# **NORTON CANES HIGH SCHOOL**

# ATTENDANCE POLICY



Version Control	Date	Author	Amendment
2	October 2023	S Diggory	5.2 Addition on Arbor app for updating parent contact details 5.3.1 Times updated for September 2023 new start times 6.1.3 inclusion of how parents can apply for leave and response time Pg 14 inclusion of Child Missing in Education Pg 15 Inclusion of Elective Home education Pg 16 inclusion in appendix of impact of absence and lateness

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# 1. Aims and principles

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- > Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- > Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- ➤ Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Regular and punctual attendance is essential for effective learning and children should be at the school, on time, every day it is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and has safeguarding implications.

Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary age groups.

# 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the <u>school attendance guidance</u> from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on <u>school attendance parental responsibility measures</u>. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

  This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

# 3. Safeguarding

- 3.1.1 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility and is the number one priority for Norton Canes High School.
- 3.1.2. Difficulties with attendance and lateness may be signs that something is worrying a child and they and/or their family are in need of early help and support.

- 3.1.3. Lack of, or erratic attendance, persistent absence or children missing education are safeguarding issues and must act as a warning sign to a range of concerns including neglect, sexual abuse, child sexual or child criminal exploitation. They may also be an indication of child-on-child abuse including bullying and sexual harassment or significant mental ill health concerns. They must not be seen as purely isolated attendance concerns.
- 3.1.4. Where children have or have had a social worker or are in need of safeguarding support, this will inform decisions about attendance issues.
- 3.1.5. Staff will maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here'.
- 3.1.6. More information on safeguarding and the protection of children can be found in the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

### 3.2. Vulnerable children

It is also important for parents/carers/social workers to let the school know of any specific vulnerability in relation to their child or home circumstances. If you are uncertain about what would be considered a vulnerability, please contact Miss Y Powell, Designated Safeguarding Lead.

## 3.3. Learning

We know from experience and from studies that regular absence and poor punctuality can have a detrimental effect on a child's learning. When a child is absent or arrives late it disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning not only of that child but also that of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility and permitting absence from the school without a good reason constitutes an offence in law and may result in a penalty notice or prosecution.

## 3.4 The Law Relating to attendance and safeguarding

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that:

"the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have either at school or otherwise"

# 3.5 Compulsory School Age

- 3.5.1. A child must start full-time education once they reach compulsory school age. This is on
- 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following their fifth birthday whichever comes first.
- 3.5.2. A child can leave school on the last Friday in June if they will be 16 by the end of the summer holidays. (see attendance coding guide in 'School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities')
- 3.5.3. They must then do one of the following until they're 18:
- stay in full-time education, for example at a college
- start an apprenticeship or traineeship
- spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training

## 4. Roles and responsibilities

### 4.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 4.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

Implementation of this policy at the school

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 4.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### 4.4 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

#### 4.5 School office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## 5. Recording attendance

## 5.1 Attendance register

- 5.1.1The school will keep an admission register and attendance register. The contents of which includes:
- All children on roll at the school
- All children's personal details including full legal name
- At least two, and preferably three, telephone numbers for different trusted adults
- The date of admission (or re-admission)
- Information regarding parents and carers
- Details of the school last attended.
- 5.1.2. The school will enter children on the admissions register at the beginning of the first day on which it has been agreed by the school that the child will start, or the day that the school has been notified that the child will attend the school.

- 5.1.3. The school will take and submit the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. This will be done within the first 10 minutes.
- 5.1.4. On each occasion, we will record children's attendance using the national codes. (For details of current national attendance codes see School attendance guidance School attendance guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- 5.1.5. Children will be marked absent if they were not in the school during the period when the register is open.

# 5.2. Family Contact Details

In order to allow us to safeguard children it is important that parents and carers provide the school with their current contact details and provide at least three other contact numbers of trusted adults in case of emergency.

