

Northwick Park Primary and Nursery Academy

Attendance Policy

At Northwick Park Primary and Nursery Academy we support the guidance given by both the Government (Department of Education) and Essex County:

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. (Department of Education: School Attendance, statutory Guidance and departmental advice) www.education.gov.uk

With reference to

The Education Act 1996: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/contents>

The Children Act 1989: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents>

In accordance with Government Guidelines, Northwick Park Primary and Nursery Academy (the school) will undertake the following:

1. Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
2. Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
3. Act early to address patterns of absence.
4. Support parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school, attend regularly.
5. Support all pupils to be punctual.
6. Work with the Local Authority, other outside agencies and Education Welfare Service where necessary to aide families to improve Attendance and punctuality.

Children should attend school for 190 days per year (380 sessions). There are two registration periods at school both of which are taken electronically.

Notification of absence

Parents must advise the school if a child is absent from school by calling the school before 8:45AM. The school office number is 01268 684554. Parents may also choose to call in at school to advise of an absence, or write a letter or email to the school. An appropriate reason for absence must be given and an expected date of return.

Authorised Absence

The school will authorise absence if the parents or guardians of the child give notice of the following:

- Illness

Parents must advise the school if a child is absent by calling the school office before 8:45AM. This should be followed up by a written note from the parent informing the school that their child was ill. Parents may be required to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This could take the form of a prescription or appointment card. Parents should also inform the school as to when their child is expected to return to school. If the child feels better by the afternoon parents are encouraged to bring them in for the afternoon session. Absences of more than three days should be supported by medical evidence.

- Medical/Dental appointments

Parents and carers are advised, where possible, to make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. If daytime appointments cannot be avoided then it is expected that a child come to school before the appointment and be returned to school after the appointment. Parents should show the appointment card to the school.

- Religious Observance

Northwick Park Primary and Nursery Academy acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British Society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent by completing a 'request for absence form'. (Available from the school office.) However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the absence rate of the school, no more than one day can be authorised for any one festival and no more than three days may be requested in one academic year.

- Exceptional circumstances

Reasons for authorising absence in this category could include family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or a previously agreed part-time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package. We request that parents give notice to the school by completing a 'request for absence form'. (Available from the school office.)

- Exclusion

Exclusion from attending school is counted as authorised absence. The school will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

- Medical conditions

Northwick Park Primary and Nursery Academy will treat illness as authorised absence and with the help of outside agencies will support children's education throughout their illnesses. We have an understanding and sensitive approach to children who may have periods of absence due to disability or long-term ill health. Parents may contact our Inclusion Manager to discuss issues of attendance and punctuality in this regard. The school's statutory duties are available in 'Access to Education for Children and Young People with Medical needs' (DfES 0732/2001)

Late Arrival

Registration begins at 8:55AM. Children arriving after that time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 9:30. Children arriving after the close of the

register will be recorded as late, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

Children who arrive late must report to the school office to ensure they are registered and their school meal preference is recorded. Late arrival will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example attendance at a medical appointment. Absences will be unauthorised if the child arrives late without justifiable cause, for example if they woke up late or were waiting for uniform to dry.

Late Arrival due to Head lice

If a child needs to be treated for head lice before school, lateness will be authorised if proof of treatment is presented to the school. It is not deemed necessary for a whole day of school to be lost due to treatment of head lice.

Punctuality

Punctuality is monitored weekly and any child who is late on more than one day in any week will receive a note of this. School doors open at 8:45 and early morning work is undertaken as soon as the children enter the class room. Lateness could result in a child missing an opportunity to improve their reading or writing. If a child reaches school after 8.55 then that child is deemed to be late, a recording is made in the register that the child has arrived late on that day.

Unauthorised Absence

The Government recommends that family holidays are not to be taken in term time and therefore the Headteacher is unable to authorise any holidays during the school year. A penalty notice of £60 (if paid within 21 days or £120 thereafter) may be issued if unauthorised holidays are taken in term time. Penalty notices are issued by the Local Authority and not by the school. Penalty notices are requested on a case by case basis.

