

Northern Counties School Attendance Policy

	Issue date: October 2023	Version No V1, October 2023
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Policy Control/Monitoring

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Approved by: (Name/Position in Organisation)	Martin Lonergan Headteacher
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Author of policy: (Name/Position in organisation)	Simon Adams, Deputy Headteacher
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Amendments/additions	
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Associated Policies: (insert hyperlinks)	Working Together to Improve Attendance, DfE, 2022
Associated National Guidance	

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Document status	<p>This document is controlled electronically and shall be deemed an uncontrolled documented if printed.</p> <p>The document can only be classed as 'Live' on the date of print.</p>
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Equality Impact Assessment

This document forms part of Percy Hedley’s commitment to create a positive culture of respect for all staff and service users. The intention is to identify, remove or minimise discriminatory practice in relation to the protected characteristics (race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age, religious or other belief, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment and pregnancy and maternity), as well as to promote positive practice and value the diversity of all individuals and communities.

As part of its development this document and its impact on equality has been analysed and no detriment identified.

Version Control Tracker

Version Number	Date	Author/ Title	Status	Comment/Reason for Issue/Approving Body

Roles & Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility

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1. Introduction

Northern Counties School is committed to providing all pupils with an appropriate and effective education in a safe and happy environment. Each child is welcomed, valued, respected and encouraged to respect themselves and others. We are a school where individuals are valued and helped to achieve their personal best. Our holistic, aspirational approach to education enables our students to make a full and positive contribution to school and community and fully prepares them for future enjoyment and fulfilment.

2. Purpose

To achieve their full potential children need to attend regularly and punctually. Non-attendance at school for any reason is an important issue that must be treated promptly and seriously. In all cases of non-attendance, it is essential that early action is taken.

The Governors, Headteacher and school staff acknowledge that there is a strong correlation between high attendance and pupil achievement. Northern Counties School adheres to the DfE Guidance on School Attendance and applies the recommendations relating to using pupil registers and attendance codes.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the education community (teachers/tutors, therapists, support staff, parents, pupils/students, and members of the schools/college governors).

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4. Associated Policies & References

[Working together to improve school attendance](#)

[Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absences](#)

[Children missing education](#)

5. Parental Responsibility

Significant adults have a primary role in ensuring the attendance of pupils. Good examples of attendance and timekeeping provide role models for pupils. Parents and carers are notified via the school blog, newsletters, in parent meetings and at other times about the importance of attendance and timekeeping, and their responsibility in ensuring regular attendance and the importance of reporting absences to school.

Parents and carers have a responsibility to notify the school if their child is going to be absent. This may be via:

- Email or a note in the school diary if the absence is known in advance (e.g., medical appointment)
- A telephone call to the school office before 9.30 on the first day of absence if the absence was unplanned (e.g., illness)

Parents and carers have a responsibility to engage constructively with school staff to support the child to attend school. Where a pupil is transported to school by parents and there is a pattern of consistently late arrival school staff will discuss this with parents and seek to offer support to resolve it. The register closes at 9.40. Anyone who arrives after this time will be marked as unauthorised absence. This will have an impact on their overall attendance.

If parents and carers would like to request leave of absence for a pupil to have time off during term time, they should complete a Leave of Absence form available from the school office and submit it at least 5 working days prior to the date of requested leave.

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The Headteacher will only authorise leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. If the Headteacher grants a leave request, then it is for the Headteacher to determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. *Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.*

Parents and carers must inform the school immediately if they or the named emergency contacts have a change of address, phone number or email address. In case of emergency we must be able to contact the parents, carers or a third named person. Parents and carers must provide this information when they first register their child and keep information up to date.

It is parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their child receives an education, and school will endeavour to work with parents and the local authority to support this. In instances where this proves unsuccessful, the school will adhere to guidance as outlined in the government publication, 'Working together to improve school attendance' which can be found here https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

The school will always act in a supportive way to absences. However, as outlined in the document above, there may be occasions where, following supportive measures not having worked, the school needs to avail itself of all options available to it, up to and including fines and even further legal action.

6. School Procedures and Responsibilities

Morning registers close at 9.40am except on days of particularly inclement weather, when the Headteacher will declare when the school register should close.

Afternoon registers close at 1.15pm.

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The register will be completed by the class teacher or delegated to a specific member of the class team. Class teachers and leaders will carry out ongoing monitoring of both attendance and punctuality.