Parents can update their details in the Arbor App

# 5.3 The School Day

5.3.1 Pupils must arrive in school by 8:35 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:40 and will be kept open until 9:10am. Your child will receive a 'late' mark if they are not in by 8:40am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12:25 and will be kept open until 12:55pm.

- 5.3.2. If your child arrives after the registers are closed, they will receive an unauthorised absence mark. Students arriving after this time should report to main reception where a member of the reception team will update the register. Parents are notified by text message.
- 5.3.3 Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information

/ instructions and news for the day. Late arriving children also disrupt lessons. It can also be embarrassing for the child; this can encourage absence.

5.3.4 If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Attendance Officer with support from the Deputy Headteacher/Head of Year to discuss and seek a resolution to the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

# 6 Types of absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by telephoning the main school office on 01543 622600 or emailing <a href="mailto:office@nortoncanes-high.staffs.sch.uk">office@nortoncanes-high.staffs.sch.uk</a>. A reason for the absence must be given and an expected return date.

If we do not receive contact by 9:00am, a text will be sent requesting a reason for the absence.

A follow up phone call will be made within 48 hours if the child is still absent without reason.

### 6.1 Authorised absence

An authorised absence is where the school has either given permission in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered is accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- Illness, medical or dental appointments for which the school has granted leave (appointments should be made outside the school day where possible)
- Unavoidable cause (which is expected to be an emergency and unavoidable)
- Days of religious or cultural observance for which the school has granted leave
- Traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment which has been agreed with the school
- Other exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the headteacher i.e. funerals, weddings (see section below for further information).

If the authenticity of the absence is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this.

When a student is feeling unwell in school, they must not contact home directly. They must report to reception who will contact first aid and then if the student needs to go home. A member of staff will contact home to arrange this.

### **Leave in Term Time**

- 6.1.1. There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from the school in term time.
- 6.1.2 Taking leave in term time will affect your child's education as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in term time.
- 6.1.3. We require parents to observe the term times of the school. All applications for a leave of absence must be made in advance to the headteacher and will only be considered if there are exceptional circumstances. Parents can request this through an application form obtained from school reception which will be responded to within 5 working days. Parents will be notified via email from the Attendance Officer.
- 6.1.4. If the school grants a leave request, we will determine the length of time that the child can be away from the school. We do not have the discretion to authorise holidays during term time.
- 6.1.5. In making a decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.
  - 6.1.6. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.
  - (A referral to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice payable of a £60 or £120 fine
  - A referral to the Local Authority for prosecution under s444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000
  - A referral for prosecution under s444(1)(a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment).
- 6.1.7. Each request for absence under an exceptional circumstance category will be considered individually.
- 6.1.8. When making the decision the following factors may be considered:
  - The amount of time requested
  - The age of the child
  - The child's general absence/attendance record
  - Proximity to internal or external test/examinations

- Length of the proposed leave
- · Child's capacity to catch up any work missed
- Childs educational needs
- · General welfare of the child
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- · Frequency of the activity,

### and

When the request was made.

When leave of absence has been granted, the absence will be recorded as authorised, using the appropriate register symbol.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events which are unavoidable.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but not exhaustive):

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- ➤ Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Funeral of a parent, grandparent or sibling
- Wedding of a parent or sibling
- Sporting events or performing arts competitions at county or national level, if the child is participating
- Graduation ceremony of an immediate family member

It is not school policy to authorise absences for family holidays in term time.

#### 6.2 Unauthorised absence

An unauthorised absence is where either no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is not considered acceptable by the school

#### This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children from attending the school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a late mark i.e. after registers have closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed
- Leaving the school without permission during the school day (truancy)

If an absence is recorded as unauthorised and absence is causing a concern the school may refer this to the Local Authority's Education Service at any point.

The Local Authority can use various sanctions to promote regular attendance such as issuing a Penalty Notice Fine or initiate court proceedings.

