



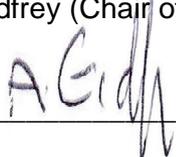
Attendance Policy

Policy Version Control

Version history see Annex A errata for details

Version No.	Policy Author	Date Updated	Review Date
1	L Shields	01.03.2017	March 2018

Approval: A Godfrey (Chair of Board)


 _____ (signed) **Date authorised:** 30.03.2017

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Statement of Intent

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

At North View Academy, we believe that good attendance and punctuality are important in helping students achieve the best that they can be. Students should be at school on time dressed in accordance with the school uniform policy, and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community including students, parents, governors and staff.

Statutory Framework

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act a student is required to attend regularly at school should a student fail to attend regularly legal action may be taken. A *parent(s)* may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice or could be fined up to £2,500 face three months in prison and receive a parenting order. An Education Supervision Order could be sought.

- The school is required to complete a register twice during the school day. This is once at the start of the school day, 9.25am, and again for the afternoon session at 1.15 pm.
- The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not itself authorise an absence. It is for the school to determine if an absence is to be authorised (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).

Education Law defines a *parent* as:

- 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 on a daily basis.
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It is important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the student that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community including students, parents, governors and staff.

School will:

- promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence in order to act early to address patterns of absence.
- keep parents fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record and follow up unexplained absences by text phone calls and letters as necessary
- contact parents on the first day when a student fails to attend school without providing good reason, via the School's electronic messaging system
- take timely action on any problem notified to us and involve appropriate outside agencies in order to support students and their families. This may include a 'home visit' or a request to the police to undertake a 'Safe and Well' welfare visit.

Students will:

- will aim to achieve 100% attendance each academic year
- attend school daily.
- will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day.

- will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.
- will go to registration and lessons on time.
- will take responsibility for registering at school admin office if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Parents will:

- support the school and their child in aiming for 100% attendance each academic year
- ensure their child attends school daily and on time by 9.20am
- ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, dressed in accordance with the school uniform policy, fully equipped, with a positive attitude to learn
- notify the school before 9 am of any absence.
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- ensure the school has regular updated contact numbers.
- will actively work with the school staff and relevant multi-agency staff, to solve any attendance issues as and when they occur.

Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.

Under the 2006 Education Regulations **it is a legal requirement that a register is taken at the start of the day**. Not only does the process allow us to monitor attendance but also to act as a student checklist in respect of health and safety issues – e.g. Fire Drill the school

School starts at 9.20am when all students should be in their classrooms in preparation for the register being taken at 9.25am. At this time students should collect items for the day and make sure that they are aware of any changes / arrangements to the day's activities. The afternoon register is taken at between 1.15pm and 1.20pm. It is essential that all students are registered on both occasions.

Any student who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site

Under the 1996 Education Act parents commit an offence if the child does not attend school regularly. If your child cannot come to school because of illness you should advise the school on the first day of absence by telephone. If no message is received we will make every effort to contact you.

It is essential that the school is kept informed of changes of contact details such as phone numbers and addresses. In cases where we continue to be concerned we may make a 'home visit' or request the police to undertake a 'Safe and Well' welfare visit.

The school will only authorise a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. If a parent rings the school to confirm the student is unwell the school may request supporting evidence: medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, doctor's note, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription, print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence.

The school may choose not to authorise absence without this supporting evidence as it is for the school to determine if an absence is to be authorised.

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, parents should inform the school in advance and submit a copy of the appointment card. The absence will be marked unauthorised if the parent fails to submit the appointment card.

We will closely monitor your child's attendance and alert you if we feel there is an issue. The school undertakes a range of measures to support students where attendance is an issue. Where we fail to see an improvement in a student's attendance it may be necessary to make a referral to an appropriate external agency to ensure the student receives the support required it is important that parents work with the relevant external agency in order to improve their child's attendance.

If your child is experiencing difficulties you should contact the school at an early stage and work together with staff in resolving the difficulties. This is nearly always successful.

