



# Normanhurst School

## Attendance Policy

### Aims

The School aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for all pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances.

The aims of this policy are as follows:

- to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
- to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the school is able to benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the School;
- to prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the School, reduce absence and set out the School's approach to the management of absence/non-attendance;
- to recognise the linkages between attendance/absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
- to help to promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection.

### Regulatory Framework

This policy has been prepared to meet the School's responsibilities under:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;
- EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (DfE, January 2024);
- Education and Skills Act 2008;
- Children Act 1989;
- Childcare Act 2006;
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Equality Act 2010; and
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (**UK GDPR**)

It includes the requirements of the DfE's publication [Working together to improve school attendance](#) 2024.

### The Importance of Good Attendance

The school recognises the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset. This is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture. In building a culture of good school attendance it recognises:

- the importance of good attendance, alongside good behaviour, as a central part of the school's vision, values, ethos and day-to-day life;
- the interplay between attendance and wider school improvement efforts, building it into strategies on attainment, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, supporting pupils with medical conditions and/or disabilities, mental health issues, safeguarding wellbeing, and support for disadvantaged pupils;
- the importance of setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicating these regularly and effectively to pupils and parents;
- that attendance is never "solved" and is a continuous process requiring revision and updating of messages, processes and strategies; and
- children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

## **School Responsibilities**

- The school acknowledges that attendance is the essential foundation to securing positive outcomes for all pupils and that everyone has a responsibility to take proactive steps to manage and improve attendance across the school community.
- The school will consistently promote the benefits of good attendance, setting high expectations for every pupil and consistently communicating those expectations to pupils and parents.
- Where there are challenges to attendance, the school will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them.
- The school will respond to non-attendance and/or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the School's terms and conditions. It will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed.
- The school will have robust systems in place to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

## **Staff Responsibilities**

The Group Managing Principal has appointed the Head, in conjunction with the Senior Leadership Team, to have responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school.

The Head's responsibilities are to:

- set a clear vision for improving attendance in school;
- establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure the systems are followed by all staff;
- monitor and evaluate progress regularly, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes;
- have oversight of and analyse attendance data; and
- communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and parents.

The SLT's responsibilities, in conjunction with the staff, are to:

- have a formal routine for registers being taken accurately each morning and afternoon;
- record all absences promptly and accurately using the processes specified;
- seek explanations for any absences as pupils return to school;
- make enquiries about unexplained absences, including those within the school day, and follow up with pupils to ensure that an explanation has been formally given to the school;
- look out for trends or patterns in a pupil's attendance and inform the Head of any specific concerns;
- deal with lateness to lessons consistently and promptly (seniors);
- consider appropriate sanctions for pupils who arrive late to a lesson in line with the school's behaviour and discipline policies (seniors); and
- discuss non-attendance and/or lateness with pupils and parents (where possible) and emphasise the importance of punctuality and attendance.

## **School Arrangements**

The school will accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day-to-day processes in place to follow-up absence. These registers are kept electronically.

## **Monitoring Attendance**

The school will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them. Such analysis may include:

- monitoring and analysing attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families;
- using this analysis to provide attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the SENDCo and DSL);
- undertaking individual analysis to identify pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeting actions for those cases;
- conducting thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends;
- benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data; and
- monitoring the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented.

## **Pupil Expectations**

School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. The school has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and has systems in place to reward good attendance and manage poor attendance.

Pupils should be aware that:

- they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each school day from the registration at the start until dismissal at the end;
- they are expected to arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons;
- they should not leave a lesson or the school site without permission or otherwise in accordance with school rules;
- they should engage with the school's arrangements for recording and managing attendance as set out in this policy;
- any unexplained absence will be followed up;
- persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the school. This may take the form of:
  - offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance;
  - communication with parents;
  - reporting to other agencies such as children's social care; and
  - sanctions against them or their parents in line with the school's behaviour policies.

If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending school or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff, although the school encourages them to speak to their form teacher/tutor.

## **Additional needs**

The school recognises that some pupils may find it harder than others to attend school, and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

The school will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with pupils without a disability, in relation to school attendance. It will also work with parents, and where appropriate with the local authority, to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND.

Where a pupil has an EHCP, the school will communicate with the local authority where the pupil's attendance falls, or the school become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs. Suitable strategies and support will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance.

Where barriers are outside of the school's control, the school will work with parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

The school will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

### **Parental Responsibilities**

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education. This means that pupils must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The school expects all pupils to be present at school for the whole of the school day, usually from registration at 8.45am to dismissal after the last lesson/session, but this period may be extended, for example for clubs, sports fixtures or school trips.

The school will help parents to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development and provide clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance.

Parents are bound by the terms relating to conduct and attendance in the parent contract and failure to ensure a child's attendance or engage with the school about it could amount to a breach of contract or a finding that the parent is treating the school unreasonably.

### **Registration**

The school uses e-registration and attendance management systems via Engage.

