



Nursery Hill Primary

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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By

NEXT REVIEW DATE: September 2024

Signed: Alexis Gardner Chair of Governors

Signed: Sarah Jeans Headteacher

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Introduction:

Nursery Hill Primary School provides a welcoming and caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels part of the school community and secure.

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to enable attendance. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.

Aims/Objectives:

We will always encourage pupils to strive for 100% attendance, however, we do understand that this is not always possible and have therefore set a school attendance target of **96%** for the academic year 2023/2024. To support this we will aim to:

- Improve the overall percentage of pupils at school.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teachers and governors.
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Implement a system of rewards and interventions.
- Promote effective partnerships with the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) and with other services and agencies.
- Recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data

Statutory Duty of Schools:

Under The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present or absent at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

An entry must be made on the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll. We follow Department for Education (DfE) guidance when coding attendance for Nursery children. In line with the Charlie Taylor report on Improving Attendance (2012), we monitor the attendance of our children and aim to support parents in improving attendance where there is a concern.

Parental Responsibility And / Or Day-To-Day Carer:

Parents/guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise under section 7 of the Education Act 1996:-

'Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'

Estranged parents with whom the child has had regular contact may be prosecuted as well as the day-to-day carer. Each situation must be dealt with on an individual basis, always remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern. The term 'parent' also includes those who are not a natural parent but have parental responsibility for the child as defined by the Children Act 1989 or who have care of the child as defined by the Education Act 1996.

Legal Framework:

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude; to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

Prosecution

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to regularly attend the school which he/she is registered at, then the parent/guardian is guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notice

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced new powers for designated Local Education Officers, Head teachers and the police to issue penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27 February 2004. Penalty notices must be issued in a manner which conforms to all requirements of the Human Rights Act and all relevant Equal Opportunities Legislation. To this aim the Local Authority has a Code of Conduct in relation to issuing Penalty Notices.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure a pupil's attendance at school.

How to Report an Absence:

If a child is absent for any reason, the school should be informed by the parent/carer (not family friends or siblings) on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return and reason for absence.

This should then be followed up in the form of a written note on return to school outlining the reasons for absence and duration of absence. Any absences for which the school have received no explanation or when the school has reason to doubt the offered explanation will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Wherever possible, parents are expected to make routine appointments such as dental or medical, outside of school time and/or in school holidays.

Categories of Absence:

There are two categories of absence:

- (i) Authorised (approved)
- (ii) Unauthorised (not approved)

Absences can only be authorised by the Head teacher (or designated member of staff).

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. For example, if the child has been unwell and the parents telephones the school to explain the absence and follows up in writing.

Only the school can authorise an absence, parents **do not** have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, an absence can be unauthorised even if the child is absent with the support of a parent i.e. Leave of Absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

A child arriving after the close of registers without good reason and truancy will also be classified as an unauthorised absence.

Punctuality:

When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom where everyone else is settled.

Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher, therefore everyone's education is compromised.

Punctuality is vitally important and is a life skill that reaches into employment in later life. Pupils who are persistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. 10 minutes of lateness a day is equal to 31 hours of education being lost per academic year.

	AM Session	PM Session
Registration	8.45am	1.00pm
Close of Register (unauthorised late)	9:15am	1.30pm

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The school day officially starts at 8.45am, when the register is taken. If a child arrives after 8.45am and before 9.00am they will be marked as late, and receive an 'L' code. If a child arrives in school after 9.15am, registration will have closed and the child will receive a 'U' code, which is an unauthorised absence mark.

All pupils arriving late to school must sign in at the school office and reasons for lateness are required for the school records.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, a **Punctuality Letter** will be sent to notify a child's parents / carers of the lateness and offering them the opportunity to discuss this. If punctuality remains of concern, the child / parents may be invited to a meeting to discuss this, to enable the reasons for lateness to be understood. If appropriate, a Punctuality Action Plan will be put in place.

Where the total attendance of a child whose punctuality is of concern falls below the whole school attendance target, the [Staged Approach](#) of this policy will have precedence.

