



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Version number	Purpose	Lead Person	Date produced
3.1	Policy review	Brian Gwynne	January 2015
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4.2	Policy review (timetabled)	Brian Gwynne	November 2016
4.3	Policy review (timetabled)	Brian Gwynne	November 2018
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6.0	Policy review (timetabled)	Brian Gwynne	October 2022
6.1	Policy review – addition in line with Local Authority Guidance	Brian Gwynne	April 2024
7.0	Policy Updated (DFE Changes)	Brian Gwynne	June 2024
7.1	Policy review (timetabled)	Brian Gwynne	March 2026

Overall Aims:

- We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved.
- West Northamptonshire County Council target for attendance is 95% or above.
- We are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils.
- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- We expect the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved (95% or above), through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, by being in school every day possible, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance of individuals and groups.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies and parents in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

Rights and Responsibilities

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register
- The school to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance.

Head Teacher:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with West Northamptonshire County Council policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with West Northamptonshire County Council policies and procedures.
- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquires.
- To oversee the analysis of data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the school business manager to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Education and Improvement Partnership Team and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.
- Monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality
- Report termly to the Governing Body on attendance
- Ensure all staff are aware of the attendance policy and apply it consistently

Office Administrator

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data.
- To check the school answer phone, office email and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence and update SIMS accordingly.
- To promptly inform the HT, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- To produce termly data for HT to analyse.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To implement the daily checking of registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To write to parents/carers following 5 instances of lateness in a seasonal term or attendance below 95%.
- To maintain attendance records in line with this policy and revised absence codes for September 2024
- To maintain clear communication with HT regarding attendance and punctuality within year groups.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school about absence.
- To follow Local Authority procedures for children missing in education (CME) or home schooled.

Staff:

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- To keep accurate, timely and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the school's register system.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on the school's register system at 8:55 am and 1.00 pm.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If and when required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection
- When required to work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the Office of pupils who persist with poor attendance or punctuality.
- To feed back to parents the impact of pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings and in school reports as relevant.

Parents:

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school and arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Not arrange medical and dental appointments in school time wherever possible.
- Telephone, by 8:45am, to inform the school on each day of their child's absence.

- Provide a written explanation of absence, including dates of absence as soon as their child returns to school.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on attendance and therefore learning.
- A pupil's absence from school will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received from the parent.

Where absence is unavoidable:

- Children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school by 8:45am on each day of absence. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents, to collect them.
- If pupils' have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. Pupils' should be brought back to school after appointments. Pupils should miss as little time as possible.
- Pupils arriving late to school are registered at reception, by the Office Administrator. Absence mark on school's register system amended to either a late before registers close or late after registers close code by the Office
- Parents provide confirmation of reasons for a child/ren absence including dates of and reason for absence upon the child's return to school.

Pupils

All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Pupils who experience attendance difficulties will be given support from their class teacher and the member of staff responsible for pupil wellbeing. At the end of each term, pupils whose attendance is either very good or improved will be presented with certificates.

School

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all staff. The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents.

Registration Procedures

It is a legal requirement that registers are taken at the beginning of a school session. It is also very important in the case of fire or the evacuation of the school that there is an accurate record of which pupils are in the building. Registers are taken promptly by the class teacher twice a day, at the start of the morning session at 8.55am and the afternoon session at 1.00pm. The registers are then sent to the school office.

Attendance at Kingsthorpe Village Primary School is recorded electronically on an attendance management system.

Lateness Procedures

If a child misses the registration, they should come into school via the main door where a member of the administration team will ask them to sign them in via the E-Registration iPad. Registers close 20 minutes after the start of the session. Children arriving within these 20 minutes will be marked 'late before the register closes' and will officially be recorded as late for session. Children arriving after the register has closed have to be marked as 'late after the register closed' and will be officially marked as an unauthorised absence for that session.

If a child has more than 5 recorded late marks in any half term a letter will be sent home to parents.

Notifying Absence

Parents should notify the school by 9.30am on the first day of absence, giving the reason and if possible, likely duration of the absence. If a phone call is not received by this time, a member of the administration team will contact parents.

If it is known in advance that a child will be absent, a letter outlining the reason should be sent into school.

At the end of the term, if despite efforts made by the school, there is no reason given for an outstanding absence, it will be recorded as an 'unauthorised absence'.