Morning registration starts at 8.40am and registers remain open until 9am during form time. There is an additional short afternoon registration that takes place after lunch before the start of the afternoon lessons. Once the morning and afternoon registers close, a pupil will be recorded as absent if not present in the classroom/lesson.

If a pupil is absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed they will be recorded as a late arrival (code L).

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed but before the end of the session without a satisfactory explanation e.g. because of an unavoidable cause, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (code U) and the reasons given/not given will be recorded.

## **Reporting Absence**

If a pupil is to be absent from school for any reason, the parent/carer should contact the school office either by telephone or by email to [absence@xxschool.co.uk](mailto:absence@xxschool.co.uk) by 8.45am on the first morning of the absence. If the pupil is ill, the school should be notified of the nature of the illness and the anticipated duration of the absence. The form teacher/tutor will be informed and the absence will be recorded accordingly.

The school should be kept updated during the absence as to the progress of the pupil and the anticipated date of return.

## **Requesting Absence in Advance**

Applications for authorised leaves of absence during the school day will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will only be permitted if made in writing. An Absence Request Form is available to download from the website and should be emailed to the school office once completed for consideration by the Head.

The school will consider each application for an authorised leave of absence individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances, the pupil's past attendance record and the relevant background context behind the request.

Apart from illness or where there are additional needs, no pupil should be away from school without prior permission from the Head. Dental or medical appointments should be made during school holidays or after the school day except in cases of emergency when the school office should be informed.

Requests to take a pupil out of school for a holiday will normally be refused or recorded as unauthorised absence, unless in exceptional circumstances.

A leave of absence will usually be authorised for religious observance if the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which parents and pupils belong. Parents are expected to make a request for this type of leave of absence in advance.

Pupils may not be taken out of school during the school day for any other purposes without the prior agreement of the Head. All pupils who leave the premises during the school day have to be signed out from the school office by the adult who is taking responsibility for them.

## **Reporting Duties**

The school has statutory reporting obligations if a pupil fails to regularly attend their absence is unauthorised. The school must report unauthorised absences for a continuous period of 10 days or more to the local authority. The school will also make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is away from school ill for 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more.

Each time the school's attendance register is completed it is treated as a contact point for these purposes.

Action will also be taken in accordance with the Children Missing Education Policy and Safeguarding Policy if any absence of a pupil from the school gives rise to a concern about their welfare.

## **Attendance Register**

The school records and monitors the attendance of all pupils (both of compulsory and non-compulsory school age) in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024. The school is required by law to take attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

The school uses the appropriate national attendance and absence codes system to enable it to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with regulation 10 of the Attendance Regulations. The attendance register is kept electronically on Engage and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy.

The school will also use these records to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) and work with pupils and parents to resolve any issues before they become entrenched.

On each occasion it will be recorded whether every pupil is:

- physically present in school when the attendance register begins to be taken; or
- absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended; or
- attending a place other than the school; or
- absent.

The circumstances in which a pupil may be recorded as attending a place, other than the school, can include:

- Attending educational provision arranged by a local authority;
- For an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the school and supervised by a member of school staff;
- Attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity;
- Attending an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by the school as part of the pupil's education;
- Attending a place for any other approved educational activity.

Absence will be recorded in accordance with the national absence codes set out in regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Regulations) 2024 and statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance relating to:

- leaves of absence;
- other authorised reasons;
- unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause;
- unauthorised absence.

The "unauthorised absence" code will be used when prior permission for absence has not been given and where the school is not satisfied with the explanation given for absence or delayed attendance or where no explanation has been given meaning that the code for "unable to attend due to an exceptional circumstance" is not appropriate. Examples include:

- holiday has not been authorised by the school or is in excess of the period determined by the Head;
- the reason for absence has not been provided;
- a pupil is absent from school without authorisation;
- a pupil has arrived in school after registration has closed and without reasonable explanation.

### **Admissions Register**

In accordance with the requirements of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 the school will:

- maintain an admissions register of all pupils (of both compulsory and non-compulsory school age) admitted to the school (also known as the school roll); and
- inform the local authority of any pupil who is going to be added to or deleted from the school's admissions register at non-standard transition points.

The admissions register is kept electronically and a back-up copy of the register is made at least once a month in the form of an electronic or printed copy. The school ensures that every entry in the school's admissions register is preserved for six years beginning with the day on which the entry was made; and every back-up copy of the register is preserved for six years after the end of the school year that it relates to.

The admissions register contains specific personal details of every pupil in the school, including their date of admission, information regarding parents/carers and details of the school they last attended.

A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admissions register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. When any of the situations set out in regulation 9 occurs, the pupil's name must be deleted.

Where the school notifies the local authority that the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admissions register, the school must provide it with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the address of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives or can be contacted in an emergency;
- the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- name of the pupil's other or future school and pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable;
- the ground (prescribed in regulation 9) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admissions register.