



Northstead Community Primary School

PUPIL ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Date of Policy Creation: Adopted NYCC model September 2019	Responsibility: Head Teacher Mr S Hopper
Updated: September 2023	Responsibility: Full Governors
Method of Communication: School website/email to parents	Date: October 2024 Headteacher: Mr S. C . Hopper Chair of Governors: Mrs J. Laybourn

This policy was rewritten in September 2024 following the DFE publication of: Working together to improve school attendance – Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities.

A copy of this can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

Summary: Working Together to Improve School Attendance

Underpinning the many benefits of school for children are aspects such as learning, wellbeing, and overall development. Recognising that daily attendance can be challenging for some, schools and local councils are committed to collaborating with families to address issues and support school attendance.

Parents' Responsibilities:

- Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child receives a suitable full-time education from ages 5 to 16.
- Exceptions for absence include illness, approved leave, or religious observance.
- Collaboration with the school is crucial for addressing unique circumstances, such as lack of transportation or temporary addresses.

Managing Absences:

- Parents should inform the school on the first day of a child's absence and may request a 'leave of absence.'
- If a child is unwell, providing medical evidence is generally not required, except in specific cases.

Accessing Support:

- Communication with the school is key if a child faces challenges attending due to issues within the school or at home.
- Support may include action plans, early help plans, or parenting contracts, with regular reviews.

Long-Term Illness or Special Needs:

- Children with long-term illnesses, special needs, or disabilities have the right to a suitable full-time education.
- Schools are expected to make reasonable adjustments, provide pastoral care, and collaborate with other services.

Anxiety and Mental Health:

- Regular school attendance contributes to mental health, but anxiety may be a concern.
- Collaborate with the school to address anxiety issues, involving support services if necessary.

Challenges with Current School Placement:

- If a child's current school placement is unsuitable, collaboration with the school, local council, and application to other schools is recommended.

Legal Actions:

- If support measures fail, parents may be invited to agree to a parenting contract or, in extreme cases, may face legal actions.
- Legal actions can include education supervision orders or, in severe cases, prosecution.

Glossary

Attendance action plan – an informal agreement between you, your child if they are old enough to understand, their school and sometimes your local council about what actions supporting your child will take to improve their attendance.

Community order – an order that can be made by a Court after you have been found guilty of knowingly failing to secure your child's regular attendance rather than sending you to prison. This may include requirements for you to take part in certain activities or observe certain rules.

Early help assessment – a voluntary assessment of what you and your family need help with to allow your child's school and/or your local council to put the right support in place or help you access the right services.

Education supervision order – an order that can be made by the Family Court to require a local council to advise, assist, and direct you and your child so that they receive suitable full-time education. This is not a criminal conviction, but persistently breaching the council's directions can lead to prosecution.

Leave of absence – permission given by your child's school for them to be absent from school for a specified period of time. You should write to the head teacher and ask for a leave of absence before the time your child needs to be absent from school. They will only be agreed to in exceptional circumstances.

Parenting contract – a formal signed agreement between you, and your child's school and/or your local council agreeing what actions you will take to improve your child's attendance and what the school/council will do to support you in this.

Parenting order – an order that can be made by a Court after you have been found guilty of failing to secure your child's regular attendance. You will be required to take part in certain activities or observe certain rules.

Reasonable adjustment – a change made by your child's school to remove or change something that is preventing your child from attending school.

Regular attendance – attending school every day that the school is open in line with the school rules apart from in a small number of allowable circumstances.

School attendance support team – the team in your local council who can help you with your child's attendance.

Special educational needs (SEN) – Children and young people with SEN all have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn than most children and young people of the same age. These children and young people may need extra or different help from that given to others.

Introduction

Good attendance and punctuality at school is important and ensures continuous learning. School encourages good attendance through making the school day and pupils' learning enjoyable. We aim to encourage a positive attitude to school to nurture learning in all pupils.

Children need to feel that their contribution in school is valued and all staff care about them as individuals.

It is crucial that parents adhere to the procedures within this policy, to ensure that all pupils are safe and their whereabouts accounted for.

The school categorises attendance and punctuality into the following groups:

Exceptional – Attendance is 99% or higher and the child is always in school on time.

Good – Attendance is 96% or higher and the child is rarely late to school.

Room for improvement – Attendance falls below 96% or the child is occasionally late to school.

Cause for Concern – Attendance is below 90% or the child is frequently late to school.