In accordance with the Essex Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices, from 1st October 2017:

- A penalty notice may be issued if 10 unauthorised absences have occurred during a 10 week period (5 school days)
- A penalty notice may be issued if there are 6 or more unauthorised sessions (3 school days) due to a holiday taken during the first two weeks of September.

Request for Leave of Absence

If a child does need to be away from school for any period then a form requesting that absence must be collected from the school office, a supporting letter can be attached to explain the circumstances if necessary. The school must be notified of every absence from school.

Absence without notification

The school will call home to ascertain the whereabouts and condition of any child that is absent from school and there has been no contact from home. (First Day Calling) If no contact is made messages will be left every day until the child returns or the school have heard from the parent/carer. A letter, and/or medical evidence to support the absence is required. On receipt of that evidence the school will authorise the absence. If no evidence is forthcoming the absence will be unauthorised. A notification of absence will be sent home at the beginning of the week after the absence.

If a child is missing from school for 10 days without notification or contact from parents an application can be made to The Missing Education and Child Employment Service. This will alert the authorities that a child is missing education. The welfare and safety of pupils is of utmost importance so the school will make enquiries as to the whereabouts of any missing children.

First Day Calling

The priority of the first day call system depends on the age of the child. The school will contact parents of year six children first and then work through the school years. This is because some older children may walk to school alone and if a child has not arrived at school there may be a safety issue which will need to be addressed immediately.

What is Good Attendance?

The school regards attendance of between 99 and 100% as excellent. If any child's attendance falls below 95% the school Attendance Officer will monitor their attendance. Any child who has an attendance of lower than 90% should expect contact from the school Attendance Officer and may be required to provide Medical Evidence when the child is absent from School. The school will be happy to work with any family if they would like assistance in encouraging their child to attend school. If there are any other circumstances which affect attendance the school will be happy to help, where appropriate. Any family is welcome to contact the school Attendance Officer or the Head Teacher in this regard.

The Missing Education and Child Employment Service (Formally Education Welfare)

The school works closely with The Missing Educational and Child Employment Service with regard to attendance and are legally obliged to inform them of any student whose absence is persistent. Persistent Absence is when a child's attendance falls below 90% and the school is not satisfied that every effort has been made for the child to attend school. The Investigating Officer will work on behalf of the school in a legal capacity and their intervention could result in:

- The issue penalty notice
- The issue of an Education Supervision Order
- Or a legal prosecution.

Parents will be invited to meet with the school Attendance Officer before a referral is made to the Investigating Officer. This will give the opportunity to families to work with the school to overcome any difficulties or issues there might be regarding their child's attendance at school.

Using Attendance data

Children's attendance is monitored regularly by the school Attendance Officer and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if the child's attendance is a cause for concern.

Attendance and punctuality data will also be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment. These are evaluated and monitored by the school's Governing body and Senior Leadership team.

We will share data with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Local Authority when required. All information shared is done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Support System

At Northwick Park Primary and Nursery Academy we recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This could be related to problems in school or at home. Parents should make us aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help us to identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some children need additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those children with special needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant or refugee children and looked after children.

We implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Including:

- Discussions and meetings with parents and pupils
- Referrals to support agencies
- Our own School Counsellor
- LSA support for individuals and groups
- Friendship groups and playground friends
- PSHE
- Family group learning
- Attendance reward system
- Regular Attendance Newsletter
- Monthly class attendance award
- Half termly shopping voucher draw
- Termly individual attendance awards
- Incentives via the Canvey Schools' Partnership. E.G. a Draw for family rewards and 'Attendance Week' challenge.
- Additional learning support

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

The School Day

The school day begins immediately your child enters the building and they should arrive no earlier than 8:45AM and not later than 8:55AM. Lunches are staggered between year groups. Children have a 45 minute break for lunch and will be marked late if they return late from lunch. Children are encouraged to remain at school for lunch to avoid disruption of the afternoon session. For years Reception through to year two the school day ends at 2:55PM. For years three to six the school day ends at 3PM.

Any child who remains in school, and has not been collected after 3:10 will be looked after in Busy Bears (Northwick Park's After School club). A charge will be made if this is the case. Any child who is continually collected late may be deemed to be 'at risk' and the Head Teacher will liaise with Social Services.

(Policy is reviewed annually: Next review June 2018)