

# North Primary School and Nursery

## Attendance Policy

North Primary School and Nursery is committed to providing a full and efficient education for all its pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from such an education, good attendance and punctuality is crucial. As a School we will do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any issues that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as quickly as possible.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play in ensuring regular and punctual attendance is achieved and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are issues which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those issues as quickly and efficiently as possible.

### **The Context**

**Ofsted, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017**

“Leaders promote a culture of care, and staff are vigilant about pupils’ welfare and safety. You (the headteacher) as the designated lead for safeguarding, ensure that any issues of safety are followed up effectively and you maintain good oversight of any pupil whose well-being or welfare raises any concerns. In addition, you and other staff follow up pupils whose attendance is low to make sure that this is not due to issues of safety or safeguarding.”

“Pupils are safe and happy at school. They are polite and show respect not only to adults but also to one another. Pupils and staff are proud of their school and the work they do together.”

“The pupil premium funding is used effectively to reach out to parents and families in which pupils are not attending school regularly enough or are persistently late. The school goes out of its way to improve attendance levels, not just of disadvantaged pupils but also of those who have special educational needs. Consequently, you have achieved key successes in turning around poor attendance. Attendance levels are improving well and persistent absence is falling. A very small number of parents, however, are still not making sure that their children attend regularly or on time.”

“They continue to work with parents so that persistent absence or lateness is reduced further.”

### **Covid-19 pandemic**

North Primary School and Nursery will implement all DfE policies and guidelines relating to attendance during the Covid-19 pandemic. From September 2020 the expectation is that all pupils will attend school and the Attendance Policy will be reinstated and implemented.

If parents or students have concerns about attendance during the pandemic they should speak to the school office in the first instance. The school's risk assessment refers to attendance and the steps that the school will take to promote attendance at the current time.

## **Rights and Responsibilities: school, parents, pupils**

### The School

Whatever the weather, staff will do everything in their power to ensure the school is open every day and with full staff attendance.

Every day is important at North – lessons are planned for every week and every day of the school year. This also applies to the end of half-terms and terms which are equally important days for the school community.

We expect pupils to attend school each time the school is open, on time, properly equipped and ready to learn.

We will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents as soon as possible if there is a concern regarding attendance or punctuality.

We will work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve issues, which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.

We will include information on pupil's attendance in annual reports to parents on achievement.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents.

### Parents

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child(ren) regularly and punctually attend school, adequately dressed and ready to learn.

Parents are responsible for immediately informing the school on the first morning of any absence by the Parentmail app or telephone, detailing the reason for that absence.

If attendance issues do develop, the school expects parents to work actively with school staff to resolve them.

### The pupil

Pupils will ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.

Pupils can expect to receive assistance following periods of absence in order to catch up with school work.

**Every Family is expected to sign the Home School Accord upon starting school. This document clearly sets out the rights and responsibilities of all staff, parents and pupils.**

### **Registration**

A manual registration system is used at North.

Manual registers must be marked in ink and where an alteration is necessary this must be clearly identified showing both the original entry and change. Correction fluid must not be used.

Registers will be returned to the school office at the end of the registration period for safety where they will be secured but remain accessible in case of an emergency.

All notes from parents regarding a pupil's absence will be stored on the pupil's file.

School will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within 10 minutes of the start of the sessions.

Morning Registration begins at 8.55am every morning. During the Covid-19 pandemic, from September 2020 onwards, staggered starts were introduced as follows:

Nursery	8.30am and 12.30pm
Reception	8.30am
Year 1	8.35am
Year 2	8.40am
Year 3	8.45am
Year 4	8.40am
Year 5	8.35am
Year 6	8.30am

Registers are closed 10 minutes after these start times.

Afternoon registration times vary by age group.

Reception	12.45pm
Year 1	12.30pm
Year 2	12.45pm
Year 3	1.30pm
Year 4	1.40pm
Year 5	1.20pm
Year 6	1.30pm

Registers will be closed 10 minutes after these afternoon start times.

If a pupil arrives after the junior and infant entrances have closed, they are required to report to reception to be entered into the late record book.

Parents of pupils arriving after 9.10am will be asked to complete a form explaining the reason for the late arrival. The Headteacher will decide as to whether the reason is acceptable and will either authorise the late arrival or record a mark as unauthorised absence for that session.

### **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend valuable time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupils' attendance or absence and in the latter case if that absence is authorised or unauthorised, using the approved and appropriate DfE codes.

If required a certified extract of the register can be produced as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a pupil.

Registers will be kept for three years following completion at the end of the academic school year.

## Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent/carer), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time (although you may be asked to provide evidence of the appointment such as an appointment card or letter before this can be authorised), emergencies or any other unavoidable cause.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no consent has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings which may include issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice for £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days or referring the matter to the Magistrates Court whereby each parent may receive a fine up to £2,500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If you are found guilty in court you will receive a criminal conviction.

Unauthorised absence includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn.
- absences which have never been properly explained.
- children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes however is recorded as an absence for the session.
- shopping trips.
- looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or other children or parents to medical appointments.
- their own or other family member's birthdays.
- holidays taken during term time without consent - five days unauthorised absence will lead to a Penalty Notice being triggered by the Local Authority.
- holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher, may result in school applying to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice or if you have previously been issued a Penalty Notice, the school may request a direct prosecution by the local authority.
- day trips.
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

## School Attendance and the Law

**There is no longer any entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday.** In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances".