Persistent Absences:

The government uses the term Persistent Absence to refer to absence of 10% or more, whether authorised or unauthorised.

There are of course, good reasons (especially illness), which make attendance at school sometimes difficult. Nevertheless, lessons missed cannot be repeated and 'catching up' on work is never as good as the original learning experience. Pupils with persistent absence are often unlikely to attain their full potential at school, are at risk of failing to stay in education after leaving and are more at risk of other negative outcomes. It follows that if schools and local authorities focus on this high-risk group they will be in a strong position to make progress in the range of outcomes for children and young people for which they are accountable.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Improved school attendance can only be achieved if viewed as a whole school approach which works in conjunction with families and the wider community. The school will endeavour to promote good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of every member of staff and not just teachers. The school will use a range of strategies and procedures to address attendance or punctuality issues and will promptly investigate any absenteeism, liaising closely with parents.

We will:

- Provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Provide an empathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns

Governors

We expect that Governors will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted within school, including pupils, parents and staff
- Annually review the school's Attendance and Punctuality Policy
- Identify a Governor with responsibility for monitoring attendance.
- Require the Head teacher/Attendance Lead to report on attendance and punctuality at termly Governing body meetings
- Ensure that the school comply with The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 and appropriate amendments, DfE coding guidance and other related legislation
- Attend and assist staff in meetings with parents where appropriate
- Consider, on an annual basis, if the school would benefit from a subscription to the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service

The Leadership Team

The Leadership team will nominate appropriate members of the school staff with individual responsibilities:

Attendance Lead

- Ensure that all staff receive as part of their induction and ongoing CPD training in supporting families identified as an attendance concern
- Ensure that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 (including amendments), DfE coding guidance and other related legislation is complied with
- Report schools' attendance data to the Governing body for each governors meeting (half termly)
- Ensure that attendance data is collated, analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions to attendance concerns, meet and work with families to improve attendance

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- Ensure accurate records are maintained in relation to attendance including minutes to meetings
- Evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Engage with a multi-agency response to support families and pupils to improve attendance
- Implement systems to report and monitor attendance of pupils of at alternative education provision
- Instigate where appropriate an Early Help process

Class Teachers

- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents and actively promote the importance and value of good attendance
- Ensure that as a whole school approach to reinforce good attendance; good teaching and learning experiences
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality
- Reward and recognise good attendance and punctuality
- Use staged interventions to establish guidelines and boundaries to sustain excellent attendance and punctuality concerns
- Ensure accurate records are kept in relation to attendance including minutes to meetings.

Administration Staff

- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents
- Escalate to Attendance Lead absences of pupils of concern and if contact has not been established with home
- Regularly analyse attendance data
- Utilise the SIMS system to ensure that accurate records are kept in relation to reasons for absences

Parents/Carers

To support their child in attending school we ask that all parents/carers:

- Ensure their child's regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Talk to their child about school and take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress, instilling the value of education and regular school attendance
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and fully prepared for the school day
- Contact school by 9.30am each day their child is absent from school. Failure to advise school of a reason for absence could result in a home visit where appropriate.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- Attend meetings as requested to discuss attainment and attendance where appropriate

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- Contact the school to discuss any planned absences (i.e. funerals) prior to the absence
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences, where possible make appointments for doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details
- Ensure that their child is collected promptly at the end of the day
- Avoid arranging family holidays during term time

Pupils

We expect that a pupil will:

- Attend school regularly and arrive punctually
- Arrive well prepared for the day ahead
- Speak to an adult if they are experiencing difficulties

Monitoring Procedures:

Pupils who are in school every day find learning more satisfying and manage the demands of the school day in a more positive way. The school monitors the attendance of all pupils and uses a staged approach to address any issues.

Staged Approach To the Management of Attendance

Whole school attendance is monitored at a minimum of every half term but more frequently as appropriate to the needs of the school.
The whole school attendance target is based on an evaluation of the last 3/5 years previous attendance.
Attendance is more closely evaluated of pupils whose attendance is below the whole school target.