Attendance at School

Parents are legally obliged that unless there is illness or some other acceptable reason for absence, children should attend school for each session during the prescribed school days of the academic year. It is essential for safeguarding purposes that parents contact school with a reason for absence. Children are welcome to arrive on site from **8.30am** each morning. ***(Please note children should not be on site prior to this time there is no supervision available)***

Reporting Absences

Illness

Parents are expected to phone the school office by 8.30am each day a child is unwell by ringing the school number 01723 362249 and leaving a message, stating the child's name, parent/carer making the call, and reason for absence.

Parents/Carers must **not** send messages on Class Dojo regarding school absence.

Our attendance officer will contact parents/carers where school has not been informed that a child is absent.

- A child who has been given antibiotics should be kept away from school for the first 48 hours of treatment.
- A child who has been sick or who has diarrhoea should also be kept away from school until the child has been clear of the problem for 48 hours.
- Medical/dental appointments should be made out of school hours, however where this is not possible the school will require notification prior to the absence. When a child is absent for a medical appointment it is expected that they will return to school immediately following the appointment.

Please contact the office for further guidance on specific illnesses & required length of absence.

Long term Absences

Occasionally, some pupils experience health or other difficulties that prevent them from attending school for some time. School deals with each case individually, agreeing procedures for re-integrating these pupils with each family as the need arises. Please contact the Headteacher if your child would benefit from such an arrangement.

Registration and Lateness Procedures

A registration system is in place to record, in an accurate manner, attendance, lateness and absences. This complies with Government and L.A. guidelines.

- School's official starting time is **8.40am**.
- Any child arriving after this time will therefore be registered with a late mark.
- The school gates will be locked from 8.38 in order to ensure that children are in their classroom for 8.40am.
- Pupils arriving after this time should report to the school dining room (soft start) where our attendance officer will sign them into school.
- If a child arrives after registration closes (**9.10am for all pupils**) they will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the whole morning session. *Note – this is based on the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 and could be used as evidence against parents if legal action were to be considered by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.*

It is important that pupils are punctual and arrive physically and emotionally prepared for the day's learning.

Safeguarding and Attendance

When a child fails to attend school for one or more sessions this will be recorded as one absence. Absences will be shown as authorised or unauthorised, following authority guidelines. The school determines whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised using these guidelines. **If a child is absent from school and we have had no communication from parents/carers as to the reason, a member of the Safeguarding Team will undertake a home visit on the second day of absence.**

If the Safeguarding Team are unable to establish contact, the police may be asked to carry out a welfare check.

Recording and use of Absence Data

Data is collected and subsequently collated. Attendance figures are monitored for individual pupils termly and where pupils' attendance falls below 90%, the local authority categorises this as persistent absenteeism. Procedures shown in the Pupils Punctuality and Attendance Policy Statement will be followed (Appendix A) and may be shared with the NYCC Attendance and Enforcement Officer. Attendance information is passed on when pupils transfer to other schools. Attendance figures are published for individual pupils in their school report at the end of the school year.

Leave of Absence from School during Term Time

You can be fined for taking your child on holiday during term time without the school's permission.

The Department for Education requires Local Authorities to implement government regulations regarding the taking of Leave of Absence in term-time, which came into force on the 1st September 2013. The new law gives **no entitlement** to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Therefore Headteachers will only be able to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and this will still be at the discretion of the Headteacher. No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as a right.

The Education Regulations state that applications must be made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each leave application is considered individually by the school taking into account any factors presented by the family. Application forms are available from your child's school. Headteachers will also welcome early discussion with you around potential applications.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

This is not an exhaustive list and Headteachers must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school.

Where a headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is, however, final.

Please note that the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without the permission of the school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the headteacher. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court. Amendments to 2007 Penalty Notice regulations will reduce the timescales for paying a penalty notice.

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be **£80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days**. This rate is in line with inflation and is the first increase since 2012.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500.

Money raised via fines is only used by the local authority to cover the costs of administering the system, and to fund attendance support. Any extra money is returned to the government.

It's the responsibility of the local authority to decide when to issue fines to parents, meaning the process varies from council to council.

However, under the national rules, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons.

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2024/08/19/fines-for-parents-for-taking-children-out-of-school-what-you-need-to-know/>

It must be noted that taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt your child's educational progress.

Absences for part of the day

From time to time, pupils show symptoms of illness at school. School will contact parents and other family members if a child needs to go home. School asks parents to ensure we have up to date contact names and telephone numbers for this purpose.

Parents are informed that they should not send children to school who seem unwell. Pupils who are ill are often very distressed and illnesses are quickly spread.