Procedures for Following up Absence

Class teachers will monitor their class register and will notify the key member of the administration team if they have concerns. This will be followed up by a phone call home. If the school is unable to contact parents via phone, an email / letter will be sent.

If a pupil returns to school after a period of absence and the parent fails to explain the absence or if the explanation offered is unsatisfactory, the school will contact the parents.

Correspondence from parents will be kept in the school office after entering the reason for absence on the electronic attendance system.

If a child has less than 95% attendance in any half term, parents will be contacted via the school office unless there are any extenuating circumstances.

If the school's efforts to improve a pupil's absence or lateness have been unsuccessful, the situation will be discussed with the School Attendance Support Officer (SASO). Following this, a referral may be made for SASO involvement.

OUR SCHOOL LETTER PROCEDURE FOR ABSENCE UNDER 95% AND LATENESS

Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality

Class Registers

Class registers are recorded using the schools' electronic systems (SIMS). The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times (see below).

Morning Register

Children to be in class for registration at 8.55am. Any child arriving after the close of register at 9.15am will have a "late" mark recorded. If a child arrives after 9.15am it will be recorded as "late/absent" and will count as an unauthorised absence.

The Office Administrator checks the registers for any children that have an 'N' code (unknown) and inputs the correct code if the children are known to have been late or are known to be absent. If there are no reasons/messages as to why the children are not in school then the Office Administrator begins first day absence calls.

School Attendance Letters

The school sends out letters, to communicate with parents about the importance of attendance and punctuality.

Why attendance matters:

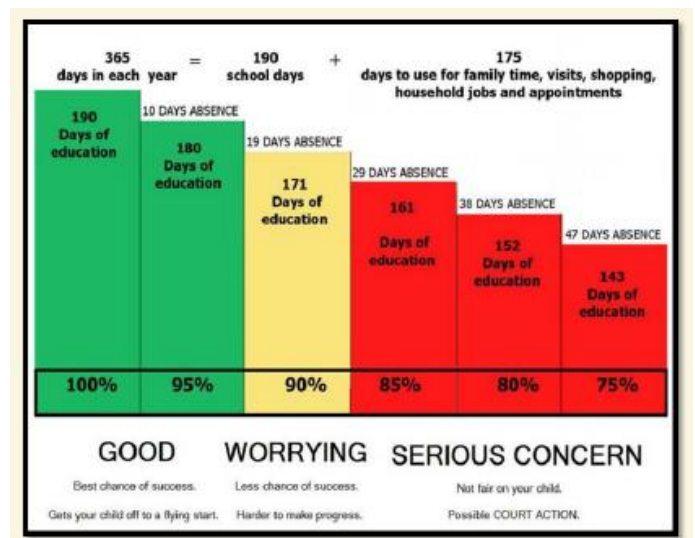
- Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

Punctuality

The Office Administrator and the HT monitor punctuality regularly. This may involve speaking to parents directly, or via a phone call. Letters regarding the school's concern over lateness may also be sent; explaining how much learning pupils are missing. If it does not improve, parents may be invited in to school to discuss the concerns with the HT and plan a way forward. If lateness does not improve following the meeting, then the family will be referred to the local authority school attendance officer who will contact parents warning them that further action may be taken.

If the school's efforts to improve a pupil's absence or lateness have been unsuccessful, the situation will again be discussed with the local authority school attendance officer who will advise on further action.



Regular meetings with the local authority school attendance officer are scheduled to discuss any attendance / punctuality concerns.

Frequent Absence

Information received from parents explaining absences and lateness are noted and kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Nurse Team if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases, the school will seek advice from other external support agencies.

Long term absence

If any child is identified as needing a substantial amount of time out of school, such as long-term illness, hospital care, school work will be made available to the family so the child can continue their learning when physically unable to come to school. The class teacher will be responsible for setting work and responding to learning for children in their class, where possible and reasonable. This system will be regularly reviewed to ensure the learning is being used appropriately to avoid this support being mistaken as home-schooling.

Long term medical absence and/or condition

If any child is identified as needing a substantial amount of time out of school, such as long-term illness, or hospital care, the school will adopt home learning if the child is able to. Home learning will be made available to the family so the child can continue their learning when physically unable to come to school. The class teacher will be responsible for setting work and responding to learning for children in their class, where possible and reasonable. This system will be regularly reviewed to ensure the learning is being used appropriately to avoid this support being mistaken as home-schooling.

