



North Leamington School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

JUNE 2023

Approval and Review

This Policy is reviewed in discussion with staff and governors.

Effective from: June 2023

Approved by: Governing Body

Review Date: June 2024

Review Leader: Deputy Head Teacher

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:** We are committed to supporting all children in achieving 100% attendance
3. **Opportunity:** Attendance is crucial to learning. It ensures that students receive the full benefit of teacher explanations and individual guidance and support.
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 and lack confidence because of this.
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 has an 'attendance champion' at Senior Leadership level to ensure that the importance of excellent attendance is shared with all stakeholders in our school community
 - The school will provide a welcoming, caring and safe environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.
 - The school will work collaboratively and build strong relationships with parents, carers and other agencies to reduce barriers to good attendance
 - Governors will support school leaders in implementing this policy
 - Leadership will work with other members of expert 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.

Safeguarding

- North Leamington School is committed to its statutory responsibilities, as outlined in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. We recognise the links between poor attendance and contextual vulnerabilities and work collaboratively with both internal and external agencies to support children and families to achieve good attendance. We recognise that children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.

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. Non attendance is identified both at the start of the day and at the start of each lesson within the school day. Morning registration closes at 09:10am.

To support effective and prompt communication with home, we will:

- a. Contact with parents, carers or those with parental responsibility for first day absences, to fulfil our safeguarding responsibilities

- b. Provide regular messaging of our expectations: students and those with parental responsibility will be made aware of our procedures – absence explanation is compulsory
- c. Use a letter system to inform parents and carers to inform parents and carers about concerns and to celebrate excellent attendance

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. We will build strong relationships with parents/carers to support in maintaining excellent punctuality, and will listen, plan and review the impact of support to address any concerns.

Attendance Procedures

10. It is important that those with parental responsibility and the school are aware of student absences in view of child safety and truancy. In order to support this, the school uses the following procedure:

- A request that parents telephone (01926 338711) or email (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
- Parents/carers must contact the school on each day of their child's absence
- 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 school is not able to contact parents and there has been no message from home, then a phone call will be made to parents/carers
- Authorisation of a child's absence is at the discretion of the school and parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence in order to support any absence

11. Regular School Attendance is promoted by:

- An ethos where all staff and students understand and role model the importance of excellent attendance
- Information on the school attendance included in the School Prospectus, website and School Newsletters
- Recognition of excellent and improved attendance in line with our rewards system
- Rewarding students who have made considerable improvement in their attendance

- Educating students on the importance of good attendance through our Tutor Time curriculum, assemblies and PSHE messages

12. Excellent and improved attendance is incentivised by:

- Regular analysis of data with staff and students to highlight improved and excellent attendance
- Communicating regularly with parents and carers
- Effective use of our Go4Schools platform
- Celebration assemblies and other rewards events
- Day to day celebration through tutor time
- Supporting students in understanding the correlation between excellent attendance and their achievement

13. 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:
 - d. Information sharing with Governors where applicable
 - e. Lines of communication and agreed action between Leadership, Year Leaders, Form Tutors, Attendance Officer and WAS
 - f. Regular meetings between Leadership, Attendance Officer and WAS

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
- g. Liaison with external partners and professionals

Consideration of Individual Educational Needs:

The Equality Act of 2010 enshrines in law the rights of students with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND), having replaced the Disability Discrimination Act. Our Equal Opportunities Policy outlines our response, and should be read alongside this policy.

14. 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:

- Building strong relationships with families
- Being adaptive to the individual needs and circumstances of students
- Involving/informing all staff of reintegration process to listen, plan and review
- 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, Year Leader, parents/carers 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

15. Supporting children who are persistently absent (below 90% attendance):

- The school will use data to target children or groups of children who are at risk of persistent absence
- The school will listen to and understand students' barriers to school 'in school' attendance
- The school will allocate professionals within school to support students and parents/carers
- The school will work with the Local Authority and other local partners to identify and reduce 'out of school' barriers
- The school will intensify support where absence does not improve or earlier support is not engaged with

16. Formalising support: how will we ensure students are safe and tackle absence together with parents and carers?

- The school will communicate with parents and carers on a regular basis
- The school will share a clear sequence with parents and carers where attendance becomes a concern for their child
- The school will monitor all students' attendance
- The school will implement individual plans to improve attendance in agreement with parents and carers
- The school will deploy the necessary resources and expertise internally and externally to support

- The school will review the impact of individual plans and intensify support if initial support is not successful or not engaged with

Monitoring and Evaluation

17. 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.
18. 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 relevant committees.

Medical Appointments

19. 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.
20. The school has the support of a designated WAS worker, who will visit homes in the event of concerns 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

When Fixed penalty notices and other legal intervention will be used.

Warwickshire County Council – Penalty Notices for Non-School Attendance

21. 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
22. Penalty Notices can now be issued to parents/carers as an alternative to prosecution for a first offence
23. In Warwickshire, Penalty Notices will be issued by WAS
24. 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 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>).

School and WAS (Warwickshire Attendance Service) Intervention

34. 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 96%
- 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

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. Year Leader/DHT, Attendance Officer and WAS identify students with attendance concerns, 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
People 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.
- When making an application for Leave of Absence the resident parent is advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify of their decision.
- It is advised if you have not received notification regarding the leave of absence, it is the parents' responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of leave.
- 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.
- The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the 'resident' parent i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides. Please complete a Leave of Absence form for each child.
- Failure to make a request for a Leave of absence in advance covering the absence dates in full will result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.
- Unauthorised Leave of Absences will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service upon the child's return to school.

*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)

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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: _____

1st date of absence requested by parents: Last date of absence requested by parents:

Expected date of return to school (as advised by parents):

Absence: Authorised / Unauthorised / Split (please delete as appropriate)

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 should 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 regulations regarding Leave of Absence (The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.) advise:

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

Expectations

- 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.
- When making an application for Leave of Absence in advance parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify parents of their decision. It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is their responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.
- 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.
- Where a leave of absence is requested, but additional days taken either prior to or after the request may be considered as part of the leave of absence and could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to the parent(s).
- Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This 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.
- 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>).

- **It is important to note**, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totalling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £60 each child if paid within 21 days).
- 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.