



# North Leamington School

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

**FEBRUARY 2021**

To be read in conjunction with COVID19 Attendance  
and Policy Addendum

### **Approval and Review**

This Policy is reviewed in discussion with staff and governors.

**Effective from:** February 2021

**Approved by:** Governing Body

**Review Date:** February 2022

**Review Leader:** Ms H Jones, Deputy Headteacher

## Introduction

1. We are committed to working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that all of our students have the best possible attendance at school. A high level of attendance is essential for students to reach their full educational achievement, future aspirations, and to assist their social development.

Any absence from school means that a learner is missing vital education; research shows that this has a negative impact on attainment.

Parents, carers and school staff share the responsibility for ensuring that the law is upheld, by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

This principles outlined in this policy are applicable for learners in all year groups at North Leamington School.

## Core Purpose

2. **Commitment:** The importance of regular school attendance cannot be over-emphasised. Regular school attendance is part and parcel of good outcomes and attainment in schools. Good attendance and punctuality is vital if a young person is to succeed at school
3. **Opportunity:** Attendance is crucial to learning. It ensures that students receive the full benefit of teacher explanations and individual guidance. With regular absence, there is always a risk that the important work will not be fully understood. Even missing the 'odd' lesson may have a significant effect. It may be that a missed lesson introduces crucial concepts on which everything that follows depends
4. **Respect:** Attendance helps students form good relationships with members of their class and teachers. When absent, students miss out on shared experiences with other students and can feel isolated because of this. Promoting and maintaining school attendance and punctuality requires a respectful partnership involving parents and families, teachers and support staff, governors, the LA support services and other agencies.
5. **Excellence:** Attendance develops good habits of organisation and self-discipline, which are essential in the adult world of work, and attendance and punctuality are always important features of any reference for a prospective employer.

## Legal Requirements

6. The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states: The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause [them] to receive efficient full-time education suitable –
  - to [their] age, ability and aptitude and
  - to any special needs they may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

*(Note: for educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.)*

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Additional legal requirements may be found in: The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 only allow Head Teacher to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in exceptional circumstances.

## **Aim**

7. North Leamington School seeks to ensure that all its students receive a full time education, which maximises opportunities for each student to realise his/her true potential.
8. To meet this aim:
  - The school will provide a welcoming, caring and safe environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.
  - Governors will support school leaders in implementing this policy.
  - Leadership will work with other members of staff who work with students and their families to support each student to attend school regularly and on time.
  - The school will employ an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the effort of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents/carers who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.
  - The school will establish an effective system of communication with students, parents and appropriate agencies, to provide mutual information, advice and support.

## **Registration Procedures**

9. Registers are taken within the first 10 minutes of every lesson. Non attendance is recorded each morning and afternoon, as it is with every lesson.
10. Regular School Attendance is promoted by:
  - Information on the school attendance included in the School Prospectus, Handbook and School Newsletters
  - Recognition of excellent and improved attendance in line with our Rewards Policy
  - Rewarding students who have made considerable improvement in their attendance
  - Educating students on the importance of good attendance through our VT curriculum and PSHE messages

## **Reducing Absences**

- The school will present a positive and proactive message concerning the importance of attendance
- The school has clear lines of responsibility and a consistent response to attendance issues:
  - a. Information sharing with Governors where applicable
  - b. Lines of communication and agreed action between Leadership, College Leaders, Attendance Officer and WAS
  - c. Regular meetings between Leadership, Attendance Officer and WAS

### **Effective and prompt communication with home:**

- a. First day absences – contact with parents, carers or those with parental responsibility
- b. Expectations – students and parents aware of procedure – absence explanation is compulsory
- c. Use of standard letter system to parents

### **Responding to lateness:**

- a. The school tries to deter lateness without deterring attendance
- b. Students' punctuality is monitored in line with our 'Late Gate' procedures
- c. Parents/carers and students invited to a meeting if lateness continues (Punctuality Panel)

If a student is not attending school because of **curriculum concerns** the school will offer some/all of the following support:

- a. Individual Educational Needs Faculty Support or in-class/individual support
- b. Regular meetings with Learning Mentor or College Leader to discuss progress
- c. Allocation of a key worker in school
- d. Meeting between school, student and parents to monitor situation
- e. After-school support sessions – to catch up missing work and/or to give additional help and support
- f. Modification of timetable where deemed necessary

### **Consideration of Individual Educational Needs:**

11. To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence, ill health or SEND, the school will take into consideration:

