



A world of opportunities

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Applies from Spring Term 2020

Signed	<i>V. Garrett</i>
Role	Chair of Governors
Date	26 September 2019

Approved by (Committee)	FGB
Date approved	26 September 2019
Review frequency	Annual
Date of next review	September 2020

National guidance

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 and Isle of Wight Council. This Attendance Policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- Admissions Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child protection Policy
- Exclusions Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy
- Teaching & Learning
- Behaviour Management Policy

The level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our pupils is included in our school's home-school agreement which parents must sign following their child's admission to a school.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly, and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this. This policy will be annually publicised in writing for all staff, parents and pupils via the school website <http://www.northwoodpri.co.uk/>

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Isle of Wight Council's School Attendance Guidance & Legislation <https://www.iow.gov.uk/azservices/documents/2129-School-Attendance-Guidance-and-Legislation-updated-September-2018.pdf> and Code of Conduct for Truancy Penalty Notices <https://www.iow.gov.uk/azservices/documents/2129-Code-of-Conduct-updated-September-2018.pdf>

In respect of school attendance regular school attendance is defined as 'in accordance with rules prescribed by the school' - The Supreme Court, April 2017, Isle of Wight Council v Platt.

Section 1

1.1 Rationale / Statement of Intent:

For a child to have high levels of educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. It is our duty to

consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital every child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

1.2 Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

Section 2

2.1 Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home/School agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular newsletter
- Report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Set targets (when and as needed) for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in the school.
- Run events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school

2.2 Roles and Responsibilities:

The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Headteacher will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. The Headteacher will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parent/carers the need and reasons for their child’s absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil’s home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.**

2.3 Responsibilities of Classroom Staff:

- Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- Promote good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the Headteacher on matters of attendance and punctuality
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child’s absence.

2.4 Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

Ensuring your child’s regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (section of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- Discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance

Section 3

3.1. Recording Attendance:

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day and again for the afternoon session.

3.2 Lateness /Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons are used to give out instructions or organise work if your child is late they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

Key Stage	Classroom Open	Registration	Registers close
Early Years (Apple)	8.45am	9.00am	9.20am
Years 1 & 2	8.50am	9.00am	9.20am

Years 3 & 4	8.40am	8.50am	9.10am
Years 5 & 6	8.30am	8.40am	9.00am

All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence code 'U' in line with county and Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site but is legally recorded as an absence.

If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. On-going and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action** (see section 6 for further detail).

The parents, guardians or carers of pupils 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, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 12-week period, the school should consider referring to the Local Authority for the issuing of further legal action as per the Isle of Wight Council's Code of Conduct.

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to the after-school club and provide the parent/Carer with the bill and share concerns as necessary with other agencies.

3.3 What to do if my child is absent?

First Day Absence

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception.

If your child is absent, we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you; *This is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance*
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Isle of Wight School Attendance & Enforcement Panel

Third Day Absence

Please Note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence the school is required to start a child missing in education procedure as set down by Isle of Wight Council. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquires to known friends, wider family.

Ten Day's Absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who are absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So, help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or Ongoing Absence

If your child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as **persistent absentees**. Where this absence is authorised, the school will contact you to inform you of the overall picture of absence.

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you.

Children at this school are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school, and whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry blame and be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

Section 4

4.1 Request for Leave of Absence:

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: **(Pupil registration) (England) regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** It is important

to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. **There are no rules on this** as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday **and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised**. Parents/Carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from the school office) in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be **unauthorised** and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Isle of Wight Council's guidance parents/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code (see section 6 for detail).

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Section 5:

5.1 Understanding types of absence:

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an **exceptional reason** for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request

This includes:

- parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, haircuts or to look after siblings
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence the child has been on holiday.

Section 6:

6.1 Penalty Notices for Non-Attendance and other Legal Measures:

Northwood Primary Academy Trust

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

6.2 Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Isle of Wight Schools and the Isle of Wight Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to School Attendance & Enforcement Panel where:

- 1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance**
- 2. The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.**

The following legal measures are for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

6.3 Legal Measures for absence taken when the headteacher has declined parent/carers request for leave of absence

Where a child has **unauthorised absence**, the school must enforce the Isle of Wight Council's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-Attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority.

NB. The school does not receive any part of a fine paid for a Penalty notice.

Section 7:

7.1 My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?

- Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning.
- Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.
- Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!
- For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you but consistency and a caring supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

7.2 Leavers

- If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to secondary school) parents are asked to give the attendance officer comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.
- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

7.3 Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or TV work and modelling.

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

7.4. Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport.

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is however, down to the headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the

nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Headteacher and are not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

7.5 Gypsy Roma traveller (GRT) showman and showman families

Absence of a child from a traveller family may be authorised if;

- the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return.
- the child is on roll, over six years old and has attended at least 200 sessions at school in each rolling 12 month period

This does not automatically reduce the number of days that a GRT child is expected to attend full time (380 sessions a year). Parents/carers must notify the school in advance of their intention to travel and confirm a return date.

Monitoring and recording of GRT pupil absence

Managing absence

If a child on roll is recognised as GRT (based on the legal definition) and they request additional time from school, then the school can and should use the following codes:

- *T* code – on days when a GRT pupil is known to be out of the area travelling and is not in any other educational provision
- *D* code (counts as not required to attend) where a GRT pupil is travelling and attending another school.

Section 8:

RECORD PRESERVATION

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies.