



Norton Free C of E Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Norton Free Church of England Primary School Attendance Policy October 2024

Norton Free C of E Primary is committed to promoting good attendance and punctuality to ensure that all pupils are able to achieve their maximum potential both academically and socially. Regular attendance and being punctual are vital to the educational achievement and personal development of the child. Only pupils who attend regularly can fully benefit from the academic, personal and social opportunities which are offered to them within the aims of Norton Free School (Please refer to our booklet about attendance). We are committed to a whole school approach to attendance and a partnership relationship with parent/carers.

Schools have a statutory duty under Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. While regular school attendance is the responsibility of parents and carers, schools play a central role in ensuring that children and young people attend school regularly.

Aims - To ensure that good school attendance is the norm at Norton Free C of School.

- For every child to be in school every day, and on time.
- To encourage all pupils to achieve their **maximum potential**.
- To raise awareness of the **importance of attendance** and its **impact** on progress and attainment.
- To recognise and reward pupils who achieve more than 98% attendance during the school year.
- To give additional and special recognition to pupils to pupils who achieve 100% attendance.
- To encourage parents/carers to play a vital role in supporting the school and encouraging their child to reach good attendance levels.
- To monitor and track pupils' attendance and punctuality through effective systems.
- To utilise this information to support the school and parents to improve attendance.
- To address poor attendance through clear, consistent and effective procedures.

All schools should have

- An Attendance Champion (Mrs Hazel Bell – Head teacher)
- A designated linked Attendance Governor (Mr Dan Thaw – Chair of Governors)
- A member of staff responsible for first day calling (Miss Helen Gill – Office Manager)

These will be referred to as 'School Based Attendance Officers'.

The Role of the Attendance Champion:

All schools must have a designated Attendance Champion, who must be a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). The attendance champion is responsible for ensuring everyone works together to improve attendance and creates a whole school ethos of 'Every School Day Matters'.

The attendance champion meets termly with their linked Attendance and Inclusion specialist. The purpose of this Targeted Attendance Support Meeting will be to discuss:

- The school improvement plan objectives linked to attendance
- The targets and outcomes identified in the school attendance action plan
- The whole school and cohort level attendance data
- Pupils who have not attended in the last 3 weeks or more with no genuine reason for absence
- Pupils considered to be severely absent (less than 50%)
- Pupils with an EHCP plan and more than 10% unauthorised absence
- Where time allows, pupils considered to be persistent absentees (90% or less)
- Next steps for the school to progress towards excellence in attendance

WHAT PARENTS/CARERS CAN EXPECT OF THE SCHOOL

- Support from the school if you have barriers to attendance – we will work with you to improve attendance.
- A broad, balanced education that is dependent upon **regular attendance** at school.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance through assemblies and rewards (certificates are presented to children achieving 100% attendance at the end of the year).
- Regular monitoring and accurate recording of attendance. We will analyse absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require additional support with their attendance.
- Prompt action to be taken where problems are identified.
- Close liaison with external agencies where appropriate to assist and support pupils and their families.
- Regular communication with parents and carers.
- Attendance Policy available on the school website.
- On Line reporting to allow all parents to access up to date attendance information.
- The school works within the framework of the Sheffield City Council “School guidance for the management of Attendance”



- **WHAT THE SCHOOL EXPECTS OF OUR PUPILS:**
- To attend regularly, on time and ready to learn.
- To be prepared for the day with any appropriate equipment (PE Kit, School Uniform and appropriate clothing for visits).
- To report to the office should they arrive after the official registration time.
- To tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may prevent them from attending school.
- To work towards a target of at least 98% attendance.

Codes used in absence registration:

L - Child is late to the session.

G – Family Holiday (NOT agreed or in excess of agreement) – Parents must apply for leave in advance of taking a holiday during school time. If parents do not apply for leave, or the school finds out from social media or another parent, this is also recorded as a G code as regulations **DO NOT** allow schools to give retrospective approval.

U – the DfE states that registers must be closed within 30minutes after the start of the session. Registers **must not** be left open for the whole session **and U codes** must be used. Regular U codes can be a safeguarding issue particularly where a child is arriving just in time for lunch.

N – No reason provided yet for absence. This cannot be left on the register indefinitely. Once a reason for the absence has been established, the code should be changed and this should not exceed 5 school days. If no reason is given for the absence within 5 days, the code should be changed to a O code. When the code is changed, the school should record who is making the change, as well as when and why.

