

Newsham Primary School
Policy for Attendance and Punctuality



Date Written: September 2018
By: Cathryn Watson
Adopted by Governors: October 2018

Reviewed annually in line with Government legislation and changes to school policy.

Attendance

Schools must meet for at least 380 sessions or 190 days during any school year to educate their pupils. Poor attendance disadvantages children. At Newsham Primary School we aim to convey a positive regard for regular attendance to parents/carers, pupils and teachers. Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents/carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school, alternative educational provision or otherwise. If a child is registered at a school, parents/carers have primary responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly.

Aims

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

We aim to ensure that the children in our school attend regularly and on time. Where this is not the case, staff follow a staged procedure to encourage consistent attendance.

The Government expects:

School Responsibilities

To monitor attendance effectively:

- use the same registration procedures throughout Newsham Primary School;
- use different codes for authorised and unauthorised absence;
- keep track of pupils during the day;
- identify vulnerable learners;
- provide guidelines for teachers on keeping registers and improving attendance;
- provide clear, full and accurate information to the EWO.

We will always follow up any absences to:

- ascertain the reason;
- ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken if necessary;
- identify whether the absence is authorised or not; and identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register which is used to download data to the School Census.

Registers

The register is a legal document. Evidence from a register can be used as evidence in a court of law. Teachers are required to complete a register at the beginning of each session (morning and afternoon) every day, accurately. The attendance register must indicate if an absence of a pupil is authorised and unauthorised. Absence can only be authorised by our Headteacher, or Deputy Headteacher who is acting on the Headteacher's authority.

School uses SIMS to record all attendance and admissions register (Number on Roll).

Where there is an absence, teachers or relevant staff are required to enter the appropriate symbol (see appendix 1). A sickness may be authorised by the teacher or relevant staff only if they have received a message (written or verbal). Any notes received by teachers must be sent to the school office; likewise verbal messages from parents must be recorded and also sent.

Where there is a definite pattern of non-attendance or where the explanation for absence is unsatisfactory, absence may not be authorised even with a message from a parent (see Letter 2)

The school admin team will record weekly percentages and any unauthorised absences.

First Day of Absence Contact

The school admin team will phone all the contact numbers for any child failing to arrive at school for the first day of absence. This contact is made by telephone and aims to ascertain the reason why the child is absent and when they are likely to return. In cases of persistent absenteeism a member of our Senior Leadership Team may conduct a home visit if failure to contact by telephone occurs. Further calls are made by senior staff if absence is prolonged. These calls also let parents/carers know that the absence has been noted and that the school cares about the effect this has on the child's learning. A record of these calls and the responses received is always kept.

Holidays During Term Time

As Headteacher, Mrs Armstrong can only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If Mrs Armstrong grants a leave of absence request, it will be at her discretion to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm. Any such application must be made in advance and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are 'special' circumstances which warrant the leave. From September 2015, requests for leave of absence will review the child's previous school attendance history as well as current attendance, and if a pattern of leave requests is found and the child's previous absence is below 90%, the Headteacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued. A Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies. Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child. See Appendix 2.

Punctuality

The school doors open at 8.40am and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration at 8.45am at which time the school doors will be shut. Any child arriving later than 8.40am should enter school via the main entrance and report to the school office. The names of these pupils will be added to the Lateness Register. The child will then be sent to their classroom. Letters will be sent out to parents of persistent latecomers (at the discretion of the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher, taking into account personal and family circumstances).

Rewards

In Monday assembly, we award a trophy to a class in each phase with the highest overall percentage attendance for the previous week. These classes can see from our hall display who has won the most trophies throughout the year and the classes with the best overall attendance record at the end of the academic year receives an age-appropriate educational treat/or visitor into school.

In addition, those children who achieve 100% attendance throughout the whole of the academic year are taken for a treat by the Headteacher and/or Deputy Head. Last year, for example, the children went on a visit for a special lunch to a local family restaurant. Those children with protected characteristics that are specified in section 4 of the Equality Act 2010 are included in this reward. Disabled people who are defined as disabled in accordance with section 6 of the Act will be entitled to attend.

Phase leaders set individual targets for pupils who fall below 96%, rewards include an attendance award 'credit card'.