In the event of School Closure

During winter months it occasionally becomes necessary to close the school due to adverse weather conditions. If this closure takes place at the start of the day it will be broadcast on Local *Greatest Hits Radio* and on *Class Dojo*. If the weather or other conditions mean that a decision is taken to close school during the school day parents and guardians will be texted or telephoned and asked to collect their children as soon as possible. The school staff will remain on the premises until all children have been collected.

Attendance Rewards

Aside from the reward of an education and the opportunity to learn and play with their community in school, we offer the following attendance rewards / incentives.

- Headteacher award to the class with the highest attendance every week (5 dojos for each child)
- Every child who is in school 100% every week will receive one raffle ticket per week. The child then chooses which prize they would like to be entered into. Prizes will change termly. The winner will be chosen at random from all entries. The more you are in school, the more chances you have!

How is attendance monitored?

Mr Shaun Hopper (Headteacher) monitors pupil absence daily and identifies patterns of non-attendance. This is then reported to our safeguarding team who will make contact as necessary. Mr Shaun Hopper and Mrs Vanessa Valancius (Assistant Headteacher – Behaviour and Safeguarding) examine the attendance patterns of any children for whom their attendance is below 90% every 20 days, as well as more regularly for any children who's attendance is below 80%.

Help and Support

When any child is identified as being persistently absent and their attendance record identifies irregular non-attendance, the parent and family will be invited to a meeting to discuss any support and provision that can be provided as well as any external support available.

APPENDIX A

Northstead Community Primary School

Policy statement – Pupils’ Punctuality and Attendance

(To be read in conjunction with DfE and NYCC policy statements)

The highest standards of attendance and punctuality are encouraged for all pupils at all times. School will endeavour to work with all parents/carers to assist them in carrying out their duties as required by the DfE.

Where a child’s attendance causes concern, the following parameters and actions will be considered by the Headteacher:

(Each case will be considered individually based on circumstances)

Cause for concern	Monitoring	Action(s) to be carried out
<p>90% attendance or below at any of the following points in time. End of September 2024 End of October 2024 End of half term 1 End of November 2024 End of Autumn Term End of Spring Term 1 End of Spring Term 2 End of April 2025 End of May 2025 End of June 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance will be monitored by the School regularly and attendance history considered.• Further half term monitoring period• Attendance continues to be monitored each half term• 10 day monitoring period (after issue of initial Warning Letter)• Failure to attend panel meeting or attendance continues to be a concern.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Attendance Letter 1 sent to parents/carers (Appendix B)• Attendance Letter 2 (Appendix C) to parents/carers offering support and informing them that SG&W Team will monitor their child’s attendance over next half-term.• Attendance Letter 2b (Appendix D) to parents/carers requesting meeting with C&F Attendance Mentor and/or DSL to complete EH Assessment or determine if referral to Early Help Service is required.• EH Assessment review and/or where necessary, Stage 1 Leg 1 Initial Warning letter sent (Appendix E)• Stage 2 Leg 2 letter - invitation to Attendance Panel Meeting (Appendix F)• Attendance Panel Meeting takes place with member of SLT and DSL/DDSL.• Stage 3 Local Authority contacted and legal procedure may commence.

<p>75% attendance or below at any of the following points within an academic year End of September 2024 End of October 2024 End of half term 1 End of November 2024 End of Autumn Term End of Spring Term 1 End of Spring Term 2 End of April 2025 End of May 2025 End of June 2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly monitoring by the safeguarding team. • Weekly monitoring by the safeguarding team continues until attendance is above “persistent absentee” level (>90%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone call for each absence to determine reasons • Welfare Visits carried out where necessary (eg. unable to make contact with parent) • Safeguarding team / DSL Meetings with parents and support offered via an Early Help Assessment. • 4-6 weekly EH Assessment Review meetings with parents to identify improvements made / ongoing concerns. • Medical evidence requested for each absence. • Where poor attendance presents a significant safeguarding concern, actions will be taken in line with Northstead’s Child Protection Policy
<p>Repeated arrival at school after 8.40am. (Repeated defined as an average of 3 late arrivals per week)</p>	<p>This will be marked in the class register as a LATE.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring for the half term (<i>continued concerns</i>) • Monitoring for a further half term (<i>continued concerns</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone call / Punctuality Letter 1 (Appendix G) to parents/carers to identify the issue as a concern. • Punctuality Letter 2 (Appendix H) to parents/carers identifying ongoing concerns, requesting that the matter is addressed and offering support. • Meeting with the safeguarding team and consideration of EH Assessment to identify possible barriers and offer support.
<p>Repeated arrival at school after 9.10am (Repeated defined as an average of 3 late arrivals per week)</p>	<p>This will be marked in the class register as an UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE for the session.</p>	<p>See attendance procedures above.</p>

APPENDIX B

Attendance Letter 1 (AL1)

Date:

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

Name:

DOB :

Class :

At Northstead Community Primary School we have a duty to monitor attendance very carefully and, in line with our school's attendance policy, contact families to inform you if your child's attendance falls below 90%.

