



NORTHFIELD SCHOOL & SPORTS COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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1. Introduction

Northfield School is committed to providing a full and effective education for all its students to ensure they achieve their potential in all that they do. We recognise the importance of full attendance and aim to ensure all students achieve and maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance is a prerequisite to a good education and therefore a priority for the school.

2. Statutory Guidance

This policy has been written in accordance with the following guidance:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) updated September 2018
- The Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010/2011/2013

3. Expectations

We expect that all students will:

- attend school regularly
- arrive on time, appropriately dressed in school uniform and prepared for the school day
- through our effective guidance system, report any problems which could impact on their attendance or punctuality
- follow school rules

We expect all parents/carers to:

- ensure the student attends school every day and on time
- ensure that the student arrives to school wearing school uniform with the correct equipment fully prepared for the school day
- provide the school with up to date home, work and emergency contact numbers and email address
- inform school in confidence of any problem which might impact on the student's attendance or punctuality
- be aware that it is their responsibility to inform school of the reason for the student's absence.
- contact school on each day of absence before 9 am and provide details of any medical appointments during the absence.
- arrange all holidays during the thirteen weeks of school holidays and not during term time
- support our school's procedures in promoting outstanding attendance for all and attend appropriate meetings in school to discuss the student's attendance
- work in partnership with the school, emphasising to students the importance of respecting policies and procedures

Parents/carers can expect that school will:

- provide the highest quality of education
- promote and encourage excellent attendance and punctuality
- raise awareness of the importance of excellent attendance with parents/carers, around school and within the local community
- maintain an effective electronic registration system
- regularly monitor attendance and use data to identify emerging patterns of absence
- closely monitor the attendance of identified vulnerable groups of students
- address the causes of non-attendance
- work with parents/carers, the Local Authority and external agencies to improve attendance
- make every reasonable effort to contact the parent/carer when a student fails to attend school and the school has not been notified of the reason for the absence
- provide access to online attendance data
- provide work during a period of authorised absence
- support students upon return to school after a period of absence
- work with primary schools as set out in our transition programme

- include attendance data in appropriate school reports
- act promptly and confidentially when notified of a problem which could impact on attendance or punctuality
- comply with safeguarding regulations

Governors will:

- attend Attendance Case Conferences when required
- agree attendance targets
- ratify the attendance policy
- monitor and evaluate attendance statistics

Governors will set areas for improvement to establish and maintain the best levels of attendance for all students. To assist with this, the Headteacher will report to Governors termly on attendance related issues.

4. Targets

At Northfield School all students are expected to achieve at least 95% attendance and anything below 95% is unacceptable (unless there are extraordinary circumstances). Attendance above 95% is regarded as 'good' and 100% attendance is regarded as 'excellent'.

5. Rewards

Northfield School recognises the importance of praise and reward. To encourage all students to realise the importance of good attendance and punctuality, not only to achieve their full potential at school but also their life goals, there is a monitoring system which incorporates rewards and consequences. For students to be considered to take part in school trips and receive their rewards, they must have excellent attendance and punctuality.

6. Intervention

There are school procedures in place (**appendices 1-10*) where all students whose attendance falls below an unacceptable level are placed on an intervention programme to improve their attendance. Structured activities take place in morning form time. Tutors can access data that links attendance with attainment. Intervention is also recorded electronically in PARS.

The short term intervention, 'Home Learning Programme', ensures students can continue with their learning when they are unable to attend school.

7. Absence

As stated in section 3, it is the responsibility of parents/carers to inform school of the reason for a student's absence. Contact should be made with the school on the first day of absence before 9 am and written confirmation is required upon the student's return to school.

If the school does not receive notification, the school operates a first-day response as part of school procedures (**appendix 11*).

A home visit may be made at the discretion of the school to ascertain the whereabouts of a student who has failed to attend.

A 'return to school' interview may take place.

'Keeping Children Safe in Education' legislation requires all schools to "inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority".