O- Unauthorised Absence. Any unauthorised absence will be followed up quickly following our attendance processes.

WHAT THE SCHOOL EXPECTS OF PARENTS/CARERS:

- It is vitally important that parents are actively involved in **promoting good attendance** and fulfil their legal parental responsibility by ensuring their children attend school regularly.
- **Parents/carers should ensure they have read the schools term time leave policy.**
- To ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the day.
- Parents are expected to bring their child to school, on time for every session they are well enough to attend and should notify school in advance of any planned term time absence, requesting permission for the absence to be authorised. If the absence is due to an emergency, contact should be made on the **first** day of absence with regular contact until the child is able to return.
- ***To report any absences to the school office by 9:30am each day via the telephone - It is a legal requirement of parents to inform school of a child's absence on the first day and the third day if the absence continues.***
- Parents are encouraged to **make contact** with school to discuss any issues that are or could be impacting on their child's attendance.
- To arrange medical and dental appointments out of the school hours and, in the case of unavoidable emergency appointments, **bring evidence** of the appointment to the main office. (This will enable us to authorise the absence and to keep a photocopy of the appointment for our school records).
- **To take holidays in school holiday time.** - Term time holidays will be classed as unauthorised holidays (marked as code G in the register) unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. In line with the Sheffield City Council policy for "**Exceptional Leave during Term Time**", if parents choose to take their child on holiday in term time, they will be issued with a fixed penalty notice (a fine), especially if the child's attendance is below 95%.
- To understand that Head Teachers no longer have the option to authorise term time holidays unless exceptional circumstances can be applied.
- **Your child may lose their place at the school if attendance is extremely poor.**

TERM TIME LEAVE:

Parents can be fined for taking their children out of a state funded school during term time without the agreement of the school. There is no right of appeal to the fine being issued. Action may be taken by Sheffield Local Authority against parents/carers who fail to ensure their child's regular attendance as irregular attendance could affect their child's level of attainment. The action may result in a penalty notice fine or a court summons being issued.

Parents and carers who regularly take their child out of school during term time, may be prosecuted via the magistrates court.

Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Holidays, leisure or recreational activities should not be considered as exceptional circumstances. **If leave is unauthorised a penalty notice must be sought.**

Parents/carers who do not notify school of term time leave and take their child on 'unauthorised leave' or fail to keep the school informed of changes to leave arrangements, may receive a fine, be prosecuted and/or **the children may lose their place at the school.**

There may be exceptional circumstances where leave in school term time may be granted. This would be decided by the headteacher on an individual basis for each notification. There is strong evidence from research to indicate that significant absence from school during term time can have a negative impact upon a child's attainment and learning.

All requests for term time leave must be made to the Headteacher on the Term Time Leave Request Form available from the school office or website. A return date must be provided and a prompt return is essential. An example of the term time request form is available at the end of this policy.

Notifications for exceptional leave in term time or for a holiday, should be made at least 20 days in advance of the arrangement being made. If no notification is submitted, the head teacher is unable to authorise the leave retrospectively.

Unauthorised Leave Penalty Notice Fine

If parents/carers choose to take their children out of school during term time for 5 or more consecutive school days and this is not authorised by the school, the school are expected to request the LA to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of £160 (if paid between 21 and 28 days) and this is reduced to £80 (if paid within 21 days). Each parent/carer can be issued with a Penalty notice, for each child, one per parent per child, issued separately.

E.g – 2 parents/carers and 2 children. Each parent and carer will be issued 2 fines, one for each child. The overall cost would be £320 if paid within 28 days reduced to £160 if paid within 21 days for a **first offence**. **For a second offence** the amount would be £320 as there will be no opportunity to pay at the reduced amount.

The responsibility for requesting Penalty Notice Fines is with the school and will be issued when requested by the head teacher.

The school will monitor and record attendance using the following registration system:

- Children will line up outside their classroom and may start to enter, as soon as the bell goes at 8:50am.
- They will be welcomed at the classroom door by their teacher or their TA.
- Registers are taken in class between 8:50am and 9am.
- Class teachers will enter a present mark (/) or if a child is not present when the register is taken they will enter N – absent until a reason is provided for their late arrival, or the school have been notified of the reason for the absence.
- Any child arriving after 9am must report to the school office providing a reason for their late arrival. They will be marked in the register as L (late).
- After 9:20am, any child arriving late will be marked as 'late after the register closes' (U), unless proof of a medical appointment is presented to the school office.
- Afternoon registration is at 1pm.
- Electronic registers (SIMs) are used by all classes, with manual fire registers kept in each class.