If a child is absent from school with no reason given, or if a pupil does not return when expected to, the following procedure will apply:

On the first day:

- 1. A member of the class team will contact the office to check if a call and reason has been received. If no contact has been made a call to parents or carers will be made to seek an explanation.*
- 2. If no contact can be made by 12.00, the emergency contacts will be called. If no contact can be made with any emergency contacts by 1.30, staff will visit the home. They may knock on neighbours' doors. If staff are unable to get a reply from the home the child will be reported as missing from education and a DSL will inform social services and the local authority.*

Where a reason for absence is sought and given, the register will be amended to reflect this. However, a late arrival after the register has closed will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If a child returns to school where no contact has been able to have been made during the absence, the parents or carers will receive a letter from the Headteacher reiterating the school procedures for pupil absence.

If a parent contacts the school to say a child is ill and will be off for 4 days or more the school will do a "Safe and Well" check after the third day. This may be via telephone, video call or home visit. Where possible staff will communicate directly with the pupil.

If a child is admitted to hospital, with appropriate consent, a member of staff will contact the hospital to liaise with them about the child's care, treatment and return to school.

The school will record and monitor where pupils arrive late at school because of difficulties with organised transport (taxi or minibus). Where patterns of consistent late

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running by contractors occur school with liaison with parents and local authority SEND transport to resolve the issue.

When classes go off site during school time details must be recorded in the school office.

7. Children Out of School for Long Periods Due to Ill-Health

Where a child is out of school for long period due to ill health, as they sometimes are at Northern Counties School, staff will work with the family and medical professionals to offer support, maintain contact and to continue to deliver education through alternative means if this is in the best interests of the child. This may be through a combination of contact by phone, home or hospital visits, provision of relevant schoolwork and virtual contact with school staff and peers. On the advice of medical, or other, professionals, school will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments to support a child back to school as soon as practically possible.

8. School Refusal

In instances where a pupil is refusing to attend despite parents' best efforts, the school Wellbeing Officer and senior leadership team will support class teams in encouraging or supporting good attendance. The school may seek to work in collaboration with external agencies such as CYPS, CAMHS and social services to support the child to access education. The Headteacher will consider cases individually and decide on the most appropriate code to record this on the register.

9. Child Protection Concerns

If there are any Child Protection concerns these will be discussed with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) on the first day of absence, or subsequently if new concerns arise. The DSL will decide on the appropriate steps.

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10. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Lead Administrator and others are responsible for monitoring attendance within school on a weekly basis. Leaders will support individuals to improve their attendance where frequent or long-term absences are identified. A plan to improve school attendance will be made and a date agreed for its review. The Lead Administrator prepares attendance reports weekly for safeguarding and senior leadership teams weekly to look at all absences and take appropriate actions for individuals.

The school's will work with local authority Attendance Officers where appropriate.

Any absences of concern are reported immediately to the DSL, in person or via CPOMS

Referrals may be made to the school's Wellbeing and Engagement Officer for certain types of absence.

Therapists and other staff may also be involved in all multi-disciplinary strategies to improve attendance.

The attendance of each pupil is regularly assessed as part of the school's assessment procedure, as it impacts on learning and progress. Individual targets, interventions and motivational actions will be made, dependant on each individual's circumstances.

The Senior Leadership Team review school attendance on a half termly basis to review overall attendance and identify any patterns of concern and report to the Trust's Safeguarding group (and then into Trustees) and to the local governing board.

If no progress is made in efforts to improve attendance, the local authority will be notified. This could ultimately result in a review of school placement. The school works closely with the Attendance Officer from placing authorities.

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring overall attendance and will report each term to the Governing Body.

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11. Recording Absences

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

It is for the school, not the parent, to decide whether to authorise any absences. The school will not authorise absences in the following circumstances:

- Where no parental explanation is given.
- For extended visits overseas where no approval has been given.
- For holidays in term time (unless there are exceptional circumstances).
- For leisure days out.
- Where it is believed a parent is condoning an unnecessary absence.
- In other cases where it is deemed there is no reasonable explanation or a parent has 'removed' their child from the school without authorisation.

12. Leave of Absence

Headteachers can only grant leave of absence during term time when there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher will determine if the request for an absence in term time is exceptional and will consider each request on a case-by-case basis. Some of the reasons we may consider as supporting an application for an absence in term time are:

- Respite at Children's Hospice or similar
- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Significant family events or circumstances
- Religious festivals (maximum of 2 days per school year)

Where absence from school can be considered an "exceptional circumstance" and the pupil has an acceptable level of school attendance a request may be granted. If a

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request is made for longer than 10 consecutive days parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the request. Similarly, if multiple short breaks are requested that add up to 10 days parents/carers may be contacted to discuss the matter before a decision is made.

Governors are also committed to granting leave of absence for family respite which is only available in term time.

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