- Being adaptive to the individual needs and circumstances of students
- Involving/informing all staff of reintegration process
- Providing opportunities for counselling and other support strategies
- Involving parents/carers and peers as far as possible
- Agreeing timescale for review of reintegration plan
- Including WAS, College Leader, parents and student in the reintegration
- Using relevant trained staff to support students involved in a reintegration programme
- Liaising with the SENCO as necessary to support individual needs
- Acting on feedback from other professional assessments

### **Attendance Panels:**

- Attendance Panels – the school uses WAS worker and College Leader to interview students and parents where there are initial concerns relating to attendance
- Motivational Meetings with the WAS worker as required

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

12. Attendance Policy processes will be reviewed as necessary in order to ensure that the policy objectives continue to be met. The review will be informed by DfE Guidance and Local Authority procedures, including the Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) protocols.

If the processes set out in the policy document are changed the document should be updated, including on the website, and Governors informed.

13. The school has clear and high expectations on attendance – students are expected to achieve above 96%. Monitoring of performance against this target will identify different types of

absence, including persistent absence, and outcomes reported to Governors through the Headteacher's termly report.

14. The effectiveness of the NLS Attendance Policy will be reviewed biennially by the Teaching & Learning Committee.

### **Attendance Procedures**

15. It is important that parents/carers and the school are aware of student absences in view of child safety and truancy. In order to support this, the school now uses the following procedure:

- Intervention will follow a staged approach and students will be monitored so that different strategies can be used depending on their stage in the monitoring process.
- A request that parents telephone (01926 338711) or email ([attendance@nls.co.uk](mailto:attendance@nls.co.uk)) the school before 8.30am on each day of any absence, with the reason for absence and if possible how long the absence is likely to last
- The school uses Groupcall communication system for student absence. The system will contact parents directly if a student is marked absent at registration and school has not been informed of a reason for the absence
- This system will ensure that both parents and school are aware of student absences and that students are absent and safe with their parents' knowledge and permission
- If the College Administrator is not able to contact parents and there has been no message from home, then an absence note is required
- Authorisation of your child's absence is at the discretion of the school and you may be asked to provide medical evidence in order to support any absence

### **Medical Appointments**

Where possible, appointments should be made outside of school hours or in school holidays. We realise that sometimes this is not always possible. Students should come into school before and/or after their appointments where possible to ensure they miss as little learning time as possible.

16. The school has the support of a designated WAS worker, who will visit homes in the event of problems with attendance. The most recent Government regulations on attendance state that students may only legitimately be away from school if they are ill. Other reasons are recorded as an 'unauthorised absence' unless they are educational or sporting activities

### **School and WAS (Warwickshire Attendance Service) Intervention**

17. School and WAS interventions include:

- Regular timetabled slots for Attendance Officer to meet with designated WAS worker
- Letters sent home regularly if absences are unexplained and when attendance becomes a concern and drops below 95%
- Home visits organised with WAS and relevant school representative
- WAS Pre-legal meeting warning letters issued to parents
- Attendance Pre-legal meetings for students in Years 7-11

- Referral to WAS takes place if there is no improvement in attendance together with persistent unauthorised absences from school

## **Warwickshire County Council – Penalty Notices for Non-School Attendance**

18. Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, an offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure their child/children's attendance at the school at which they are a registered student and the absence has not been authorised by the school
19. Penalty Notices can now be issued to parents/carers as an alternative to prosecution for a first offence
20. In Warwickshire, Penalty Notices will be issued by WAS
21. A formal warning will always be issued first allowing a monitoring period of ten school weeks during which parents will be asked to ensure that their child/children's attendance improves
32. At the end of this period, the Penalty Notice will be issued if the required level of improvement has not been achieved
33. The fine is £120 to be paid within 28 days of issue, which reduces to £60 if paid within 21 days. If this is not paid, instigating criminal prosecution proceedings will be considered

## **Holidays in Term Time**

34. In order for consideration to be given to a Leave of Absence request, requests must be in exceptional circumstances only. Such exceptional circumstances could include:
  1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
  2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health or other professional in the following circumstances:
    - as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
    - a recommendation from a professional if the child is Looked After or has a Special Educational Need or Disability, and there is a specific recommendation for the absence to be taken during term time
  3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
  4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family where a reasonable timescale for absence is identified.
  5. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 4 above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the Warwickshire Attendance Service to take advice, prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

**Please refer to Annex 1 for further guidance published by Warwickshire County Council and North Leamington School**

## **Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) Referral**

### **WAS Attendance Pre-legal Meetings – Years 7-11**

35. Attendance Pre-legal meetings will, in partnership with school, offer the opportunity to intervene where attendance becomes an issue. North Leamington School will have the opportunity to hold an Attendance Pre-legal meeting. The meetings will be managed by WAS who will work closely with the DHT and the School Attendance Officer. In order to ensure legally acceptable evidence and consistency, all correspondence will be the responsibility of WAS.