The school will respond to lateness in the following ways:

Persistent lateness is discussed with parents at parent/teacher consultation meetings or with the Headteacher, prior to a referral being made to external agencies where appropriate to assist and support pupils and their families arriving at school on time.

Dealing with Absence:

Attendance will be monitored to achieve the school target of 98%.

Attendance below 97% will be monitored by school. If attendance continues to fall, parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to support unexplained absences and they may receive a letter from school

acknowledging that we will monitor their child's attendance. You may be invited into school to talk to the Head teacher about their attendance.

Attendance falling below 93% will result in a written notification to parents to bring this to their attention and offer support if necessary.

Attendance below 90% will be closely monitored by school and the LA, through the Attendance and Inclusion Service. Parents may be invited to a professionals meeting to discuss the reasons for continued absence. The aims of this will be to identify any issues and provide support to ensure the child's attendance improves.

Attendance below 90% may be subject to prosecution.

Responding to absence- criteria for referral to the Attendance and Inclusion Service:

If the children's absence has already been highlighted as a cause for concern, the parents may be asked to provide medical evidence to support the absence.

As a safeguarding precaution, telephone contact is made with parents/carers of any pupils who are absent where school has not been provided with a reason for absence. This is made on the morning of the absence by 9:30am.

Absence will only be authorised when a satisfactory reason has been provided by the parent or carer.

In cases where parents have been asked to **provide medical evidence for absence**, this should be taken to the **office** in order for the absence to be authorised.

Home contact will be made by the school if several days absences remain unauthorised. If contact is unsuccessful then the case may be referred to the Local Authority, where 'Children Missing from Education' procedures may commence. (see 'The school's response to poor attendance', below).

Roles and Responsibilities:

Governors

- Maintain an overview of attendance through reports by the Headteacher and the LA via the head teacher report.
- Have a named governor with responsibility for attendance.

Head Teacher

- Has overall responsibility for attendance within the school.
- Is the Attendance Champion
- Has responsibility for reviewing and updating the attendance Policy in line with local/ National changes
- Provides advice and support to school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues
- Liaises with the named governor and the LA
- Works with colleagues to implement targets, review statistics and amend policy as necessary
- Works with other schools and agencies to promote attendance and punctuality within the Family of Schools
- Has responsibility for monitoring the progress of children Looked After by the LA
- Has responsibility for investigating and, where necessary, reporting incidents of Children who are Missing from Education
- The school has been given authorisation from the Children Missing in Education (CME) Team to remove a child from role when the child has been continuously absent for a period of not less than 20 school days, absence has been unauthorised and both the school and local authority have been unable, after reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the child is.

Class Teacher

- Accurately mark registers using appropriate codes, in line with Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 - both morning and afternoon.
- Ensure Office staff receive notes/information from parents promptly.
- Report to appropriate staff any issue or problem which may affect the attendance or punctuality of a child.
- Promote good attendance and punctuality within the classroom and the school.
- Share any concerns over attendance with HT and/or Admin Officer.

Clerical Officer

- Receive, update and maintain accurate class registers in line with Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006
- Maintain SIMS attendance data base
- Ensure correct codes are allocated for absences
- Where a specific need has been highlighted, ensure medical evidence is requested and followed up
- Provide reports from SIMS to the governors each term (via Head Teacher or Chair of Govs)
- Provide reports for the Headteacher for discussion at weekly meetings to identify vulnerable children (falling attendance) and agree a course of action
- Provide relevant information to the LA officers making contact with families regarding attendance and punctuality
- Have responsibility for investigating and, where necessary, reporting incidents of children who are Missing from Education.
- Have responsibility for ensuring parents/carers have access to accurate information and appropriate forms
- Have responsibility for ensuring requests for term time leave are dealt with in a timely and effective manner in line with the school's policy on attendance.
- Prepare requests for penalty notices to be made to the LA

Additional Information can be found at:

Norton Free C of E Website; www.nortonfree.sheffield.sch.uk

Sheffield City Council; www.sheffield.gov.uk/attend

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

Education Act 1996

Attendance Champion: Mrs H Bell

Chair of Governors: Mr D Thaw

Attendance Governor: Mr D Thaw