If the difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school will make a referral to the Local Authority Attendance Service they will assess the case to determine the appropriateness of use of statutory enforcement procedures i.e. Fixed Penalty Notices, Magistrates Court or seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment a parenting order can also be imposed.

Punctuality/Lateness

Arrival after the close of registration with no valid reason will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded “U” in the register. However at North View Academy the majority of pupils arrive at school on home school transport provided by the Local Authority as part of their EHC plan and provision. These transports can sometimes be held up due to unforeseen circumstances and no late registration will be marked in this case or situation. Parents of students who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents, will be invited to attend a meeting in school and discuss the problem. If the lateness continues a referral will be made to the Local Authority Attendance Service and a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued or ultimately the parent could be prosecuted.

It is important to note that any student who arrives to school after 10am will be marked with a letter ‘O’ in the register, unless this is due to transport issues.. This means that, despite being in school, they will technically be marked absent from school for the morning sessions. It will be recorded on the register as an unauthorised absence and could result in the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notice.

Holidays in term time

Time off school for family holidays cannot be authorised. The Principal has the discretion; in exceptional circumstances to authorise short periods off school.

Applications for Leave of Absence where dates can be known ahead must be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested date.

Consideration is given to each request before a decision is reached by the Principal; on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its individual circumstances.

Any leave of absence that has been declined or the parents has not sought approval for will be recorded as unauthorised. These cases will be referred to the Local Authority and a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued to each parent for each student.

Encouraging regular attendance and investigating the underlying causes of absenteeism should be set out in a school’s attendance policy, which would clearly set out staff roles and responsibilities for dealing with attendance, which should come before referral to the Attendance Team.

Progression through the stages of the Non-attendance Procedures relies upon an active partnership between schools, the Attendance Team and other LA support services. The following paragraphs underpin the need for agreed criterion for referral to the Attendance Team.

Procedures for non-attendance at school – Guidance

Schools and Attendance Development Officers should establish who would be the contact person(s) in school and arrange regular meetings if this is not already the case.

The Attendance Team can only progress cases of non-attendance where there is unauthorised absence. The head teacher, or another authorised member of the school staff can authorise absences, which includes non-attendance for which a satisfactory explanation (e.g. genuine illness) has been provided.

It is important to note that these procedures should not replace a school's established procedure for poor attendance. For example, a referral may already have been made to the Attendance Development Officer; or the school may have made contact with a pupil's parent before stage one. It is expected that the procedures will be applied when strategies employed by the school have been exhausted.

Stage One

There will need to be an agreement in each school on a Trigger Point for action (e.g. an agreed level of attendance related to the school average and/or 4 broken weeks in any ten). At this stage, the appropriate in-school person should address the attendance pattern of the pupil. Plans for dealing with the problem should be devised with the involvement of parent(s) and any support agencies available to the school, depending on the pupil and their circumstances.

For example: Making contact with parents either in person or by telephone.

Working in partnership with parents and pupils to identify underlying causes of non-attendance:

- SEN
- Medical needs
- Bullying
- Family difficulties
- Social problems
- Disaffection
- Lateness etc.

Adopting in-school policies to identify underlying problems and where appropriate, develop suitable strategies to address them.

- Writing to parents/carers to ensure they are aware of an attendance problem
- Arrange meetings in school with parents/carers to discuss attendance and associated problems
- First day of absence contact
- School/Home contracts to encourage an improvement in attendance/punctuality
- Lateness strategies with the use of IT to improve the monitoring of attendance including a dedicated answer phone line. This is particularly useful in cases of post-registration truancy
- Raising the awareness of the implications of poor school attendance through:
 - Newsletters
 - Parents Evenings
 - Induction Meetings
 - Home-school agreements
 - Rewarding good attendance and punctuality
 - Acknowledging improved attendance
 - Periodically reminding parents of the school's procedures for notification of absences
- In school late gates

