

Attendance Policy

North Park Primary School



2022

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Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

North Park Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils may find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

➤ **Why is regular attendance so important?**

Being in school every day that it is open is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. There is a renewed national focus on maximising pupils' time in the classroom, as evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best secondary results in GCSE and A Level results – this is also the case for progress and attainment in primary schools.

Working Together to improve school attendance – DFE – 2022;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

Good attendance helps ensure children

- develop strong relationships
- build confidence and resilience
- take part in the wider life of the school, and become involved in all aspects of school life.

There is a vital interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts;

- good attendance is built into the strategies school has to continually improve attainment and maintain good progress;
- good attendance supports good behaviour and strategies to tackle bullying
- good attendance is especially important for pupils with additional needs, including special educational needs, medical conditions or disabilities.

- good attendance is key to ensuring safeguarding, wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged students (including use of pupil premium).

Here's what the data shows:

- Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.
- Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.
- Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.
- Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.
- Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.
- Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent.

So the key message is attendance is vital for progress, attainment, wellbeing, social skills and behaviour.

- **This policy is supported by our policies on:**
 - Safeguarding
 - Behaviour
 - Anti-bullying
 - Special Educational Needs
 - Curriculum

How do we aim to support families to work together and ensure good attendance?

WHAT DO WE EXPECT?

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

The best attendance is 96% or above – anything below 90% is a cause for concern.



HOW WILL WE MONITOR?

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

We look at data weekly, half termly and termly to see if concerns are emerging. Attendance information is shared termly with Governors.



HOW WILL WE TRY TO LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND?

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to understand any barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

We will contact you by telephone, letter or a meeting where we have a concern.



HOW WILL WE FACILITATE SUPPORT?

Work to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

We will hold a meeting with you to see what we can do, and who we could ask to help, to improve attendance – there are lots of services that could help.



WHY AND HOW COULD WE FORMALISE SUPPORT?

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

We will meet with you to look at a formal plan to improve attendance – this may mean we need to ask for advice from the Local Authority or other services.



WHY WOULD WE THEN ENFORCE ACTION?

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Attendance at school is vital and where all other support has not worked, we will then use Local Authority service to enforce attendance.

➤ **Our Expectations**

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

➤ **We will ensure that:**

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Attendance is a priority across the school.
- Aspire to high standards on attendance.
- Students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of students.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

Children are rewarded on a termly basis in recognition of good punctuality and attendance, and at the end of the academic year.

➤ **Attendance data**

We use data for cohorts, groups of children and individuals in the following ways:

- Weekly monitoring reports on absence, including persistent absence and lateness
- Half termly monitoring of absence and lateness – we use this data to help us arrange meetings with parents/carers to address concerns that arise from falling attendance.
- To analyse any need for support from additional services or referral to Local Authority
- Termly reviews of attendance for reporting to parents, governors and for reward
- To inform annual reporting to parents
- Our data management system includes a parental APP (which will be launched in 2022) so parents can keep track of their child's attendance

The school will rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

➤ **How much absence would mean my child becomes a persistent absentee?**

TERM		Number of sessions (half days) missed before becoming a persistent absentee
<i>AUTUMN</i>	<i>HALF TERM 1</i>	7 or more (3.5 days)
	<i>HALF TERM 1 and 2</i>	14 or more (7 days)
<i>AUTUMN + SPRING</i>	<i>HALF TERM 1 to 3</i>	20 or more (10 days)
	<i>HALF TERM 1 to 4</i>	25 or more (12.5 days)
<i>AUTUMN + SPRING + SUMMER</i>	<i>HALF TERM 1 to 5</i>	31 or more (15.5 days)
	<i>HALF TERM 1 to 6</i>	38 or more (19 days)

Steps to improving attendance and supporting families

1. Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance

If concerns begin to arise in attendance, school will contact parents in the first instance, and will aim to discuss attendance concerns with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and if necessary, plan or otherwise agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

2. Facilitate support

School will endeavour to work with parents to try to remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school.

- We will begin by asking parents what barriers there are and looking at ways of supporting with this. A plan may be formalised to target improvements
- Additional support may include an early help referral or whole family plan where there are wider issues affecting attendance, if families would find that beneficial.
- To reduce persistent and severe absence, we will ask parents to agree to a plan of action, and if necessary access wider support services. Advice can be sought for parents from universal services (Health, Early Help) and from the Local Authority attendance team.
- Where necessary we will work with other agencies to formalise that support.

3. Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

4. Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

General / frequently asked questions

➤ **When can children be absent from school?**

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
Generally, unless otherwise advised, we will contact parents after a period of 3 days, as we would normally expect medical advice to have been sought for prolonged illness beyond this.
Regular absences may result in school requesting medical evidence – this can be an appointment letter or card, or medication that has been dispensed; this helps us ensure that support from medical professionals has been sought.
Remember we can help in administering medication, to aid a return to school, if this is prescribed as needed more than 3 times a day, or for an ongoing medical condition.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school. In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such absences.

These are the only circumstances where schools can permit your child to be absent.

➤ **What do I need to do if my child needs to be absent from school for one of those reasons?**

You should contact their school as early as possible to explain why. If not, your child's school will contact you on the first morning of their absence to find out why.

All parents can request a 'leave of absence' for their child which gives them permission to be absent from school. Leaves of absence must be applied for before your child will be absent and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The headteacher has the final say over whether to approve the request and how long your child can be absent. Their decision will be made after considering the specific facts and circumstances behind your request.

➤ **Can I take my child on holiday during term time?**

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leaves of absence for holidays unless it is unavoidable. As leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that your child's headteacher will agree a leave of absence for a family holiday.

If permission is refused and you keep your child off school on the days requested, this information is sent to the Local Authority; you are likely to be committing an offence and may be issued a fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted by your local authority.

Attendance Procedures and Absence Processes

Attendance and absence management

➤ **Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

- Monthly rewards/treats for class attendance
- Termly rewards for individual attendance
- Yearly rewards for 100% attendance

➤ **Communication**

The school requests that all parents please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital, that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to, for example medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance then we may contact you by phone, letter or invite you to a meeting.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.

➤ **On the first day of absence**

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. There is a system for leaving messages, emails or texts (we will be launching our communication APP soon too).

If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will text and/or phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctors and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

➤ **Periods of extended absence**

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received, the school will text/phone to

verify the absence and take any relevant action in relation to assuring itself of the child's welfare.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an **unauthorised** absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

➤ **Absence authorisation**

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Headteacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences, particularly where a child's absence is below 90% (classes as persistent absenteeism).

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

➤ **Punctuality**

Registration time is at **8.55am (9am for Nursery)** at which point the pupil entry gates will be locked and all pupils must enter by the main entrance. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point (9.10am) and any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

Being 10 mins late every day for one year is equal to 33 hours - approximately 6 days!

Minutes lost each day	Days lost per year
5 minutes	3 days
10 minutes	6.5 days
15 minutes	10 days
20 minutes	13 days
30 minutes	19 days

➤ **If your child is late for school:**

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (Arbor).

➤ **If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions**

School will contact parents to see if there are underlying reasons and follow the steps to improving attendance as detailed above.

- **If lateness becomes persistent** with no identifiable reason, or **if the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality** then more formal action may be taken, if other avenues of support have failed to improve attendance and punctuality.

Help & Support

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people:

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are only able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually, taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.

Pupils with specific needs

The policy considers that some pupils may have specific needs. We will ensure that the policy is applied fairly and consistently and consider the individual needs of pupils/families who have specific barriers to attendance. In development and implementation of the policy, we consider obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Children Missing from Education

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

Roles and Responsibilities

Please see key contact list and details at the start of this document.

Person	Role	Responsibility
Mrs P Monk	Head Teacher	Overall responsibility for attendance policy and procedures; Monitoring of attendance; Work with parents to offer support and advice.
Mrs E Atkinson	Deputy Head teacher	
Mrs J Harris	Administration Manager – manages day to day contact and referrals	Day to day administration and record keeping Initial and follow up contact for First Day Absence procedures Monitor attendance with Headteacher Will send referrals to LA and liaise with LA officers
Mrs N Wood	SENCO – supports with SEND need and inclusion	Works alongside the headteacher and can offer specific support and advice for children with SEND
Class teachers for all children		Monitor and report attendance concerns Discuss issues with parents as they arise and signpost for further advice Report to parents at parent meetings regarding attendance concerns
Elaine Hopkins	LA Attendance and Improvement Team Office	Advises school team Advises parents/carers and can offer additional support/advice Termly visits to school
Clare Nicholls	LA - Pupil Placement and Attendance Manager	Oversees matters on attendance in the LA
Claire Vickery	School Governor with responsibility for attendance	Governors monitor the application of the policy and the attendance statistics in school on a termly basis; monitor what support is being offered and where this has improved attendance/where more support is needed

The policy will be reviewed annually by leaders and Governors in school.

If you are experiencing difficulty or have a concern, please contact school – class teachers or senior staff as detailed in this policy.

Additional support can also be arranged by referral to Early Help Service – school can support with this or you can contact your One Point Hub:

Telephone:

0300 026 1113

Address:

Broom Road, Ferryhill, DL17 8AN