

Northway Primary & Nursery School



Attendance Policy

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P. Donnelly.
Chair of Govs. 7/11/17

Northway Primary School Attendance Policy

We consider regular school attendance to be at least 97%

Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend school regularly and we expect your child to be in school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Irregular and poor attendance will have an adverse effect on educational attainment.

Poor punctuality undermines learning and teaching. It is important that every pupil develops good habits which will enable them to realise their potential and make a positive contribution to school life and society.

Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring that their child/children attend school regularly. They must also ensure that their child/children are in correct uniform and ready to learn. Support will be given to parents wherever necessary, to encourage full attendance and good punctuality. The school will take a register twice daily and record the information generated.

Aims

- ❖ To maximise the attendance of all children.
- ❖ To ensure that all parents are aware of the school's Attendance Policy and understand their responsibilities.
- ❖ To encourage a positive and proactive ethos within the school, by which attendance is prioritised and promoted.
- ❖ To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers.
- ❖ To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future practice and policy.
- ❖ To work closely with the Education Welfare Officer.
- ❖ To ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the school community are actively communicated and understood.

Road Map

Throughout the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

This will be monitored through our Attendance Road Map (Monitoring Attendance Programme). The school is aiming to achieve 97% at the end of the school year. All children with attendance above 97% will receive a green light letter. Children between 92% and 97% will receive an amber light letter. Any children whose attendance falls below 92% will receive a red light letter. The Education Welfare Office may contact parents to discuss any attendance matters.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Local Authority designates an Education Welfare Officer to work with the school. The Attendance Officer regularly reviews the attendance data to identify pupils who are a cause for concern (attendance below 92%).

The school attendance leader meets with the EWO on a regular basis to discuss concerns, to coordinate an action plan for improvement and to evaluate the impact of actions previously taken.

Parents have a duty to ensure that their child/children attend school regularly. They will be made aware that the Local Authority has the power to prosecute them for failing to ensure that their child/children attend school.

Class teachers complete the school registers twice daily. They will liaise with the school attendance officer regarding issues of concern around poor attendance and punctuality patterns. Parents will be informed when necessary, and may be invited into the school to discuss any concerns.

In the event of any absence

Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the **first day** of absence.

If the child is still absent on the **third day**, we ask parents/carers to contact school again. If the illness continues, we request parents/carers keep school up-dated on a regular basis.

On the child's return to school, a written explanation should be provided and must be signed and dated.

First Day Response

If a pupil is absent without explanation when the register is called the school office will send a text to the parents by 9.30am.

If there is no response to the text, the school office will try to contact the parent by telephone.

Punctuality

The school day begins at 9.00am for all children in Reception to Year 6. The school gates are closed by 9.05am and any child/children who arrive after this time will need to enter school at the main entrance reporting to the office, giving the reason for the lateness. Parents/carers will be asked to sign their child/children in via the electronic sign in.

At Northway we work hard to improve attendance and time keeping at the school. There are a few key things that we wish to develop with all of our families:

It is essential that parents are on time bringing children to school and when collecting them at the end of the day. Class teachers will be asking for reasons for any lateness and persistent lateness will be further investigated by school or the Education Welfare Service.

Please continue to ring with reasons for absences. The school number is:

0151 722 3540.

Pupils arriving after 10.00am may be recorded as absent for the morning session. This will be considered as an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given e.g. Doctors appointment.

Authorised/Unauthorised absence

Authorised absence; is absence with permission from the Head teacher or other authorised representatives of the school. This includes instances of absences for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided (e.g. illness).

If a child's absence falls below 92%, we may require medical evidence for all absences. Medical evidence can be a doctor's note, a dated appointment card, a dated compliment slip from care in the chemist, a medical letter or note, prescription or medication or a confirmation text from the surgery.

Unauthorised absence

Absence without permission from the Head teacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences.

Persistent Absentee

A pupil who is designated as a persistent absentee is one who has missed 10% or more of the available school sessions for any reason. This means that you will be informed of your child's attendance if it falls below 90% even if your child's absences have been authorised by school. If your child is suffering from recurrent illnesses the school can organise a meeting with the school nurse, who may be able to offer support in controlling that condition or liaising with your GP to highlight the effect on your child's school attendance.

Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments

To avoid any unauthorised absences, we are asking parents to follow these guidelines:

- ❖ Please do not make dental or GP appointments during the school day. We understand that this is difficult where hospital outpatient appointments have been made for you, **but these may not take up the whole day and your child should attend school before/after the appointment.**
- ❖ Please bring your appointment card or letter to the school office so your child's mark can be recorded as medical and not unauthorised.

If you need any further information you may contact school to make an appointment with the Education Welfare Officer, Ms Eyo.

Holidays

All absence is discouraged.

From 1st September 2013, the new law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. The Head Teacher would not be expected to class **any** term time holiday as exceptional.

Parents can receive a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. From September 2013 these Notices now cost £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

Managing 'exceptional circumstances'

The DfE cites three examples of 'exceptional circumstances'

- ❖ A parent is a member of the armed forces and has restricted leave (a letter from your HR department will be required).
- ❖ A parent is a member of the Fire Service and has restricted shift patterns/leave (a letter from your HR department will be required).
- ❖ There has been a bereavement of a close family member

School Attendance Matters

Attendance Procedures Absence and Punctuality

Stage 1

The Attendance Officer will monitor the attendance and punctuality of all pupils. If a child's attendance falls below 97%, our Attendance Officer will send a school letter to the parents/carers informing them that no more absences will be authorised unless medical evidence is provided.

Stage 2

If there is no improvement in attendance and punctuality the parent/carer will be invited into school to meet with the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer.

Stage 3

If there is still no improvement and a child's attendance drops below 95%, a formal referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) at Pupil Attendance and Welfare Services.

Stage 4

If a child's attendance is between 92% - 95%, the Education Welfare Officer will contact the parent or carer to explain their formal procedures and to arrange a home visit or appointment to discuss the appropriate support.

Stage 5

Persistent non-compliance may result in court proceedings. There are a number of options available to the Magistrates, including a fine; Education Supervision Order (ESO); and in more serious cases, community sentences or imprisonment.

A referral to the EWO can be made prior to stage 3 above, in instances where there are attendance safeguarding concerns. If a parent fails to contact school regarding their child's absence and school is unable to make contact with a parent or emergency contact by the third day of absence, a referral will be made to the EWO, for an attendance welfare home visit to be carried out.