I am writing to inform you that for this academic year to date, has achieved% attendance. This equates to missed sessions.

As an acceptable level of attendance is a minimum of 96% (school target) the school are concerned about this level of absence. I recognise that at this early stage in the academic year even a relatively small number of days of absence significantly impacts attendance levels, however I am obliged to let you know your child's current level of attendance because it constitutes persistent absenteeism.

Irregular school attendance may have a serious impact on your child's academic progress if it is allowed to continue and you are legally responsible for ensuring his/her regular and punctual attendance.

We understand there may, at times, be unavoidable, genuine reasons for your child's absence - for example illness; and that there may also be times when the school has authorised a leave of absence for your child during term time due to exceptional circumstances. However, these all contribute to your child's overall absence rate and risk impacting their academic and other progress.

We ask that you always inform school as soon as possible of the reasons for any absence your child has and are aware that you may well have done so using our absence line and request for 'leave of absence in exceptional circumstances' process. If this is the case we thank you for doing so, if not, please use these facilities in future to help us safeguard your child and others at the school.

If your child continues to have absences and school are uncertain of the reasons offered, you may be requested to provide medical or other evidence before any further absence can be authorised. Medical evidence should be in the form of a doctor's note, GP surgery print-out, appointment card or prescription.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs V Valancius
Assistant Headteacher

Mrs L Roberts

APPENDIX C

Attendance Letter 2 (AL2)

Date:

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

Name:

Dob:

Last half term, you received a letter informing you that your child's attendance was below 90% and that it would continue to be monitored by the school. Their attendance continues to be a concern.....has only achieved% attendance so far this academic year. This equates to..... missed sessions.

This level of attendance is below the threshold by which the Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as being a persistent absentee (90% and below). This can seriously affect your child's academic progress if allowed to continue.

All parents who have children of compulsory school age have a legal responsibility to ensure that they receive an efficient education.

Parents whose children are registered at this school are therefore responsible for ensuring that they attend regularly, punctually and stay in school during school hours. Failure to do so is an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

The Safeguarding and Welfare team will now continue to closely monitor your child's attendance for the next half term. Should your child's attendance decline and continue to be a cause for concern you will be invited into school for an Attendance Meeting in accordance with the next stage of the School Attendance Procedures. You will be expected to attend this meeting where we can discuss issues impacting on your child's attendance and look at ways we can work together to improve this situation. This meeting will be with a member of the Safeguarding and Welfare Team.

Should you have any further queries or require any further support then please contact school on the number above, and speak to a member of the Safeguarding and Welfare Team.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Vanessa Valancius

*Assistant Headteacher,
Designated Safeguarding Lead.*

Miss Lisa Roberts

*Safeguarding and Welfare Officer,
Designated Safeguarding Lead.*

APPENDIX D

Attendance Letter 2b (AL2b)

Date:

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

Name:

DOB :

Class :

Last half term, you received a letter informing you that 's attendance was below 90% and that it would continue to be monitored by the school. Your child's attendance continues to be a concern. has only achieved% attendance so far this academic year. This equates to..... missed sessions (two sessions is equivalent to one school day).

This level of attendance is below the threshold by which the Department for Education (DfE) defines a pupil as being a persistent absentee (90% and below). This can seriously affect your child's academic progress if allowed to continue.

All parents who have children of compulsory school age have a legal responsibility to ensure that they receive an efficient education.

Parents whose children are registered at this school are therefore responsible for ensuring that they attend regularly, punctually and stay in school during school hours. Failure to do so is an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

You will now be invited to an Attendance Meeting in accordance with the next stage of the School Attendance Procedures. You are expected to attend this meeting where we can discuss issues impacting on your child's attendance and look at ways we can work together to improve this situation. This meeting will be with a member of the Safeguarding and Attendance Team.