## **Process**

36. A summary of the process is set out below:

- a. College Leader/DHT, Attendance Officer and WAS identify non-attenders, appropriate for the attention of the Pre-legal meetings
- b. A referral form will be completed by the School Attendance Officer which will provide WAS with basic information. The form is passed to the designated WAS worker
- c. The Pre-legal meeting will be held on school premises
- d. Members of the Pre-legal meeting will include a WAS worker and College Leader
- e. Parents/Carers and the student attend the Pre-legal meeting. Issues concerning non-attendance will be discussed. Where appropriate a target for improvement is set and consequences, including Fixed Penalty Notices and prosecution, will be clearly stated
- f. Where appropriate, a referral will be made for direct work to a WAS worker
- g. After a monitoring period (10 school weeks), the WAS worker and school staff will hold a review
- h. Letters will be sent to parents informing them of the results of the review. Where fines/prosecution is appropriate, paperwork will be forwarded to the WAS Court Officer
- i. WAS Officers will also offer a consultation session for staff as part of the service they provide on Pre-legal meeting days at school

## **Links to other Policies**

- Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour and Engagement Policy
- Accessibility Plan
- Students with Medical Needs Policy
- SEND Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy

**Warwickshire County Council  
Communities Directorate**

**APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FOR A SCHOOL PUPIL IN TERM TIME IN  
EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY**

**Important Information for Parents/Carers**

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 only allow Head Teacher to authorise leave of absence (for any purpose) in exceptional circumstances
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head Teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for Leave of Absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements confirmed or money committed
- If Leave of Absence is granted please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress
- This form **MUST** be completed by the resident parent(s)/carer(s) before requests will be considered
- Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child
- Failure to make a request for a Leave of absence in advance will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised

*Please note: Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.*

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Name of Child: \_\_\_\_\_ Form Group: \_\_\_\_\_

First Date of Proposed Absence: \_\_\_\_\_ Last date of Proposed Absence: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected date of return to school: \_\_\_\_\_

Reason for Proposed Absence – please provide reasons to support the application including evidence (they can only be exceptional circumstances) (see overleaf before completing)

.....  
.....  
.....

Total Days Requested On This Occasion

(For siblings) I have also applied to \_\_\_\_\_ School/Academy for leave of absence for \_\_\_\_\_ (Insert child/children's name)

Signature of resident Parent/Carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**For school use only:** NAME OF CHILD: \_\_\_\_\_ Date received by school: \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> date of absence requested: ..... Last date of absence requested:.....

Expected date of return to school: .....

Absence Authorised: Yes/No

The reasons for this decision are:.....

- LOA record sheet to be completed by school and submitted where verbal requests made/ for other relevant information

Head Teacher/Attendance Lead: .....Date: .....

- Copy of this completed section must be sent back to parent with letter



**The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 state:**

1. Head Teachers shall not grant any leave of absence during term time unless:
    - A) An application has been made in advance, by the parent with whom the child normally resides
- AND**
- B) They consider there to be exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
2. The Head Teacher must be satisfied that exceptional circumstances warrant the granting of a leave of absence.
  3. The Head Teacher can determine how long an absence should be and any additional absence will not be authorised.

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- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full time education through regular attendance at a school or otherwise (ie home education) (Section 7 Education Act 1996).
  - If a child who is of compulsory school age, who is registered at school and fails to attend regularly, it is the parent that will be guilty of an offence (Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996).
  - Parents whose children have unauthorised absence may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or prosecution.
  - Any Fixed Penalty Notices issued and/or prosecution will apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend school.

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**Parents:**

1. The application must be made in advance by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with.
2. Any leave of absences taken which have not been requested in advance will recorded as unauthorised.
3. Parents can be issued with a Fixed [Penalty Notice or prosecuted](#) for unauthorised absence including holidays.

***We have a shared responsibility to ensure that the law is upheld and that your child achieves to his/her full potential. We look forward to your co-operation.***

## **Leave of Absence**

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

**Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.**