Reward Systems

Kingsthorpe Village Primary School offers an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos will aim to demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken. An attendance trophy will be awarded each week in assembly to the class with the highest attendance percentages for the previous week.

100% attendance certificates will be given at the end of each term and at the end of the school year. Children whose attendance has greatly improved will also receive a certificate.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Attendance data will be monitored and analysed regularly in order to identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support and inform policy/practice.

The Head teacher will give termly and annual reports to governors on attendance matters.

Parents will be given information about their child's attendance for the school year on the annual written report in the summer term.

School Newsletters/ParentMail

The school newsletter is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality

Breakfast Club

A daily Breakfast Club takes place every day for our families run by an outside provider. This supports parents by allowing them to drop their children off from 7:45 am, to get work on time. The school may subsidise places on a case by case basis to support school attendance^[L]_[SEP]

The School Learning Environment^[L]_[SEP]

A welcoming, organised learning environment, that supports and celebrates its learners is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality.

Parent/teacher consultation evenings & Child's annual school report

This provides an opportunity for class teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set. The class teacher then monitors this. If there is no improvement in attendance/punctuality, the pupil is referred to the HT. The impact of poor attendance should be written in the child's annual report.

Regulations for taking holidays in term time

The Department for Education has made amendments to the regulations which previously allowed Head teacher's the discretion to grant holidays taken during term time. The regulations come into force from 1 September 2024

The time frame for parents receiving a fixed term penalty notice has reduced from ten to five days or 10 sessions. (NCC Policy April 2016) Fixed penalty notices within Northamptonshire are triggered by periods of unauthorised absence and carry the tariff of £60 rising to £120 if unpaid within 21 days. The local authority imposes the fixed penalty notice.

Extended Holidays

All schools can grant a leave of absence when a pupil needs to be absent from school with permission. All schools are expected to restrict leaves of absence to the specific circumstances set out in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority must do so.

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA).
- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.
- Exceptional circumstances: All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of schools maintained by local authorities and special schools not maintained by local authorities, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Exceptional circumstances are agreed on an individual basis. Some examples are provided below but this is not an exhaustive list.

- Children may need time to visit seriously ill relatives within school in exceptional circumstances
- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.
- Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
- The school may take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
- The school has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Families may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The school family can provide a caring, safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If leave is granted in "exceptional circumstances" it should not exceed 10 school days and should not be taken during important assessments/school events. It is expected that any work missed should be made up by taking assignments with him/her or completing them on the child's return.

The term dates are published a year in advance on the West Northamptonshire County Council website, westnorthants.gov.uk and are also available on the school's website, www.kingsthorpevps.co.uk

Legal Action in regard to Irregular Attendance

The new National Framework for Penalty Notices for absence

The Department has laid regulations to amend the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 to deliver on the Schools White Paper commitment to introduce a National Framework for Penalty Notices from September 2024.

The framework embeds the 'support first' approach to managing attendance, ensuring that penalty notices are considered on a case-by-case basis, and only used where attendance support has already been provided and has not worked or been engaged with or where support is not appropriate (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).

It sets a single national threshold for considering a penalty notice of 10 sessions (typically, 5 days) within 10 weeks, replacing area by area thresholds.

We are increasing the fine amount to £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 when paid within 21 days.

Finally, the Local Authority are supporting schools and local authorities to tackle repeated offences by introducing a flat rate of £160 for a second penalty notice within a three-year period and not allowing more than 2 penalty notices, after which an alternative route (e.g. prosecution) should be considered instead as the penalty is clearly not working.

"If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (90%) within 10 weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action. This could include,

- **A Penalty Notice payable up to £160 fine without further reference to you for a penalty notice this warning is valid for 12 months.**
- **Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.**
- **Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment."**

Definition of a Parent - 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.

National Framework for Penalty Notices

There will be a single consistent national threshold for when a penalty notice must be considered by all schools in England of 10 sessions (a school day is 2 sessions - morning and afternoon) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of unauthorised absence. The 10-school week period can span different terms or school years.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. Increasing to £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court

Second Offence (within 3 years)

The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised absence the amount will be: £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court

Third Offence and Any Further Offences (within 3 years)

The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued and the case could be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court.

Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.
Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

Policy Review

The monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of this policy is the responsibility of the Standards, Quality and Community Committee of the Governing Body. This policy will be reviewed in full by the Governing Body every two years.