When successful contact has been made with parent(s) it is often possible to agree strategies, which resolve the attendance pattern without recourse to the Attendance Team. Parent(s) should be encouraged to be involved actively in dealing with attendance problems including the use of parenting contracts. They should be kept informed about the use of report systems, curriculum or timetable changes, pastoral counselling, assessment of learning difficulties or other interventions. Where intervention at school level fails to bring about improvement in attendance, the pupil will fall into the Stage One category, discussed by the Attendance Development Officer and the School Representative at their scheduled meeting and a joint decision taken on how to proceed.

The Stage one response on an individual pupil could be:-

- a) Implement normal school procedures, (contact parents, letter home etc.).
- b) Where the absences are unauthorised send a concern letter incorporating the penalty notice information. Refer to the Attendance Team if the absences are unauthorised. In order to ensure the health and safety of the Attendance Development Officer concerned, details of any known risk factors associated with the pupil, or the pupil's family.
- c) Where the absences are authorised send a Concern Letter from the Head teacher to the pupil's parent(s). A copy of the letter should be given to the Attendance Development Officer.
- d) No action at the moment and monitor the situation if, for example, the pupil's absences are justified or because of genuine illness.

(Even absences that have been authorised need to be carefully monitored by the school, especially if illness is continually given as a reason).

Following the Concern Letter, if the pupil's attendance does not improve immediately or continues to cause concern a referral to Stage Two should be made by the School and Attendance Development Officer. In all but exceptional circumstances referral should be made within two weeks of the Concern Letter.

Stage Two

The school will be responsible for arranging meetings of the Governing Body and presenting reports.

The School Representative will make a referral to the School Governors. The School Governors may interview the parent(s) and the pupil. The school representative will present the governors with the PROFORMA, but a copy will not be sent to the parent(s), other than in exceptional circumstances, (e.g. housebound parent). The school will complete the form and the Attendance Development Officer will submit an appended report in cases that they have been involved in. Whether the governors interview the parent(s) and pupil or not they should consider the following alternatives:-

- a) That the matter be referred to Stage Three of the procedures immediately, or
- b) That the situation should be monitored for a short period to allow for an improvement in the pupil's attendance. It may be appropriate for the matter to be referred to the Attendance Development Officer for further action.

Further action may include communicating with the pupil in school, and/or a home visit if appropriate. The purpose of a home visit is to make an assessment of the reasons for the unauthorised absence; inform parent(s) of their legal responsibilities and agree remedial action. This visit will look at supportive strategies to improve school attendance by resolving the issues contributing to the unauthorised absence.

Feedback from home visit will be given to the school within three working days of the visit being completed. In some cases it may be necessary to complete a parenting contract, which will include an agreed attendance target. The plan will be completed in consultation with the pupil, parent(s), an appropriate member of school staff and the Attendance Development Officer.

If the attendance target is not reached within the agreed timescales, the case will automatically be referred to Stage Three. In all but exceptional circumstances referral should be made within two weeks. If the situation is resolved, monitoring will continue for four weeks then the case will be closed and the pupil will revert to school monitoring/review rather than the current caseload of the Attendance Development Officer.

Stage Three

A senior member of the Attendance Team who will work to a script to ensure consistency will conduct an interview of the parent(s) and the pupil. The referral will be made by presenting the interviewer with the updated PROFORMA and copies of the completed REAP reports which will then be returned to the Attendance Development Officer accompanied by brief notes and one of the following recommendations:-

- a) If the level of unauthorised absence is sufficient the matter should be referred to Stage Four of the procedures immediately and the case passed to the Enforcement Team, or
- b) That the situation should be monitored for a short period to allow for an improvement in the pupil's attendance (If there is no improvement or there is a subsequent deterioration, the matter should be referred to Stage Four).