Whilst any child may be absent sometimes, it can be that they are reluctant to attend or there are safeguarding concerns

Any problems with regular absence are best sorted out between the school and the parents/carers and the child.

### 6.3. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

- 6.3.1. A child is considered to be a 'persistent absentee' (PA) if they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason.
- 6.3.2. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that level is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.
- 6.3.3. PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through weekly meetings between the Attendance Officer/EWO and the relevant Head of Year and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment.

- 6.3.4. All our PA children and their parents/carers will be supported through an action plan. The plan may include:
- Regular and agreed contact to monitor attendance
- Agreed actions of parents, student and school
- Home visits (where appropriate)
- Allocation of additional support through a mentor / internal support
- 6.3.5. All PA cases are also automatically made known to: -

The Deputy Headteacher for Behaviour and Attitudes and the Headteacher through the line management process and Governors through Governors Meetings.

6.3.6. If your child has, or is at risk of, reaching the threshold for PA, you will be asked to provide evidence for any future absence. This may be medical evidence for illness which can be in the form of prescriptions, medicine packaging or hospital letters.

# 6.4 Suspensions and exclusions

6.4.1. All incidents where a child is sent home due to poor behaviour, will be coded on the register as an exclusion, even if pre-agreed with a parent, i.e., children being sent home during lunch times. If an exclusion is for part of the day (including lunch-time), it will be noted as a half day exclusion.

## Safeguarding

- 6.4.2. Whilst a child is excluded from school, parents have a duty to ensure that their child is safe and well and appropriately supervised at home.
- 6.4.3. A child must not be present in a public place during school hours throughout the exclusion period, unless there is reasonable justification for this. Parents may be liable to prosecution and/or receive a penalty notice from the local authority if their child is present in a public place during school hours during the dates of the exclusion. It will be for the parent to show reasonable justification.
- 6.4.4. The headteacher will take account of the legal duty of care when sending a child home following an exclusion.
- 6.4.5. The school will continue to ensure regular safe and well checks are completed. This is particularly important for additionally vulnerable children
- 6.4.6. Following a permanent exclusion, safe and well checks will be carried out until the result of any appeal is known.

# 6.5 Alternative provision

6.5.1. All professionals have a statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The tracking and reporting of attendance at alternative provision

is an essential component in achieving this. Children at alternative provision are additionally vulnerable and will be closely monitored.

- 6.5.2. The senior leader with responsibility for alternative provision is Mrs Tuli, Deputy Headteacher.
- 6.5.3. The arrangements for monitoring of attendance, contacting of parents and carrying out safe and well checks will form part of a written individual plan, agreed with the child, parents and alternative provider before the child begins their placement.
- 6.5.4. Attendance at off-site alternative provision will be monitored daily by the attendance officer who will ensure that swift action is taken when a child does not attend their alternative provision place.
- 6.5.5. The school will make regular contact with the alternative provision to check on well -being and academic progress.
- 6.5.6. Alternative providers are required to contact the school on the first day by 9.30am whenever the child is absent.
- 6.5.7. The senior leader with responsibility for alternative provision will ensure arrangements are in place to formally monitor, report on attendance at alternative provision to SLT on a weekly basis, liaising with the DSL, SENCo, LAC coordinator or other key colleagues as necessary.
- 6.5.8. Children whose attendance falls below the school's target will have a plan put in place to support better attendance
- 6.5.9. There is an expectation that any safeguarding concerns are raised with the designated safeguarding lead and that all alternative providers adhere to the child protection and safeguarding policies held by the school.

### 6.6. Part-time timetables

- 6.6.1. All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Schools have a statutory duty to provide full time education for all children
- 6.6.2. In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary parttime timetable to meet a child's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a child from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.
- 6.6.3. A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term solution. Any individual support programme or other agreement will have a time limit by which point the child is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.
- 6.6.4. There will be an identified lead person with responsibility for monitoring the part -time timetable
- 6.6.5. Part time timetables will last no longer than 6 weeks and formal written reviews will take place at least fortnightly and will include the child, parents/carers and other professionals as appropriate.