Please can you therefore contact school within the next 5 school days, on the telephone number above, and speak to a member of the Safeguarding and Welfare Team to arrange a suitable date and time.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Vanessa Valancius
Assistant headteacher
Designated Safeguarding Lead

Miss Lisa Roberts
Safeguarding & Welfare Officer
Designated Safeguarding Lead

APPENDIX E

Attendance Letter 3 (AL3)

Date :

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

Initial Warning Letter

Name:

Dob:

As your child's current attendance stands at %, it falls below the threshold of a persistent absentee as defined by the Department for Education (90%) The absences also include unauthorised absences under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Your child's attendance will now be closely monitored by the school for the next 10 school days. Should 's attendance continue to be of concern, it will become necessary to arrange an Attendance Panel Meeting in accordance with the next stage of the School Attendance Procedures. You will be expected to attend this meeting, bringing your child with you when requested.

Any further absence your child may have due to illness must now be supported by medical evidence before authorisation is possible by the school and it remains your responsibility to provide this evidence.

May I remind you that it is the legal duty of parents/carers to secure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at school or other educational placement.

Failure to do so is an offence under the Education Act 1996 Section 444 and, following referral to the Local Authority for statutory intervention, may be dealt with by the following: a Prosecution in the Magistrates Courts under s444 (1) or (1A) of the above Act, a Penalty Notice being issued which is a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days, or an application made to the Family Courts for an Education Supervision Order under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989.

You will have the right to pursue your own legal representation regarding the above.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact either myself or a member of the Attendance Team the school telephone number.

Yours sincerely,

S Hopper

Mr S Hopper
Headteacher

Encl: School Attendance Procedure – Time Restricted
Information for Parents/Carers – Rights and Responsibilities

APPENDIX F

Attendance Letter 4 (AL4)

Date :

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms

Name:

Dob:

An Initial Warning letter was issued to you on Unfortunately, the attendance of your child continues to be unsatisfactory despite this and further contact between yourself and the Attendance Team in relation to these concerns.

It is now necessary to arrange an **Attendance Panel Meeting** to be held at **Northstead Community Primary School, on at**in accordance with the school's Attendance Procedures. Would you please bring..... with you to the meeting or if in school he/she will be asked to join us (if appropriate).

It must be emphasised again that it is the duty of those with parental responsibility to secure the regular attendance of their children at school. Failure to do so is an offence under Section 444 (1) or (1A) of the Education Act 1996.

If you are unable to attend the meeting, please contact the school direct, to discuss an alternative time. If you fail to attend, and do not provide a reason, then this can be used as evidence of your unwillingness to cooperate and the meeting may go ahead in your absence. You may wish to pursue your own legal representation with regard to any of the above proceedings.

Yours sincerely

S Hopper

Mr S Hopper
Headteacher

APPENDIX G

Punctuality Letter (PL1)

Date :

Dear Mr/ Mrs/Ms

Name:

DOB :

Class :

I am writing to inform you that..... 's lateness to school may be having an impact on their progress. Since the start of the school year, has been late on a total of occasions.

This lateness is minutes, which equates to hours of missed learning.

Late arrival can cause children to be unsettled, and often takes the teacher away from the focus of the lesson to helpsettle in and catch up.

Our pupils need to be present for the start of school at 08:40 each day and I should be grateful if you would do everything possible to ensure that..... is present before then so that they can make a good start to school every day alongside their fellow classmates.

Yours sincerely

S Hopper

Mr S Hopper
Headteacher

APPENDIX H

Punctuality Letter (PL2)

Date :

Dear Mr/ Mrs/Ms

Name:

DOB :

Class :

Last half term, we informed you that 's late arrival at school was becoming a cause for concern.

We are writing to inform you that 's late arrival on a morning continues to be a concern. Since the start of the school year, has been late on a total of occasions.

..... has been minutes late to school during this period, which equates to hours of missed learning.

As stated in our earlier letter, late arrival can cause children to be unsettled, and often takes the teacher away from the focus of the lesson to help settle in and catch up on missed lesson time. Our pupils need to be present for the start of school at 8:40am each day so that they can make a positive start to their day alongside their fellow classmates.

We would be grateful if you could address the concerns around late arrival to ensure that arrives at school prior to 8.40am on a regular basis.

Should you have any queries or require any further support please contact school on the number above, and speak to a member of the Safeguarding and Welfare Team, who may be able to offer support if you are experiencing difficulties getting to school on a morning.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Vanessa Valancius

Assistant headteacher

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Miss Lisa Roberts

Safeguarding & Welfare Officer

Designated Safeguarding Lead