



North Somercotes CE Primary School



Whole School Attendance Policy

Attendance Monitoring Group:

Mr Floyd	Headteacher
Mrs Selby	Administrator
Mrs Treasure	School Governor
Mrs Pook	Education Welfare Officer

1. MISSION STATEMENT:

North Somercotes CE Primary School is committed to providing a full and exciting education for all pupils. The school believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the school will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents to see that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities by regular attendance at school or education otherwise

2. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy received the full agreement of the Governing Body and was agreed at the meeting in Autumn Term 2024

3. AIMS

1. We recognise the importance of school attendance in enabling pupils to achieve their maximum educational potential and fully endorse the link between attendance and attainment.
2. The school is committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies in order to achieve the best outcomes for children.
3. Pupils on the roll of North Somercotes CE Primary are required to attend school punctually and regularly and parents have a responsibility in law to ensure that this happens.
4. The school will provide a welcoming and caring environment where all members of the school community feel secure and valued.
5. The school will emphasise the importance of attendance in a variety of ways including through our PSHE curriculum, assemblies, posters and leaflets.

6. The school will effectively communicate with pupils and parents to support good attendance and timekeeping and to provide appropriate information and advice.
7. Registers will be kept in accordance with government regulations with weekly class attendance monitored.
8. The registers will be kept open for 45 minutes after the beginning of each school session. Pupils arriving after 9am will be marked as 'late' with an "L" code. Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' with a "O" code.
9. Parents/carers are required to notify the school by 9:30am on each day of the absence on **01507 358221** to advise that their child is absent and the reason why.
10. The school will make the decision as to whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised.
11. The school will operate a First Day Contact system whereby the parents of pupils who are absent and no notification has been received will be contacted and asked for the reason of absence.
12. Individual pupil's attendance will be regularly monitored and concerns promptly shared with parents/carers and the Education Welfare Officer.
13. School staff will work with pupils, parents/carers and other agencies to resolve school related issues which are impacting on a pupil's attendance. All parents/carers of children with Persistent Absence or likely to become Persistent Absentees will be invited to attend a School Attendance Surgery or School Attendance Panel. A persistent absentee is a pupil whose attendance falls below 90% regardless of the reasons why i.e. illness /a medical appointments etc.
14. The school will support the reintegration of pupils after an absence, sensitively and involving relevant staff and giving access to counselling or mentoring services as appropriate.
15. North Somercotes CE Primary does not authorise any term time absence except in the most exceptional of circumstances.
 - Parents are required to complete a 'Leave of Absence Form' at least two weeks before the proposed leave.
16. The school will respond to any such request giving reasons for the decision and include:
 - The expected date of return
 - That parents/carers are expected to advise of any delay in return
17. If a request is rejected and time off from school is still taken this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and the Educational Welfare Officer will be involved, possibly with a formal warning letter and/or a fixed penalty notice being issued.
18. We celebrate children attending school regularly through attendance certificates, termly attendance raffles, special attendance weeks, attendance cake and many more positive strategies.
19. A specific attendance newsletter is sent out quarterly containing updates and celebrating good attendance. Attendance also features on the weekly newsletter, as appropriate.

4. SCHOOL ORGANISATION:

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, **every** member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

Specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

Headteacher:

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence
- To liaise with the EWO
- To attend Targeted Support Meetings with Local Authority Advisors
- The Headteacher, Mr Floyd, fulfils the role of School Attendance Champion

School Attendance Administrator:

- To ensure the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
- To report to the Headteacher on attendance issues.
- To liaise with EWO.

Class Teacher:

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To monitor suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.
- To be aware of individual attendance trends.
- To inform senior staff of concerns in a timely manner.

Governors:

- Governors will play a valuable role through representation at school attendance panels.
- Request regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings.

Parents:

- Contact with school on first day of absence or as soon as possible.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.

The Importance of Registration:

- An electronic attendance register is kept which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent.
- Accurate marking of registers, and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems has a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures.

Categorising Absence:

All schools are required to use a common set of codes to record pupil attendance and absence.

The Department for Education (DfE) believes that these codes are best used within electronic systems for recording attendance and absence of pupils. Such electronic systems are capable of producing the data necessary for absence returns to DfE without time consuming counting up of possible attendances and actual absences.

The use of fixed codes will also assist both LAs and DfE in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without the permission of the school, but why pupils are absent from school.

- Only the school, in the context of the law can authorise absence, a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If an appropriate member of staff does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason then the matter must be referred to the Headteacher.
- Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the Headteacher.

- Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> - contains latest DfE Attendance Codes

Authorised or Unauthorised Absence:

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised**.

The following **may** be reasons for authorising absences.

- Illness
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

Approved Educational Activity

Where pupils are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way but are counted as present for calculating data for the DfE absence return. To avoid confusion in emergency situations pupils who are off site should not be marked as present.