Stage	Trigger	Outcome
1	Attendance falls below the whole school target and the child's attendance is of concern.	Letter 1 will be sent to parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing concern about attendance • Informing the parents of current attendance • Enclosing a registration certificate • Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the nature of 'persistent absence' • Welcoming the parents to arrange contact the school if they wish to discuss attendance further. Attendance is monitored for a fixed period.
2	Parents have received a Stage 1 letter and attendance remains of concern.	Letter 2 will be sent to parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing parents of ongoing concern about attendance • Informing the parents of current attendance • Enclosing a registration certificate • Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the nature of 'persistent absence'

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notifying parents that the child's attendance is being monitored and of the duration of the monitoring period. • Welcoming the parents to arrange contact the school if they wish to discuss attendance further. <p>Attendance is monitored for a fixed period.</p>
3	Parents have received a Stage 2 letter and attendance remains of concern.	<p>Letter 3 will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing parents of ongoing concern about attendance • Informing the parents of current attendance • Enclosing a registration certificate • Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the definition of 'persistent absence' • Requesting that the parents provide medical evidence of absence for illness, to enable the school to consider the authorisation of absence. • Inviting parents to an appointment with the Attendance Lead on a specific date, with the purpose of discussing attendance, agreeing an action plan of support, considering whether it may be appropriate to involve outside agencies, and setting an internal school attendance target. • Notifying parents that should they chose not to attend, the meeting may take place without them and a target set.
4	Parents have failed an internal school attendance target and attendance is below the level of Persistent Absence (90%)	<p>Letter 4 will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing parents of ongoing concern about attendance • Informing the parents of attendance during the target period. • Enclosing a registration certificate • Notifying parents that the school intends to discuss their child's attendance with its Education Casework Officer, of the Warwickshire Attendance Service, and may make a formal referral.
	During a monitoring period, attendance improves.	<p>A Letter of Praise will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing the parents of attendance during the monitoring period. • Notifying parents that the school will continue to monitor attendance to ensure sustained improvement.

Rewards:

The school promotes regular attendance in the following ways: Assemblies, school values statement, PSHE and through rewards. Attendance is discussed and Registration Certificates are shared during Parent Consultations and in School Reports. Along with other reports, attendance records are passed on to receiving schools when a child moves school.

All the children who have outstanding attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance awarded at Merit Assembly every term. Annual awards are also given, awarded at the end of year Merit Assembly.

Leave of Absence Regulations

The Government have issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent, i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Attendance, Compliance and Enforcement Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council's Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).

- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Nursery:

Whilst Nursery and Pre School children are not of statutory age the school's high expectations of attendance and punctuality still apply. Legal sanctions cannot be applied to children not of statutory age; however, all other practices and procedures will be applied in order to ensure an early commitment from parents/carers towards their child's education and attainment.

The Improving Attendance at School – Charlie Taylor report 2012 supports the importance of early years attendance monitoring. Therefore the school will record the attendance of nursery age pupils in line with the DfE Attendance coding guidance.

Deletions from the Register:

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

Nursery Hill Primary School will follow Warwickshire County Councils Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

Performance:

It is important to set realistic targets. The school will look at the interventions as part of the evaluation process in order to maintain their effectiveness.

When evaluating success the school will consider whether or not:

- Attendance has improved
- Punctuality has improved
- Persistent absence has reduced
- Parental response to absence has improved
- Re-integration plans have been successful
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance within the school, governing body and the local community
- Pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within the school

It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role that must be carried out in order to raise standards. Promoting attendance is the responsibility of the whole school and the attendance policy is supported by our Anti-Bullying Policy, Exclusions Policy and Safeguarding Policy.

Warwickshire Attendance Service:

The school is responsible for liaising closely with Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) and follow their standard approaches in managing attendance issues. When appropriate, WAS will escalate the situation and instigate legal procedures.

Prosecutions for non - school attendance must be conducted in line with the Warwickshire Non School Attendance and Fixed Penalty Code of Conduct and the Code for Crown Prosecutors and must pass the evidential and public interest tests.

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