A copy of the minutes will be given to the parents and the school representative

If the parent(s) fails to attend the meeting a questionnaire will be sent requiring them to complete and return it by a specific date. The questionnaire will be used to inform the Stage Three decision. If the situation is resolved, monitoring will continue for 8 weeks then the case will be closed and the pupil will revert to school monitoring/review rather than the current caseload of the Attendance Development Officer.

It is not considered appropriate to offer more than two appointments to parents. The Attendance Team will be responsible for arranging the LA interviews and for notifying the school of the outcome.

Following the interview, if the pupil's attendance does not improve immediately or continues to cause concern the Attendance Development Officer will be responsible for referring the case to the Enforcement Team.

In all but exceptional circumstances referral should be made within two weeks of the Interview recommendation for inclusion in the next available Stage Four meeting.

Stage Four

If there has been no satisfactory improvement a formal letter will be sent to the parent(s) inviting them to attend a PACE interview with a representative of the Enforcement Team. They will be advised that they can seek legal advice and can bring legal representation to the meeting. If appropriate the Attendance Development Officer will complete a Stage Four report (an update of involvement with the family following the Stage Three meeting).

A record will be kept of the meeting and all parties will be required to sign the minutes. Following the meeting the parent(s) will be sent a final warning notice with a copy of the PACE Interview record.

Following the PACE interview the representative from the Enforcement Team will make one of the following decisions:-

- a) Consideration to the suitability of the case for placing before the Family Court with regard to an Education Supervision Order.
- b) Recommend immediate prosecution of the responsible parent(s); or
- c) Recommend that the parent(s) be given a short period (usually no more than four weeks), to improve the pupil's attendance.
- d) Issue a Penalty Notice

If the parent(s) fails to attend the Stage Four meeting a letter will be sent which will include a written PACE Caution and a questionnaire which the parent(s) will be required to complete and return within seven days. The letter will advise the parent(s) that there will be no further involvement from the Attendance Team unless specifically requested.

If the Stage Four recommends immediate prosecution the Enforcement Team will prepare the appropriate documentation within one week. If the recommendation is to monitor and there is no improvement or a deterioration after the Stage Four PACE interview, consideration will be given to issuing a Penalty Notice or initiating legal proceedings against the responsible parent(s).

If the attendance has improved during the agreed monitoring period the Enforcement team will continue to monitor for a further 8 weeks if the attendance is sustained, the case will be closed by the Enforcement Team and returned to the Attendance Development Officer. The pupil will revert to school monitoring/review rather than the current caseload of the school based Attendance Officer. To reactivate the case the school will be required to make a referral to the Attendance Development Officer and the case will re-enter the process at Stage Three.

Stage Five

The Enforcement Team will prepare the papers for legal proceedings against the responsible parent. The Enforcement Team will use the pupil case file provided by the Attendance Development Officer to prepare summonses, witness statement or a penalty notice. The magistrate's court will be contacted for the next available court date. The Enforcement Team will keep the Attendance Development Officer informed of the current status of the case.

If the pupil's attendance does not improve the Enforcement Team will return the case to the magistrate's court under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996 (where, if found guilty, the penalty is greater).

The Enforcement Team will monitor the case for 18 weeks if the attendance improves the case will be returned to the Attendance Development Officer. The pupil will revert to school monitoring/review rather than the current caseload of the school based Attendance Officer. To reactivate the case the school will be required to make a referral to the Attendance Development Officer and the case will re-enter the process at Stage Three.

Appendix 1

Criteria for referral to the Attendance Team

1st priority – unauthorised absence:

- after ten consecutive days

 - sporadic unauthorised absence of one/two days over a four week period

 - emerging patterns of a regular day of unauthorised absence over a four week period i.e. every Tuesday.
- 2nd priority – lateness
- lateness over a sustained period of four weeks or more or emerging patterns of lateness.
- 3rd priority – condoned absence
- continual condoned parent(s) absence.

Annex A

Version No.	Change History	Guidance reference (if any)	Date
1	Created		01.03.2017