



Newbridge Learning Community

Attendance Policy

Subject Leader: Senior Leadership Team

Policy current at: September 25

To be reviewed: September 26

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

Education Act 1996

Equality Act 2010

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)

DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2025'

Principles

Education is important. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority.

All children are sometimes unhappy about attending school. Families can be going through unsettled times that can make regular school attendance difficult. Any problems with regular attendance, especially any concerns about possible bullying or learning difficulties, are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child at an early stage. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that school attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences are those which the staff at school do not consider reasonable or for which no "leave" has been given. These are an offence by the parent and include:

- **keeping children off school without a good reason**
- **truancy from a whole session**

- *absences which have never been properly explained*
- *children who arrive at school too late to get a mark*
- *taking unauthorised holidays*

Parents/ carers are expected to contact school staff and to work with them in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may offer parents a formal Personalised Attendance Contract.

We will also try to resolve the situation by agreement wherever possible but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, school can use legal proceedings against parents if required, including Penalty Notices (fines) or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Procedures

The school has a special responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is below the national average which is below **95%** over the school year. These are called "persistent absentees" by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence. Special procedures may be applied to children at risk of falling into this category.

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Head Teacher 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 must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Morning registration for the standard school day will take place at 8.45am. The registers will remain open until 10.00am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation ie. 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.

The afternoon registration will be at 1.00pm

The registers will close at 1.30pm

Registration for bespoke/alternative programmes will open at the start of the programme and will close one hour after the start time.

First day absence

During the pre-placement meeting with parents/carers, they will be informed of their responsibility to contact school before 10.00am on the day that their child is going to be absent.

On the first day that a child is absent if there has been no contact from parent/carer, the PFP Team will attempt to make contact, this will usually be by telephone call or text message. A record of all telephone calls/text messages will be recorded on CPOMS

Continued (or sporadic) ongoing Absences

If a child continues to be absent from school PFP worker will complete a home visit.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the PFP team to be aware and bring attention to any emerging attendance patterns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents/carers. If this is unsuccessful the school may refer to the School Health Adviser/School Nurse etc, if the problem appears to be of a medical nature.

Health Related Absence

The school recognises that pupils with health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for pupils to reduce barriers to attendance.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) Policy.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Referral to the school councillor.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and break times.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Education Penalty Notice (EPN)

An Education Penalty Notice may be issued following an Education Penalty Notice warning being sent.

School would complete Education Penalty Notice request form if a child falls within one or more of these categories within a 12 week period;

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence with under 90% attendance
- 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence

- Persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration

The Local Authority will consider issuing a Penalty Notice to each responsible parent. The use of Penalty Notices shall be restricted to one per pupil, per parent in any single academic year.

Legal action

The Attendance Service will undertake statutory casework to deliver holistic interventions to families who require enforcement action.

They will work within the legal framework to ensure that parents are held to account if improvements are not seen in a timely manner.

If you are prosecuted and found guilty of not securing your child's attendance at school, the court can impose penalties, including a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or a jail sentence of up to 3 months.

A welcome back

It is important that on return from an absence that 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 other pupils.

Absence notes

Notes 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. We record attendance concerns and strategies on our CPOMS system.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

The home/school agreement can be used in this way

Working with Parents

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families and work to build trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is

expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services.

The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education - parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, we will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, we will work with the Headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL, Emotional and Wellbeing learning Mentor and the PFP team, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, we will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

Holidays in term time

Holidays during term time are discouraged. Parents/carers will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. If parents do take their child out of school in term time to go on holiday they are required to obtain and complete a holiday form which is available from the school office **only in exceptional circumstances will this be authorised by the Headteacher**

It is not usually possible for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, minding the house, birthdays, day trips etc. Leave may however,

be granted in an emergency or for genuine pastoral reasons (e.g. after the death of close relative).

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school time wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, staff should be informed (in advance if at all possible). A "present" mark can still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives and strategies

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

Attendance awards

The school will reward pupils who have good or improving attendance. There are a variety of incentives and reward schemes used within school.

Attendance targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets is established.

Overall attendance target is set at least 95% or above, this includes pupils who are educated off site in order to reduce poor attendance and possible absence and chronic non-attendees.

The Members of staff responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Dawn Robson and Cath Bessell supported by the PFP and Admin teams as well as The Attendance Service.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Please work with us.