



Attendance Policy



Review Date: January 2023
Next Review: January 2024



Introduction

Newton on Trent Church of England Primary School is committed to providing a good quality of education for all pupils. We believe that pupils can only benefit from the good education in our school through regular school attendance. We will therefore strive and insist on the maximum possible attendance for all pupils, and we will make sure that any issues or problems regarding attendance are identified and resolved as quickly as possible. This can only be achieved by staff, pupils, parents, carers and external agencies working together in a team approach.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

This policy takes its legal framework from the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- The Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments
- Working together to improve school attendance (2022)

This policy works in conjunction with the:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Exclusion Policy
- SEND policy

Aims

It is recognised that:

- All pupils of statutory age have an equal right to access an education at Newton on Trent Church of England Primary School in accordance with National Curriculum Expectations.
- No pupil should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- In the first instance it is the responsibility of pupils and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many pupils and their parents may need to be supported at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with agreement and support of parents, work in partnerships with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of pupils want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

Expectations

We expect the following from all pupils:

- Children attend school daily.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That in line with safeguarding, they will truthfully tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school or from arriving at school on time.

We expect the following from parents:

- To ensure that their children attend school daily and on time, as is their legal duty. (Current school hours are 8.20am-2.45pm)
- Parents inform school before 8.30am on the first morning of their child's absence. This can be done through the absence line on our telephone or through Parentmail. This can also be done in person or in writing if appropriate.
- To ensure that their child comes prepared for the school day and has all the equipment required of them.
- Ensure we have updated contact numbers of all parents/carers.
- To ensure children are brought to the office if they are arriving after the close of the registers.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problems occur that may affect their child's attendance or punctuality.
- To make all attempts for medical or dental appointments to be made during the school holidays or after school hours. Proof of appointments may be requested.
- Leave of absence forms are to be requested and completed at least two weeks before the absence. Please note leave of absence forms will only be authorised under exceptional circumstances and is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Should a child be taken out of school for a holiday which has not been approved by the Headteacher, this will be coded as unauthorised absence and a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued for the period of absence.

Parents and children can expect the following from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance and punctuality.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Timely action on any problem notified to us.
- Recognition of good attendance.
- Regular communication regarding children's attendance.
- A quality education.

Absence During Term Time/Holiday Requests

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 have removed the reference to holidays during term time and that any leave of absence should only be granted due to exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

What amounts to 'exceptional circumstances' is a matter for the discretion of the Headteacher and should be judged on a case by case basis but it is unlikely to amount to an exceptional circumstance if it is merely claimed that a holiday can only be afforded in term time or that a parent is unable to take leave during the school holidays (this is a matter between the parent and the employer). 'Exceptional' in this context is being of unique and significant emotional or spiritual value to the child, which outweighs the loss of teaching time. This interpretation will have different parameters from one case to another, and whilst it will be important to look at the whole situation in making decisions about individual requests, the normality will be that requests will be refused.

The Headteacher will also consider asking for evidence of the circumstances that have arisen where appropriate.

Holidays in term time unless they are for exceptional circumstances will not be granted. If a parent still intends to take their child out of school even though the absence has not been authorised a Fixed Penalty Notice Warning letter/notice will be issued.

If a pupil is removed from school for an unauthorised holiday for more than 4.5 days, the School and Local Authority will issue a Fixed Term Penalty Notice, under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, which carries a fine. Non-payment of this fine can result in prosecution on the grounds that the parent is failing to secure their child's school attendance.

Responding to Lateness

- If a child is late (before registers) the number of minutes they were late will be recorded.
- If a child is late (after registers) this may impact the child's attendance levels as they were not present for their mark.
- If a child is consistently late with no explanation, this may become unauthorised absence and there for the same process for non-attendance will take place.
- If appropriate an early help assessment may be offered to provide support to a family who needs it to improve punctuality and attendance.

Responding to Non-Attendance

- Where concerns for a child's safety and welfare are present, the Lincolnshire Area Child Protection Procedures will be followed immediately.
- If school has not received notification that their child is absent and the reasons for this absence, the parent/carer will be contacted on the day of the absence by phone.
- Where there is no response, a phone call will be made again the following day, or a letter sent to attempt to identify a reason for the child being absent. Where there is no response, a home visit from school staff will take place. This may happen before if there are concerns about the reason for absence.
- Should a child be absent with no explanation given for a period of 5 days, a referral will be made to the Children Missing from Education Team. Should a child be absent for a total of four weeks without any explanation, and after due investigation, the school is entitled to remove this child from the register. Parents would then have to re-apply for place in the school should they wish their child to return.
- School will send termly letters, set targets and monitor attendance where attendance has been less than 90% or there has been a significant drop in attendance.
- We aim to review each child's attendance every term. If a pupil's attendance is below 90%, a letter setting an attendance target for the following weeks will be sent home.
- If this target is not met, you will be asked to attend an initial School Attendance Panel meeting with the attendance officer/Headteacher. Targets for the next time period will be set.
- Should this target not be reached you will be invited to a 2nd School Attendance Panel meeting which will give you further opportunity to meet a new attendance target. An Educational Welfare Officer may become involved in the monitoring.
- If, at the end of this monitoring period, there are ongoing unauthorised absences, these could result in a parenting contract being requested or legal options being considered such

as, Education Supervision Orders, Fixed Penalty Notice warning letter/penalty or a Formal Legal Warning Letter being issued in regard to prosecution.

