

Attendance Policy

North Kesteven Academy

2017-2020

Review Date: Summer Term 2017

Next Review Due: Summer Term 2020



North
Kesteven
Academy

Think Excellence

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ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. MISSION STATEMENT:

North Kesteven Academy is committed to providing a comprehensive and outstanding 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 this will be dealt with as quickly as possible. We also recognise that there is a clear link between high levels of attendance and attainment and behaviour (See appendices). The Government guideline figure for attendance is 95%. From September 2015 a pupil is also classed as 'a persistent absentee' if their attendance is 90% and below.

2. IMPLEMENTATION:

This policy has received the full agreement of the Governing Body.

3. AIMS:

It is recognised that:

- * All pupils of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the Department of Education Statutory Guidance.
- * It is the responsibility of pupils and their parents/carers to ensure attendance at school as required by law in accordance with the Education Act 1996.
- * Pupils and their parents/carers may need to be supported in meeting their legal obligations and legal responsibilities.
- * In exceptional circumstances situations beyond the control of pupils and/or parents/carers may impact upon attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents/carers work in partnership with outside agencies where necessary to resolve these.

4. EXPECTATIONS:

We expect the following from all our pupils:

- * That they attend school every day.
- * That they attend punctually, arriving at 8.43am ready to be in Tutor Period at 8.45am every day.
- * That they will inform the school of any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.
- * That they will hand in all notes regarding absences to the Attendance Officer (Mrs S Harrison).

We expect the following from parents/carers:

- * To ensure their children attend every school day punctually arriving at 8.43am ready to be in Tutor Period at 8.45am. The law states that this is the parents/carers responsibility. Arrival after registration is treated as an absence for legal purposes.
- * To support their children in achieving maximum attendance.
- * To ensure that they contact the school giving an explanation for absence on the first day and then on any subsequent days if necessary. Medical evidence will be required for pupil's with an attendance of 90% or below.
- * To provide medical evidence for absences of 3 consecutive days or more.
- * To make dental/medical appointments outside of school hours unless absolutely unavoidable or an emergency. Schools are not obliged to authorise these and evidence is required.
- * To provide a note of explanation if a pupil arrives after 9am. They must sign in at Reception and provide evidence of any appointments for authorisation.
- * To take all leave of absence outside of term time i.e. in the school holidays.
- * To provide school with up to date contact details.
- * To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that affects a pupil's attendance in school.

Parents/carers and pupils can expect the following from school:

- * We will use computerised systems to make regular and accurate recordings of attendance.
- * We will attempt to contact you on first day of absence if we have not already heard.
- * Swift contact when a pupil fails to attend school without being provided with good reason.
- * Immediate and confidential action regarding any problem notified to us.
- * That we will endeavour to resolve ongoing issues with a tailored action plan to support each pupil effectively.
- * That we will reward and recognise good and improved attendance. The Attendance Cup, attendance certificates and prizes will be presented to individuals, Tutor Groups and Year Groups, as well as the 'e-praise' points system.

5. ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH REWARD AND RECOGNITION:

Attendance should be encouraged in the following ways:

- * Accurate completion of registers within the first 10 minutes of each lesson.
- * Attendance checks at appropriate times.
- * Attendance data is recorded for each child using the school's monitoring procedure.
- * We will recognise and reward all aspects off attendance using the school policies.
- * Transition and Primary Liaison will be used to help us identify pupils who have existing attendance problems and put in place appropriate measures in order to support the pupils where necessary.
- * Pastoral support is offered to parents/carers who are concerned that their children may be experiencing difficulty in attending school.
- * Attendance is published on pupil reports sent home to parents/carers.
- * The efficient and effective use of data management software to provide valuable Year Group, Tutor Group and pupil level attendance data in order to assist with timely analysis and intervention from the school.

6. RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE:

When a pupil does not attend, the school will respond effectively using a clear escalation process as follows.