Absence related to a Mental Health issue

The school has a duty of care to promote children's mental health and wellbeing, and embed this into the whole-school ethos and policies. As part of curriculum coverage, the school has a legal responsibility to teach pupils through a high quality, evidence-based and age-appropriate curriculum about respectful relationships; emotional wellbeing; mental health. This is in addition to supporting each individual's social and emotional development.

The school maintains high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of pupils who are anxious about attending school and recognise that, in many instances,

attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue. The school recognises that there can be attendance challenges where a child has an SEMH issue, particularly a severe issue for which the child is receiving clinical treatment. Parents should notify school on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness, and any absences will be recorded as authorised where it is not possible for a pupil to attend due to illness, both physical and mental.

Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, exams, or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly. Any associated anxieties about attending school should be mitigated as much as possible by creating a plan to implement reasonable adjustments to alleviate specific barriers to attendance. These adjustments should be agreed by and regularly reviewed with all parties, including parents/carers.

Lateness:

We actively discourage late arrival by challenging young people who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation. Registration begins at 8:45am

Registers remain open, 45 minutes from the beginning of registration. In the event of bad weather this period can be extended.

Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open they may be marked present.

Where a pupil arrives after register closure without good reason, they should be marked with the letter L to indicate that they are on site.

Registration begins at 8:45am. Pupils who arrive after 9am will be marked as late. After the close of the registers (9:30am) non-attendance will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless school has been notified of the absence.

Good Practice:

Research suggests that good practice is associated with:

1. The Headteacher having specific responsibility for pupil attendance.
2. A list of absentees being produced quickly, ideally by morning break, for use by appropriate teaching and office staff.
3. The school will devise a sensitive scheme for the immediate follow-up of absentees – e.g. either by telephoning home or sending out letters to parents or guardians.

4. Staff with responsibility for pupil attendance having regular meetings with EWO on an agreed basis.
5. Rewards introduced for individual pupils with an excellent attendance record in the form of praise or prizes.
6. First day of absence contact. Where the school is able to resource this, a phone call to the homes of all, absentees on their first day of absence has proved to be effective in addressing casual and opportunistic absence. Even short-term use of the strategy can produce long-term benefits.
7. Targeting identified pupils or groups of pupils with unsatisfactory levels of attendance, for example through school attendance panels, can have significant benefits.

Responding to non-attendance:

When a pupil does not attend the school the following procedures are in place:

- If there are Child Protection concerns then the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Procedures should be followed immediately.
- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents/guardian, the parents/guardian will be contacted on the day of the absence by phone call.
- Where there is no response a phone call will be made on the following day, or a letter sent to attempt to identify a reason for the child being absent. Where there is no response, a letter will be sent after three days of unexplained absence, or there may be a visit from a member of the school staff or the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) where the Service is involved.
- School follows all national guidance relating to 'Children Missing Education' and will report to the authorities as appropriate
- Where **non/poor attendance** continues the case will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer for the school and further action planned. This could, in appropriate cases, result in a formal referral to the Education Welfare Officer. Parents may be asked to attend a School Attendance Surgery or Panel meeting. Targets for the next time period will be set to support improved attendance and the meeting will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school.
- School will send quarterly attendance letters and monitor attendance where attendance has been less than 95%.
- Continued absence could result in a formal referral to the EWO. If there is still no improvement in attendance unauthorised absence could result in legal options being considered such as, Education Supervision Orders, Fixed Penalty Notice Warning letter / penalty or a Formal Legal Warning Letter being issued in regards to prosecution.

Legal Sanctions

From August 2024, under the new national framework, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child of compulsory school age has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons, in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The period of 10 weeks can span different terms or school years. The threshold can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence.

The local authority retains the discretion to issue a fine before the threshold is met. If issued with a fine or penalty notice, each parent is fined £80, which rises to £160 each if not paid within 21 days. In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Fines per parent will be capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

If a parent is prosecuted and attends court because their child hasn't been attending school, they can be fined up to £2,500. Penalty notices can be issued by the Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Leave of absence during term time.

Leave of absence during term time will only be granted where an application is made in advance to the school and the school consider that the leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances relating to that application. A 'Leave of Absence Form' must be completed.

The Headteacher will also consider asking for evidence of the circumstances that has arisen, where appropriate.

- The Education Welfare Officer will be notified
- In the event of unauthorised absence Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued by the Local Authority.

Reintegration following absence or reduced timetable:

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence or reduced timetable requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme.
- Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the SENCO may be required.
- The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on maintained schools and academies to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. Individual healthcare plans will normally specify the type and level of support required to meet the medical needs of such pupils. Where children and young people also have SEN, their provision should be planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way with the healthcare plan. Schools are required to have regard to statutory guidance 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

Lincolnshire County Council have their own website dedicated to whole school attendance - <https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/school-attendance>

**Agreed by Governors Autumn Term 2024
Policy to be reviewed annually**