6.6.6. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a child being absent for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

# Safeguarding

6.6.7. The school will ensure that the DSL has been consulted, a risk assessment carried out and suitably robust arrangements are in place to ensure the ongoing safeguarding of any child on a part time timetable.

# 6.7 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 7. Strategies for promoting attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents/carers/social workers, children and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide parents / carers with details on attendance in the school newsletter, student reports and general correspondence if there are concerns with student's attendance.
- Report to parents on how their child is performing what their attendance rate is;

- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events;
- Run promotional events when parents, children and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

# 8. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school each day their child is ill, unless the length of time is known.

If a pupil's unauthorised absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

School collects and stores attendance data and may be used for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

## 9. Children Missing in Education

Schools have a duty by law to refer any absence of 20 days or more to Local Authority Children Missing in Education department where they have been unable to establish contact with the parent/pupil or have general concerns about the absence.

To avoid any referrals, parents are requested to inform the school if they are moving house/area or country and to provide a forwarding address, contact number and the name of the new school if known.

#### 10. Elective Home Education

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child, school will contact the parent and discuss their reasons in more detail, offering support to deal with any issues raised. If after this time the parent still wishes to home educate their child, the school will inform the Local Authority of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register.

Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record. Prior to deciding to home educate, parents are requested to contact Local Authority Elective Home Education department.

# 11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

# 12. Monitoring Evaluation and Review of Policy

The governing body reviews this policy every year. The governors may, however, review the policy earlier than this, if the government introduces new regulations, or if the governing body receives recommendations on how the policy might be improved.

The Headteacher will report to the Governors relevant aspects of the working of the policy as appropriate.

The Governors will review the policy **annually** or as appropriate.

## Appendix:

# 1. Impact of absence:

There are strong and proven links between pupil attendance and educational achievement. Just 17 days absent from school in a year could mean a drop in a GCSE grade within all subjects.

Missed number of	Missed number of	Missed number of	Missed number of
days	sessions	weeks	lessons
1	2	0	5
3	6	0.5	15
5	10	1	25
7.5	15	1.5	35
10	20	2	50
12.5	25	2.5	65
15	30	3	75
17.5	35	3.5	90

# Impact of lateness:

Over a school year -

5 minutes late every day = 3 days absent 15 minutes late every day = 10 days absent 30 minutes late every day = 19 days absent

# 2. Other relevant guidance/advice

- Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2021- statutory guidance for schools Keeping children safe in education 2021 (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Working together to safeguard children statutory guidance for safeguarding partners <u>Working</u>
   Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (legislation.gov.uk)
- + School attendance main guidance Aug 2020 School attendance guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- School attendance Covid addendum ongoing updating by DfE check website for latest version <u>Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus</u> (<u>COVID-19</u>) during the 2021 to 2022 <u>academic year - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u>

- + Looked After Children <u>Promoting the education of looked-after children and</u> previously looked-after children (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs Statutory guidance for local authorities January 2013 <u>Additional</u> <u>health needs guidance (publishing.service.gov.uk)</u>
- Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities Sept 2016
   Stat guidance template (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Children Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils: supporting access to education - Case study - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Statutory Guidance on Children who run away or go missing from home or care <u>Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care</u> <u>(publishing.service.gov.uk)</u>
- Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation Department for Education (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- NSPCC Protecting children from sexual exploitation | NSPCC Learning
- Elective home education guidance for local authorities April 2019 <u>Elective home</u> <u>education: departmental guidance for local authorities (publishing.service.gov.uk)</u>
- → Elective home education a guide for parents April 2019 <u>Elective home</u> education: guide for parents (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Alternative Provision Statutory guidance for local authorities Jan 2013
   Alternative Provision statutory guidance for loval authorities
   (publishing.service.gov.uk)