8. Registers

There is a legal requirement upon schools to keep an attendance register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon sessions to mark students present or absent. There is also a requirement that attendance records must show whether an absence of a student of compulsory school age is authorised or unauthorised. Northfield School has a PARS computerised registration system in place which incorporates a lesson monitor. Both staff and students see the taking of registers as an integral part of the school day, as was intended by the law and particular attention is paid to accurate registration. Stockton Borough Council requires all staff to use the symbols shown in (**appendix 12*).

9. Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Only school can approve absence, not parents/carers. The school is not obliged to accept a parental note or other form of notification as a valid reason and further evidence may be requested. If, after investigation, doubt remains about the explanation offered or where no explanation is given, the absence will be treated as unauthorised. Where parents condone unjustified absence the school will commence attendance procedures at an early stage.

Should a student feel unwell in school, then he or she must tell a member of the year team if they feel too poorly to remain in school. If appropriate, school will call home to notify parents/carers who can decide if they wish the student to be collected. Students are told that under no circumstances must they directly phone their parents/carers without permission. School does not allow parents/carers to collect the student during the school day without the school's permission as this has serious implications for safeguarding.

10. Medical Appointments

The school recognises that occasionally medical appointments during the school day are unavoidable. However, students are expected to return to school immediately following an appointment and medical evidence may be requested. The vast majority of medical appointments do not require a full day, or even a full session of absence.

In line with safeguarding regulations, students are required to sign in and out of school when they arrive or leave during the school day.

11. Requests for absence in term-time

Permission from the Headteacher must be sought for **all** absences that occur during term-time. A 'request for leave of absence' form must be completed in advance of the absence (available from the school office). Only the Headteacher can decide if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised.

Under current regulations, schools cannot authorise any holidays taken in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. School will require evidence of exceptional circumstances, which should be attached to the 'request for leave of absence form' and the judgement about what is exceptional will be made by the Headteacher. If he decides not to authorise the holiday and he intends to refer to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice should the holiday go ahead, he will issue a letter to the parent/carer warning of his intention.

Holidays taken in term time can have a very negative impact on a student's education, on the motivation of other students and staff as well as school's attendance statistics and examination results. Research has shown that a 10% drop in attendance (equivalent to 19 ½ days in a school year) can mean a one grade drop at GCSE.

For absences that are due to sporting or other educational activities which have not been organised by school, evidence of the event must accompany the 'request for leave of absence' form.

12. Punctuality

At Northfield School punctuality is extremely important. All students are required to arrive punctually for registration at 8.50 am in the morning and 1.30 pm in the afternoon. If a student arrives for school after

the close of registration, the session can be recorded as an unauthorised absence. We also expect students to arrive punctually to lessons. Students who arrive late to lessons not only affect their own learning but also seriously disrupt the learning of others and this will not be tolerated. The school rewards excellent punctuality and has strict disciplinary procedures for dealing with persistent lateness.

13. Truancy

When school become aware that a student is truanting, whether it is internal or external truancy, parents/carers will be contacted and the truancy will be recorded as unauthorised absence. Disciplinary action will be taken.

14. Penalty Notices

In order to improve attendance and tackle lateness, the school uses the Local Authority Penalty Notices procedures.

If a student has 10 unauthorised sessions (equivalent of 5 days) in any 6 week period, including unauthorised sessions caused by holidays and punctuality, this may result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of the Penalty Notice Process.

15. Persistent Absenteeism

The Department for Education deems that if a student's attendance drops below 90% they become known as a Persistent Absentee, regardless of the reason for the absence and irrespective of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and parent/carer's full support and co-operation is required to avoid this. At Northfield School all absence is monitored thoroughly and any case seen to have reached the Persistent Absence level or becoming at risk of reaching it is given priority.

16. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually.

**Appendices available upon request*

17. Data Privacy Statement

Does any review/amendment to this policy have an impact on the security of personal data or rights of individuals?

Yes/No: **Yes**