- * First day contact. If a note or message is not received from parents/carers, the Attendance Officer will attempt to make contact by telephone, text and/or email.
- * Where we receive no response, an absence letter will be sent requesting an explanation for the dates in question.

- * If non-attendance persists and attendance falls, each individual case will be assessed by the Attendance Officer and further action will be taken using the school attendance procedure. This procedure will incorporate letters home, meetings with pupils, meetings with parents/carers, home visits and/or 'Safe and Well' checks by the police.

As each case may vary, the steps within this procedure will be applied according to each individual circumstance using an escalating process. This may necessitate some steps being omitted completely and will be at the discretion of the Attendance Officer. For parents/carers who receive a warning letter, please be advised that these are valid for 2 years.

- * For pupils with a history of low attendance or who become poor attendees or persistent absentees, parents/carers will be asked to provide medical notes/evidence so that absences can be authorised.
- * The Attendance Officer will hold School Attendance Panels, issue Fixed Penalty Notices and initiate Legal Proceedings in order to further intervene with persistent non-attenders.

Reintegration

- * The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence requires careful planning and preparation. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Plan (PSP) as detailed in the DfE Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance.
- * The Attendance Officer in liaison with relevant school staff is responsible for deciding upon a programme for the return of long term absentees and for its management. Programmes will be tailored to individual needs and will involve phased re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate.
- * The success of the Pastoral Support Plan will rely upon the active involvement of appropriate school staff, outside agencies, the pupil and parents/carers. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.

7. SCHOOL ORGANISATION:

It is imperative that every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to all pupils the importance and value of education, emphasising the clear link between attendance and achievement.

In addition to this the following staff members hold key responsibilities for this as follows:

Assistant Head Teacher (with responsibility for Behaviour and Safety):

- * To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole Attendance Policy.
- * To regularly report progress on attendance to Governors and Senior Leadership.
- * To ensure that challenging but achievable targets are set to reduce absence.
- * To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- * To oversee the work of the School Attendance Officer.

School Attendance Officer:

- * To hold prime responsibility for maintaining and improving school attendance.
- * To analyse and interrogate school attendance data.
- * To implement strategies and manage the attendance process.
- * To oversee the registration process and reinforce good practice and closely monitor attendance data on a daily basis.
- * Complete home visits and meet with parent/carer's and pupils in school.
- * Plan and review casework, hold school attendance panels and undertake legal proceedings.
- * To liaise with Progress Managers/Transition/6th Form and Outside Agencies.
- * To produce the attendance profile and attendance data for the whole school.
- * To ensure registers are completed accurately and on time and to manually enter paper registers, late registers, signing out book and notification of absence register.
- * To initiate first day contact including the investigation of absences.
- * Works closely with Tutors, Staff, parents/carer's and pupils.

Subject Teachers:

- * To complete registers accurately and on time for every lesson.
- * To follow up any unexplained absences from lessons and take immediate action if a pupil appears to be missing unjustifiably.

Personal Tutors:

- * To monitor their tutor groups attendance and advise the Attendance Officer of any concerning absences or patterns to absence.
- * Chase up absence notes as required.
- * To display and discuss information on attendance with Tutees.

Governors:

- * Governors have a valuable role to play through representation on school attendance panels and at parent evenings etc.
- * Regular attendance reports at the Governors Behaviour and Safety Committee meetings will scrutinise, monitor and quality assure the school's attendance procedures.

8. LIAISING WITH VARIOUS AGENCIES WHEREVER APPROPRIATE

Research has shown that schools that work in partnership with a full range of support services have a greater impact upon school attendance than when they act alone or when support services are poorly coordinated.

Poor school attendance may be a symptom of a wide range of institutional, community, family or individual circumstances. Many of these circumstances will demand expert support beyond the remit of the school. It is therefore vital that strong partnerships are established with all agencies that work with children and young people to ensure that educational opportunities are maximised.