Our aim is for children and families to work with us to focus on achieving at least 96% with no lateness for as many children as possible.

Finally, we have an attendance initiative called '*In-it-to-win-it.*' Each term, any child with attendance of 96% or above during that period is entered into a prize draw to win a £5 gift voucher. The winners of all these awards are announced in assembly and included in our weekly newsletter.

Monitoring Attendance Rates/Persistent Absence

Weekly, monthly and half termly analysis of attendance is undertaken by the School Business Manager and the School Clerk this is followed up with, phone calls and letters home (Letter 1) to parents/carers. The EWO (Education Welfare Officer), visits school at least half termly to monitor our whole school percentage and individual pupils causing concern, this can result in home visits at our request to talk to families about an improvement in absence rates. Parent/carers of persistent absentees are invited into school to meet with Phase Leaders. From September 2015 the rate of persistent absenteeism is only 10% of the total days in school (19 days

or 38 sessions). Careful monitoring of these pupils will highlight any pupils causing concern early. Once attendance rates improve a letter of thanks is also written.

Roles and Responsibilities

School Admin Team

- *Monitor registers on a daily basis and record absences.*
- *Make and keep a record of telephone calls to parents on the first day of their child's absence (these calls continue until an adequate response is gained).*
- *Mark reasons for absences into registers and leave a message for teachers explaining absences.*
- *Calculate weekly attendance percentages.*
- *Give regular feedback to SBM concerning attendance and punctuality issues.*
- *Liase with Educational Welfare Officer where necessary.*
- *Work with DHT and other school staff to develop strategies to improve school attendance.*
- *Print official registers.*

Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher/School Business Manager

- *Ensure that attendance and punctuality receive high profile in the school through newsletters, school reports, home/school communications, assemblies and rewards.*
- *Meet with parents/carers who request a leave of absence for their child.*
- *Oversee and report to Headteacher and Governors on whole school attendance and punctuality.*
- *Communicate with parents where clear concerns exist about attendance or punctuality.*
- *Liase on a regular basis with school admin team.*
- *Complete statistical returns.*
- *Offer support to parents on attendance and punctuality issues.*

Class Teachers

- *Have high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classes.*
- *Complete registers on a daily and weekly basis.*
- *Use class newsletters to highlight class attendance and punctuality.*
- *Develop and share strategies to improve class attendance.*

What can parents do to help?

- *Let the school know by 9.00am (12.30pm for afternoon nursery) why your child is away, usually on the first day of absence.*
- *Make appointments and book holidays out of school time.*
- *Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is really necessary.*

Appendix 1

Newsham Primary School

Attendance Registers

The attendance register is a legal document and the following guidelines apply.

Registers should be called at the beginning of the morning session AND the afternoon session. On both occasions registers MUST be promptly completed and saved. Any problems must be reported to the admin team immediately.

Non-attendance must be indicated with the appropriate symbol (see below).

Unauthorised absence is the only occasion when a register space can be left empty. Absence letters from parents should be kept for the term and dated to correspond with the relevant absence.

SYMBOLS

/ - Present (am)

\ - Present (pm)

C – Leave of absence authorised by the school

G – Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period

H – Family holiday authorised by the school

I – Illness (Not medical or dental appointments)

L – Late

M – Medical/Dental appointments

O – Absent from school without authorisation

U – Arrived at school after registration closed

! – Non-compulsory school age absence

B – Off-site educational activity

D – Dual Registered – at another educational establishment

J – At an interview with prospective employer, or another educational establishment

P – Participating in a supervised sporting activity

V – Educational visit or trip

E – Excluded but no alternative provision made

F – Extended family holiday authorised by the school

R – Religious observance

S – Study leave

T – Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

N – Reason for absence not yet provided

X – Not required to be in school

Y – Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

- Planned whole or partial school closure



Headteacher: Mrs. Anne-Marie Armstrong

Application for Leave of Absence of Child from School

Name of Child: _____ Class: _____

Proposed first day/date of absence: _____

Actual day/date of proposed return to school: _____ Total Number of School Days: _____

Reason for absence (please give details of 'exceptional circumstances')

As Headteacher, Mrs Armstrong can only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. PLEASE SEE THE REVERSE OF THIS FORM FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

Declaration

I have read and understood the information on the reverse of this form regarding leave of absence during term time, unauthorised absence, and Penalty Notices. I am aware of the possible consequences should I take my child on leave of absence without the prior authorisation of the Head Teacher.

