

Academy Handbook: Policies and Procedures

Title	Attendance Policy
Associated Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguarding and Child Protection • Inclusion • Exclusion Policy • Behaviour Policy

Reviewed: January 2019

Next Review: July 2019

1.0 Principles

At Newton Road School we believe that good attendance is essential if our pupils are to take full advantage of school life and gain the educational and social skills which will equip them for their futures. It is important too, that children arrive at and leave school on time.

Our school aims to achieve good attendance by operating an attendance policy within which staff, children and parents work in partnership. We shall monitor attendance and punctuality, working to solve quickly any identified problems so that absence and lateness are kept to a minimum.

All staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality and our Parent Support Advisor and Attendance Officer will liaise with families and other agencies when this is appropriate.

2.0 Aims

The school aims to:

- Promote good attendance and punctuality as the norm
- Help every child to reach their maximum potential unhindered by unnecessary breaks in their school life
- Demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality are valued by our school
- Maintain a pattern of monitoring attendance and punctuality that ensures consistency across the school
- Communicate with parents/carers in relation to their children's attendance and punctuality

3.0 Recording of attendance

- The class register is to be completed every morning and every afternoon. Registers open at 8.40am and close at 8.50am. Pupils arriving between 8.50am and 9.30am will be marked as late. The afternoon register is taken at 12.30pm.
- Any latecomers will be marked in the register appropriately
 - L - late 9.00am up until 9.30am classed as present
 - U - after 9.30am classed as an unauthorised absence
- Parents/Carers are asked to inform our school on the first day of their children's absence by written note, verbal message or telephone call. These must be received before 10am for them to be recorded and accepted. It is important for Parents/Carers to realise that not all reasons for absence may be recorded as valid and may not be authorised.
- All absences from school have to be classified by the Principal, not by the parents, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

- Authorised absences are for when a child is away from school for an acceptable reason. These could be illness, hospital appointments, religious reasons, or unavoidable circumstances such as bereavement or a serious emergency
- Unauthorised absences are those which are not exceptional circumstances and for which no "leave" has been given. This can include:
 - parents keeping children off school unnecessarily (as deemed by the Principal)
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have never been properly explained
 - children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
 - routine doctor or dentist appointments that can be organised outside of the school day
 - Continued lateness will be reported and discussed with Parents/Carers. Parents/Carers must ensure latecomers are signed into the late book, which is in Reception.
 - Absences must be recorded by staff using the correct absence and attendance code as issued by the Department for Education.
 - All letters explaining absences are to be kept in the pupil's school record file.
 - If a reason for absence has not been provided, as a first day response, the office will telephone Parents/Carers.
 - Unauthorised third day absences must be reported by staff to the Principal or Parent Support Advisor immediately. Staff use their knowledge of the pupil's known history and use their discretion in ascertaining what action is needed in contacting the Parents/Carers, including possibly making a home visit.

4.0 Procedures:

- School gates and doors open at 8.40am
- Early Morning Work begins promptly at 8.40am
- Registers are completed on SIMS by the class teacher and will be marked at the beginning of each half day session.
- Children who are absent or late will be noted.
- The registers will close at 8.50am and 12.35pm
- In the event that SIMS is not available in the classroom, a paper register is completed and returned to the office to be completed by office staff
- Advance consideration will be given to offsite or residential visits so that appropriate provision can be assured.

5.0 Procedures for recording lateness

- Children who arrive after 8.50am but before 8.55am are given a late slip to take to class so their arrival and reason for lateness can be recorded by the class teacher
- Children who arrive after 8.55am must report to the school office where their name, time of arrival and reason for arriving late will be noted.
- After 9.30am, an adequate reason for lateness may be authorised, but children and parents/carers who fail to provide an adequate explanation for the lateness must be marked as an authorised absence for that session.

6.0 Late collection procedures

- Children should always be collected punctually at 3.05pm. If a child is not collected they are taken to the Office at 3.15pm and their name is recorded in the late collection folder.

- Parents/Carers will be asked to record a reason for their lateness. Emergency contact numbers will be used if we are unable to contact parents/carers. Social Care will be informed if any child is left uncollected after 4.05pm.
- If Parents/Carers have an emergency that means they are going to be significantly late, school should be informed as soon as possible and attempt to make alternative collection arrangements.

7.0 Absence concerns

- In the event of a child not being in school by 9.15a.m., if a message has not been left as to the reason why, it is the responsibility of the admin staff to make sure that all reasonable attempts are made to contact the parent/carer.
- The appropriate code will be marked on the electronic 'absence form' when it is issued.
- From July 2016 any parent whose child is marked as an unauthorised absence for any of these periods
 - 10 sessions* of unauthorised absence in the last 6 weeks
 - 5 consecutive days unauthorised absence (10 sessions)
 - An accumulation of unauthorised absence leading to an attendance of 90% or less will be referred to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership (EIP) Team who may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

*A session is a morning or afternoon i.e. 2 sessions = 1 school day

A parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

The local authority and school will need to decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

It is important that Parents/Carers understand that the initial Fixed Penalty Notice of £120 is issued to each Parent/Carer for each child with 28 days given to settle the Penalty. If the Penalty Notice is paid within the first 21 days, the amount payable is reduced to £60.00 to each Parent/Carer for each child.

For example: A two-parent family with two children would be fined £240.00 if the Penalty Notice was settled within 21 days.

8.0 Request for leave of absence

Any planned leave of absence must be notified to school. Special Leave of Absence forms are available from the office and on the school website, and must be completed in advance. If the request is based on exceptional circumstances then the parent/carer must be willing to have a meeting with the Principal to discuss the request (please note that a meeting may not be arranged and authorisation may just be declined). Before making a booking written permission from the school authorising the absence must be given. Authorisation is not guaranteed and 'exceptional circumstances' is at the discretion of the Principal. Please see above (Paragraph 7) for further details of penalty notice situations.

9.0 Monitoring, recording and reporting

At the beginning of each term the school will identify:

- Children whose attendance has fallen below 90% for the previous term and for the current academic year.
- Children whose attendance is below 96% and has been below 96% in the previous academic year

The registers will be analysed to find the reasons and patterns.

- An initial letter will be sent out explaining that attendance has fallen below 90%.
- Children who continue to have attendance below 90% and have not improved will be sent a letter requesting a meeting between the Principal/Vice Principal (or Parent Support Advisor) and Parent/Carer. An attendance target will be set.
- A parent contract may be issued where attendance has not subsequently improved.
- If attendance still does not improve, it may be necessary to make a formal referral to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership (EIP) Team.

10.0 Communication with parents

Lateness:

- If a child has a pattern of arriving late, unless there are exceptional circumstances, the parent will be contacted by verbal communication, followed up with a written letter

Attendance:

- The school's regular newsletters emphasise the need for good attendance and punctuality and celebrate the classes which have the highest attendance.
- Attendance and punctuality statistics are reported to Parents/Carers at parents' evenings and in the children's end of year school reports.
- Where attendance drops below 90% parents will be informed of this through a standard letter explaining that while we acknowledge these absences are authorised we are still required to monitor and report on them.

11.0 Target

The school has a target of 96% attendance, in line with the national figure for 2016/17 for Primary schools

12.0 Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a legal duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.