern and support may be sent to parents and they may be invited in to attend an Attendance Improvement Meeting.
- A formal letter of warning and the option of a referral to Local Authority for legal action for unauthorised periods of absence over 10 sessions.

The school will ensure that it fulfils its legal obligation to register pupils every morning at 9am and every afternoon at 1pm.

It is the expectation of the school that all pupils attend registration and lessons on time every day. All pupils arriving to school in the morning should register with their teacher. The gate opens at 8.45am and closes at 9am, when the children will be registered, they will be registered again in the afternoon at 1pm.

The punctual attendance of each pupil will be recorded using the following protocol;

- when a pupil is present when the register is opened at 9am and 1pm they receive a present mark (/).
- when a pupil arrives after the registration has closed at 9:05am, they are late and should be marked with a late mark (L).
- the school office will formally close the registers at 9.15am and any pupil signing in after this will receive a late after registration closes mark (U).

The school expects absences to be kept to a minimum; routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible.

Roles and Responsibilities

We believe the responsibility for the attendance of all pupils is shared between the pupil, parent and school.

Parents will:

- make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their child attends school 100% of the time and arrives punctually to school;
- inform the school on the first day of their child's absence, and on every subsequent day of absence, of the reason for the absence and, where appropriate, supply a medical certificate or other evidential paper work as requested;
- Inform the school of any unavoidable medical or dental appointments during school time in advance of any consequent absence.

Teachers will:

- mark registers accurately
- maintain awareness of prior and current Persistent Absentees and liaise closely with the Headteacher to pick up any attendance issues for pupils or groups of pupils;
- reinforce the positive messages about attendance at every opportunity:
- use assemblies regularly to reinforce the importance of punctuality and good attendance and praise students with consistently high punctuality and/or attendance.

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The Tewkesbury District Partnership Attendance Officer will;

- monitor and update registers along with the Headteacher as necessary, when they have been completed by teachers.
- ensure codes are recorded accurately;
- prepare, analyse and share relevant data to share with the Headteacher
- liaise with Headteacher and Attendance Officer to identify causes for concern and decide appropriate level of intervention;
- follow indicative action protocol with pupils and families giving cause for concern (see policy into practice);
- to review weekly and termly attendance data and ensure an appropriate level of response to attendance concerns.

The Headteacher will:

- Liaise with the Attendance Officer and LA with regards to patterns of absence
- formulate the strategic response to attendance issues across the school;
- analyse data to identify trends, areas of improvement and areas needing improvement;
- investigate strategies to improve attendance of all pupils at the School.
- will ensure the school follows the DfE guidelines and ensure the legal obligations of the school are met in regard to all matters of attendance.

Governors will:

- review attendance on a regular basis
- hold senior leaders to account for the level of attendance in school and have an overview of the policy and procedures in dealing with attendance.

Monitoring and evaluation

Our Attendance Policy will be reviewed by the governing body every year.

Other related policies and documents

LA Exclusions procedure
Equality Opportunities Policy
Safeguarding Policy
Home/School Agreement

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Appendix A

EXCEPTIONAL ABSENCE REQUEST

Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. Section 444 of the Education Act gives powers to the Local Authority (LA) to issue Penalty Notices when a parent or carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance and/or punctuality. Information on the Department for Education website states that '**Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless these are exceptional, e.g, serious family illness or bereavement.**' The vast majority of requests will therefore be refused and, if a holiday in term time is taken, this will constitute unauthorised absence which may result in the issue of a penalty notice to each parent in respect of each absent child.

Please refer to our Attendance Policy on our School website for more information.

Please complete the slip below, providing information as to why a leave of absence should be authorised.

Child's Name:..... Class:

I wish to apply for absence from:.....to:.....

Reasons for absence:.....

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.....

Number of school days lost:.....

Parent/Guardian signature 1:.....Date:.....

Parent/Guardian signature 2:.....Date:.....

On behalf of the Governing Body **I authorise/do not authorise** absence from school for

Child's name: from: to:.....

Head teacher's Signature: Date:

Brief Statement by Headteacher:.....

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