Signature of parent/carer: _____ Date: _____

This section is for school use:

Response to your request for leave of absence during term time

Child's Name: _____

Child's overall attendance during last academic year: _____

Child's overall attendance during the current academic year: _____

Our overall school attendance target is 96%

Your application for leave of absence detailed above is AUTHORISED / UNAUTHORISED.

Signed: _____ (Headteacher) _____ Date: _____

Important Information for Parents/Carers

Research suggests that children who are absent from School may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results. As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

The Education Act (1996) requires parents to ensure their child attends school regularly. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless:

- An application has been made in advance to the Headteacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives with: and
- The proprietor (Headteacher) or person authorised by the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to that application.

The Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to justify an authorised absence. It is the parents' responsibility when submitting the request to provide all the information and evidence to prove **exceptional circumstances**.

The request for authorised Leave of Absence must be made at least two weeks in advance and the Deputy Headteacher will invite the parent/carer(s) into school to discuss the request before a decision is made.

If the Headteacher refuses Leave of Absence and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the Headteacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.

From September 2015 if a parent/carer requests leave of absence, the Headteacher will review the child's previous school attendance history, and if a pattern of leave requests is found and the child's previous absence is below 90%, the Headteacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.

A Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies. Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.

Children who attend school every day:

- Have the best chance of achieving well
- Are more settled
- Develop good work habits for the future
- Are better prepared for learning often enjoy school more.

Children who often miss school or are late:

- Miss important learning
- Can feel left out
- Develop poor work habits
- Suffer from low self esteem
- Are often unsettled
- Can find it hard to catch up
- Find it hard to be prepared for learning.
- Miss key concepts, special events, trips and visits.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing them to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

Newsham Primary School Blyth

Warwick Street, Blyth, Northumberland. NE24 4NX

Tel: 01670 353124 Email: admin@newshamprimary.northumberland.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs. Anne-Marie Armstrong



DATE

Attendance and Punctuality

Dear Parent/Carer,

At Newsham Primary School we consider good attendance and punctuality a major influence on our pupils learning. In accordance with our school policy we monitor these areas very carefully. Attendance figures to date for this academic year have just been collated and it has come to our attention that XXXXXXX has had an attendance record of XX%.

If XXXXXXX continues to miss a significant number of lessons he is likely to fall behind the rest of the class in his academic progress. Whilst we understand that childhood illnesses are unavoidable, these absences will undoubtedly be having an affect on his learning. It is vital to make every effort to improve XXXXXXX's attendance rate, which we will be monitoring closely. For your information, our school target for each child is 96%.

We acknowledge that you may already have contacted us regarding a particular absence concerning your child. However, we are sure you appreciate the need to continue to monitor attendance levels throughout the year.

I must remind you that school attendance is compulsory and we thought by writing to you at this stage in the academic year you would appreciate the early notice that XXXXXXX's attendance needs to show improvement.

If there is anything we can do to help support you or if you have any queries regarding this letter please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Mr Jones
Deputy Headteacher

Newsham Primary School Blyth

Warwick Street, Blyth, Northumberland. NE24 4NX

Tel: 01670 353124 Email: admin@newshamprimary.northumberland.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mrs. Anne-Marie Armstrong



DATE

Attendance and Punctuality

Dear XXXXX,

At Newsham Primary School we consider good attendance and punctuality a major influence on our pupils' learning. I am sure that you will support us in this to give your child the best opportunities.

As a school we support and encourage pupils to achieve good attendance. Regrettably, following illness XXXXX's school attendance is XX% which is well below our school target. For your information, our school target for each child is 96%.

I am writing to inform you that from today we will no longer authorise any absences for XXXXX without proof of medical attention (e.g. proof of prescription or receipt from a pharmacy) or until we see a marked improvement in her attendance. I have enclosed forms which must be completed and returned to school should XXXX be absent again.

If there is anything we can do to help support you or if you have any queries regarding this letter please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Mr N Jones

Deputy Headteacher