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a Penalty Notice may be requested by the school.

**Exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:**

... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

**We will not agree leave during term time:**

- at any time in September. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new class at the beginning of the new school year as quickly as possible.
- for Year 6, from the start of the summer term until after SATS have finished in mid-May.
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.

**Procedure for following up absence or lateness**

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence. Office staff complete register checks every day. A telephone call will be made to the parents/carer in the event of unexplained absence.

If telephone contact has not been made and a written explanation is not provided then a letter will be sent home (absence letter 1, Appendix A)

If the above actions do not elicit an explanation, a further letter will be sent (absence letter 2, Appendix B) to the parents/carers.

If this second letter does not elicit an explanation the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where the school has concerns about a particular period of absence or a pattern of absence a meeting with the parent/carers will be called by the Headteacher. If this does not resolve the matter a formal referral will be made to the Local Authority.

If the pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, in exceptional circumstances there will be provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the school system. In the event of a pupil returning after a longterm absence then an individual reintegration programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible.

Where a pupil is persistently late the school will write to the parent/carer inviting them to a school-based meeting.

It may be necessary for the school or Local Authority to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of reason for absence e.g.

- ◆ Appointment cards/letters
- ◆ Medical certificate
- ◆ Letter from GP

**Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's education and we need the fullest support and co-operation of a parent/carer to tackle this.

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly. If a child is seen to have reached the PA mark or is considered to be at risk of moving towards that mark we will

inform the parent/carer. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. If attendance remains a concern, a school-based meeting will be held and an action plan will be discussed. This may include: allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, Family Support Worker, Local Authority, Family Solutions or Social Care. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Annex A for the Essex Code of Conduct), prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

### **Deletion from Roll**

For any pupil leaving North Primary School and Nursery, other than at the end of Year 6, parents/carers are required to complete a 'Leaving School Form for Parents' which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, date of birth, class, current address, reason and date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know and safeguard the whereabouts of all of our pupils.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency.

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school, on time, every day.

All school staff and the Governing Body are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

**This policy will be reviewed to its effective implementation by the Curriculum Committee on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.**

Reviewed by Curriculum Committee: October 2020

### **Appendices**

- Appendix A    Absence Letter 1
- Appendix B    Absence Letter 2
- Appendix C    Essex Code of Conduct  
Penalty Notices for parents of truants and parents of pupils excluded from school
- Appendix D    Staff Roles

**Appendix A**

***North Primary School and Nursery  
John Harper Street  
Colchester, Essex CO1 1RP***



*Headteacher: Alan Garnett*

*Telephone: 01206 574225*

*Fax: 01206 369583*

*www.northschool.org.uk*

*admin@north.essex.sch.uk*

[date]

Dear Parent/Carer

Your child has been absent from school on the date/s shown below and we do not appear to have been informed of the reason for the absence.

As we are required by law to record all absences, it would be helpful if you can complete the slip below or inform me in writing of the reason for the absence.

Please inform the office if your child will not be attending school at the beginning of the school day. Should you have any queries concerning this letter please contact Mrs Sancassani in the school office.

Yours sincerely

Alan Garnett  
Headteacher

---

Name:

Class:

Date of absence:	Reason for absence
.....	

Signature of Parent/Guardian ..... Date.....

Appendix B

**North Primary School and Nursery**  
**John Harper Street**  
**Colchester, Essex CO1 1RP**



*Headteacher: Alan Garnett*

*Telephone: 01206 574225*

*Fax: 01206 369583*

*www.northschool.org.uk*

*admin@north.essex.sch.uk*

[date]

Dear Parent/Carer

I have previously written to you regarding your child's absence from school for the date/s shown below.

As I have had no response, I will have no alternative than to mark this/these absence/s as unauthorised/truancy, unless we hear from you within the next seven days. Please complete the slip and return to the school office.

Could I also remind you, that it is your responsibility to inform the school on the first day of the child's absence why they will not be coming to school. If you have any queries concerning this letter, please contact either myself or Mrs Sancassani in the school office.

Yours sincerely

Alan Garnett  
Headteacher

---

Name:

Class:

Date of absence:	Reason for absence:
	.....

Signature of Parent/Guardian ..... Date.....



## Appendix C

**See separate document**

## **Appendix D Staff Roles**

The head teacher is responsible for attendance issues and will check the registers on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns.

The head teacher will meet regularly with the Office Manager to discuss any attendance/punctuality concerns.

The administrative team are responsible for ensuring that registers are kept safely and are available for inspection to relevant professionals.

The administrative team are responsible for logging attendance information onto the computerised system.

The class teacher is responsible for taking the register daily, once for the AM session and once for the PM session.

The class teacher is responsible for register maintenance of their own class register. Including the following:

- ◆ using the correct colour ink
- ◆ ensuring that symbols used are appropriate
- ◆ not using correction fluid
- ◆ ensuring all mistakes are amended with the original information still clear and corrections clearly marked
- ◆ ensuring the registers are neatly kept allowing for ease of reading at all times but especially in an emergency situation – i.e. during a fire procedure

The Head will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.