[Stat guidance template \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

- If appropriate an early help assessment may be offered to provide support to a family who needs it to improve punctuality and attendance.

Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices

Newton on Trent Church of England School follows the Lincolnshire code of conduct when issuing Fixed Penalty Notices and they will only be issued within the guidelines. Lincolnshire County Council is responsible for the administration and issue of penalty notices and all payments are made to Lincolnshire County Council not directly to the school. For further information on how these are issued please use: [Fixed penalty notices - code of conduct – Use of fixed penalty notices - Lincolnshire County Council](#).

Reintegration following absence or reduced timetable:

- The return to school for a pupil after a long-term absence or reduced timetable requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfE Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance.
- Aimee Riley will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to Aimee Riley as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from Aimee Riley or Catherine Robinson may be required.
- The Children and Families Act places a duty on maintained schools and academies to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. Individual healthcare plans will normally specify the type and level of support required to meet the medical needs of such pupils. Where children and young people also have SEND, their provision should be planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way with the healthcare plan. School are required to have regard to statutory guidance 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'.

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

Staff will be notified of the return of long-term absentees.

Elective Home Education (EHE)

- As soon as a school is informed that a child is to be withdrawn to be electively home educated they need to e-mail the letter from the parents along with two year attendance record to the local authority.

- Schools are reminded that a child should not be assumed to be electively home educated until a letter has been received from the parents informing them of this decision. This letter must be sent to the Inclusion and Attendance team via EHE@lincolnshire.gov.uk
- Parents and Carers should be made fully aware of their responsibilities to home educate their child if they choose this route.

Liaising with External Agencies

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone.

Other agencies to be used where appropriate in individual cases could be:

- Early Help Consultants
- Behaviour Outreach Support Services
- Educational Psychologists
- Working Together Team
- Ethnic Minority, Traveller Education Team
- Lincolnshire Grief and Loss
- Healthy Minds
- Children and Young Persons Nursing Team
- Home Start
- Special Educational Needs Service
- Children's Services
- Local Police

Appendix One-Letter regarding persistent absence

Dear XXXX,

I am writing to you regarding XXX attendance. Newton on Trent Church of England Primary School and the Local Education Authority are determined to make attendance and achievement a high priority.

I know you are also aware of the importance of regular school attendance, and this is a priority for your child and our school. There is a very strong link between regular school attendance and achievement and if your child is frequently absent from school, the chances of them achieving their targets is reduced.

I am writing to you because xxx attendance has dropped to XXX and this letter has been sent to the parents and carers of all children with attendance between 80% and 90%.

I understand that there have been good reasons for XXXX absence, and we would not want her to attend school if she was ill. However, it is vital that all pupils at our school attend well over 90% and therefore, we will be monitoring XXX attendance over the next term to which I hope to see it return to over 90%.

If at the end of this period of monitoring, XXXX attendance is still less than 90% and we have concerns about the reasons for absence, you will be contacted by myself again to discuss any further support we can offer.

We know that you are as committed to XXXX learning and progress as we are and that you recognise that attendance plays a huge part in this. We can only make such improvements with your help and support, and I hope that we can work together to return XXX attendance to a good level as soon as possible.

I would like to thank you in anticipation of your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Aimee Riley
Headteacher

Appendix Two-Letter regarding persistent absence

Dear XXXX,

I am writing to you regarding XXX attendance. Newton on Trent Church of England Primary School and the Local Education Authority are determined to make attendance and achievement a high priority.

I know you are also aware of the importance of regular school attendance, and this is a priority for your child and our school. There is a very strong link between regular school attendance and achievement and if your child is frequently absent from school, the chances of them achieving their targets is reduced.

As you were made aware XXXX's attendance was being monitored due to it falling below the expected standard. Following this monitoring period, XXX's attendance is now XXX and still a concern.

I would like to invite you into school for a attendance meeting to discuss XXX's level of attendance and to support you in making a plan for this to improve. We would like to invite you to attend on XXXXXXXX at XXXX. If you are unable to make this time, please offer an alternative time for the meeting to take place. Please respond to this invitation by XXX through enquiries@newton-on-trent.lincs.sch.uk.

We know that you are as committed to XXXX learning and progress as we are and that you recognise that attendance plays a huge part in this. We can only make such improvements with your help and support, and I hope that we can work together to return XXX attendance to a good level as soon as possible.

I would like to thank you in anticipation of your co-operation in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Aimee Riley
Headteacher

Appendix Three-Sample warning letter for Fixed Penalty Notice

Dear

Fixed Penalty Formal Warning

Name of child or young person:

Date of birth:

Pupil registered at:

This letter is a Fixed Penalty Formal Warning and is being sent to you because you have requested a period of absence from school for your child during term time.

The period you have requested from (date) to (date), is not deemed to be exceptional circumstances and therefore will be coded as unauthorised absence. If you choose to ignore this warning, a fixed penalty notice will be issued for the above period of absence.

A fixed penalty notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children attending their school under the following legal framework:

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise
- Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act
- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled Section 4448 of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a fixed penalty of either £60 or £120.

Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please contact the school on the above contact details.

Yours sincerely

Aimee Riley