



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Northgate Primary School

Approved: April 2017
Review Due: April 2018

1. Introduction

Northgate School is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for children. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority, 2016.

Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

2. Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

3. Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Hertfordshire LA and the DfE where requested.
- To ensure all staff are aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Headteacher.

Northgate Primary School's Attendance Policy clearly states the time of the morning and afternoon sessions, including the time registers open and close:

- Main gate opens - 8:45am
- Morning registration – 8:55am – 9:10am
- Afternoon registration
- EYFY 13.00-1.15pm KS1 1.20 – 1.35 KS2 13:30pm-13:45pm

The school will call attendance registers at the start of the morning session (8:55am) and once during the afternoon session and to record whether pupils are present, absent or on an approved educational activity.

When calling the register the appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each pupil's name - gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. In marking registers, schools should use the national set of symbols as advised by the Department for Education (see Appendix)

When the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as 'N' meaning no reason yet provided for absence and any subsequent correction to the register is made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

4. Responsibilities

This attendance policy ensures that staff, governors and parents in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Parents and Carers

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have

Parents should:-

- ensure that their children arrive at Northgate School on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of the attendance policy
- impress upon their children the need to observe the Northgate's code of conduct
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with Northgate to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- notify the school if they are absent. This should be done on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the children return to school
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- should not book holidays during term time

School

Northgate will:-

- work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the pupil body as a whole - as one of their key tasks
- have clear policies in place to address persistent absence
- support parents and be sensitive to any individual parent needs in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Marking the register accurately using the codes in Appendix 1
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff see attendance as part of their responsibility
- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Evaluating trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence, including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues and if necessary putting an action plan in place
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Actively addressing all issues, such as bullying, which may lead to non-attendance
- Making referrals to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's AIO
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

- Informing Governors of attendance data and trends

Administration staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Ensuring the Absence/Late record on screen in entrance hall is completed
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher.
- Providing attendance data for the whole school and groups of children.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance each half term where there are any concerns.

5. Punctuality

Northgate will take steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness will be monitored and followed up.

School policies, brochures and website clearly state the time at which each school session begins and finishes, including the time at which registers open and close. We will not keep a register open for the whole session.

When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open they will be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.

When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session using the correct code.

When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she should be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. (Code U)

When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, his/her presence on site should be noted on the on-screen system in the school entrance for purposes of emergency evacuation, etc.

Children who are consistently late will receive a letter from the school. If it does not improve the Headteacher will arrange a meeting with the parents.

6. Responsibilities – ISL Attendance Team

The ISL Attendance Team fulfils the statutory duty of the County Council in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities.

Northgate School is supported by the Hertfordshire ISL Attendance Team service. As part of this service, we get allocated visits according to need. The purpose of each visit is to help identify pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties, agree on focused, time-limited action which needs to be taken by the school and/or the AIO, assist the school in identifying persistent absentee (PA) pupils and those at risk of becoming PA and ensuring that effective plans of action are in place.

The AIO may undertake direct work with pupils and their parents. This may include:

- arranging meetings between the school, parents and pupils
- making home visits to assess the situation and determine what action needs to be taken
- offering specific support to parents and individual pupils, either at school or elsewhere
- facilitating meetings
- enabling the pupil and parents to access appropriate support from other services and agencies

Attendance Improvement Officers will usually work with children whose absences have not been authorised. However, AIOs may work with children whose absences have been authorised, such as persistent absentee (PA) pupils.

If required, Attendance Improvement Officers will offer, or assist with, INSET sessions on a range of subjects related to attendance, including:-

- the promotion of regular school attendance
- working effectively with the AIO
- addressing persistent absence
- legal responsibilities relating to school attendance

The Use of Legal Action

If a pupil, who is registered at a school, fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Attendance Improvement Officer and the school fail to secure that pupil's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action.

For further guidance on this refer to <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml> or from the local Attendance Team Manager. Further information on Education Related Penalty Notices and School Attendance Orders can also be found here.

7. Admission & Attendance Registers

The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 as amended 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016.

It is important that the school's admission register is accurate and kept up to-date. Northgate will regularly encourage parents to inform them of any changes whenever they occur, through existing communication channels such as regular emails and newsletters. This will assist both the school and local authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education.

Where a parent notifies us that a pupil will live at another address, the school is required to record in the admission register:

- a) the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- b) the new address; and
- c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, we must record in the admission register:

- a) the name of the new school; and
- b) the date when the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

All schools are required to notify the local authority **within five days** via school admissions - <http://www.intra.thegrid.org.uk/admissions/seam.shtml> when a pupil's name is added to the admissions register at a non-standard transition point. Schools will need to provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point – at the start of the first year of education normally provided by that school.

Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Registers must be taken at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session at regular, set times. All children leaving during the day must be signed out by their parent/carer in the entrance.

When calling the register the appropriate mark and/or symbol should be placed against each pupil's name - gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. In marking registers, schools should use the national set of symbols as advised by the Department for Education.

When the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent correction to the register made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

All schools are required to notify the Local Authority of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason. This duty also extends to academies and independent schools.

Registers - Retention

When computerised registration systems are used, a print-out of the register is made not less than once a month. A print-out of the register relating to a particular school year should be bound in a single volume and retained for a period of not less than 3 years.

Removal from Roll

There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in **Regulation 8** of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

Full guidance on Removal from Roll is available at -
<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are any concerns about the pupil's welfare Northgate will contact the local Attendance Team immediately.

If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or radicalisation, the local Attendance Team is contacted immediately.

When the school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at Northgate will establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Confirmation should then be sought from the receiving school. When this information has been obtained, the school should will complete a Removal from Roll form and return it to the local Attendance Team office. Whenever a pupil leaves a school the Common Transfer File (CTF) will be completed.

If Northgate is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has "disappeared", the matter would be drawn without delay to the attention of the Local Attendance Team.

8. Authorising Absence

Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if Northgate School does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or when no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence should be treated as unauthorised and the parent informed.

All absence notes will be kept on file for at least a term and when a pupil's absence is a cause for concern to retain the notes until there is no longer a concern.

Absence should be authorised if:

- the pupil is absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body or proprietor of the school')
- the pupil is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs
- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home; and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LA for any of the following: the child's transport to and from school; boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school; enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision
- there is a close family bereavement
- leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application. (Parents should be reminded that they cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence)
- leave of absence should be granted to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (c) for which a child performance licence has been issued.

Before granting a licence the local authority must be satisfied that the child's education will not suffer. A school letter is requested as part of the licence application as confirmation of this. If a school believes a child's education will suffer as a result of taking part in a performance they should provide reasons to the local authority in writing. The information must be specific to the child (saying for example that it is against school policy is not sufficient). If the school does not provide such information the local authority will issue the licence. The absence should be recorded as code C.

Further guidance is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

- Absence should be unauthorised if no explanation is forthcoming from the parents or if the school is dissatisfied with the explanation

Requests for Family Holidays During Term time

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations which came into effect on 1st September 2013 remove all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is for the Headteacher to determine what constitutes exceptional circumstances and for them to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

9. Administrative Codes

See appendix

10. Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

Pupils who are engaged in off-site educational activities should be recorded as attending (or absent from) an approved educational activity using the appropriate code.

The key features of approved educational activity are that they must be:

- educational *and*
- approved by the school *and*
- supervised by the school or someone authorised by the school

A pupil should be recorded as approved educational activity if he/she is attending:

- a field trip or educational visit
- an approved sporting activity approved by and supervised by someone authorised by the school
- the pupil is attending an interview with a prospective employer, or another educational establishment
- an offsite educational activity

Dual Registered – at another educational establishment

Note: This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the school census. This code should be used where pupils are attending an ESC, hospital or special school on a temporary basis or for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children where they are known to be registered at another school for the session in question. Each school should only record the attendance/absence for those sessions where the pupil is expected to attend. Schools must ensure that they follow up all absence in a timely manner.

Consortia Schools

Pupils attending consortia schools need only be placed on the registers of their main school. They should be treated as “guest pupils” at the other consortia school/s. The “host” school must have robust systems in place to monitor and report the absence and attendance of “guest pupils” and this must be shared with the main school.

Schools should ensure that in the event of a fire drill or other emergency evacuation they are able to carry out an immediate headcount as to the number of pupils physically present on-site.

11. Flexi-schooling

Northgate does not consider flexi-schooling arrangements.

12. Part-time time-tables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil's needs. A part time timetable must be time limited and must not be treated as a long term solution and can only be made with parental agreement. The school should mark the sessions were the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C).

Guidance on part-time timetables is available at -

<http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016 is available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk>

Further details information and advice on all aspects of school attendance in Hertfordshire is available at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

Appendix

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Present at offsite educational activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another educational establishment	Not expected to attend this session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Holiday authorised by the school	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	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational reasons	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age pupils)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils (Planned)	Not counted in possible attendances

Detailed advice on the use of these registration codes can be found at www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00221879/advice-on-school-attendance