These are the main support services that the school may involve in order to support pupils, parents/carers in achieving the highest levels of attendance:-

- * Behavioural and Support Service
- * Educational Psychologist
- * Special Educational Needs Service
- * Social Care
- * County Council Children's Services (Parent Partnership, Parent Support Advisors, Education Welfare Officers and Youth Workers)
- * Family Action and Families Working Together
- * Autism Outreach
- * CAMHS
- * Police PCSO's and Crime Prevention
- * GP's and Nurse Practitioners
- * School nurses

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school from sharing information with the police or social care where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

9. METHODOLOGY

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

The Importance of Registration:

- * An attendance register must be kept at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, whereby pupils are marked present or absent. This is a legal requirement and is known as 'Statutory Registration'.
- * Where electronic registers are used, a hard copy, current for each session, must be kept to observe the spirit of the law and for Health and Safety reasons.
- * Attendance registers and bound copies of print outs must be kept for a minimum of 3 years from the date that the last entries were made.
- * Accurate marking of registers and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems can have a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures.

10. CATEGORISING ABSENCE

From 1st September 2006 all schools were required to use a common set of codes to record pupil attendance and absence.

The Department of Education (DfE) believes that these codes are best used within electronic systems for recording attendance and absence of pupils.

The use of fixed codes will also assist both Local Authority's and the Department of Education in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without the permission of the school, but also the reasons why pupils are absent from school.

- * **Only the school**, in the context of the law **can authorise absence, not parents**. A note or explanation from parents/carers does not guarantee authorisation. If we do not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid or legal reason, then the absence will be unauthorised by the School Attendance Officer.
- * Reasons for absence should be entered on SIMS with the appropriate code symbol.
- * Schools are not obliged to authorise medical or dental appointments taken during the school day. **Parents/carers are asked not to make these appointments unless vital** or due to an emergency. Evidence will be required and if not received the absence will be unauthorised.

Authorised and 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 bereavement
- * Days of religious observance
- * Fixed term exclusion
- * Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated

Persistent Absence (PA):

A pupil will be classed as a persistent absentee if they have an attendance of 90% or less. This is whether the absences have been authorised or not by the school.

Leave of Absence:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents' a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.**
- **Where a child is a registered pupil at a school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance, the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act.**

- In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled, Section 444B of the same Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60 or £120 per adult per child.

Government regulations state that when it comes to dealing with requests for leave of absence, schools are no longer permitted to authorise family holidays or time off for other family occasions, as they are not classed as exceptional circumstances. The law also states that parents/carers do not have an automatic right to take their children out of school for leave of absence during term time. Schools can use Section 444B of the Education Act 1996 to issue Fixed Penalty Fines for non-attendance.

All requests for leave of absence must be made in writing to the School Attendance

Officer, giving details, dates and a full explanation of why leave of absence is required. All requests are looked at individually and further evidence may be sought as required.

You will receive a reply in writing.

We strongly advise that you seek advice from the School Attendance Officer before making any bookings.

Any leave of absence taken without prior notification to the school beforehand will automatically be unauthorised regardless of the explanation given after the event.

Approved Educational Activity:

Where a pupil is absent from school but is undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way but will be 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.

The following activities fall within this category:-

- * Field trips and educational visits
- * Interviews with prospective employers and for a place at a higher or further educational establishment
- * Pupils receiving approved education off site

Absences will not be authorised under the following circumstances:-

- * Shopping trips
- * Leave of absence in term time where the permission of the school has not been given
- * Minding the house or looking after siblings or family members
- * Lateness if registration is missed without explanation
- * Medical or dental appointments that cannot be verified
- * No reason given

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a pupil being absent from school. It is for the School Attendance Officer in liaison with the Assistant Head Teacher for Behaviour and Safety to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable.

Punctuality:

The school will actively encourage punctuality by challenging pupils who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation. The school attendance Officer carry out 'late sweeps' to monitor pupil punctuality. They also check all registers for late marks and apply the appropriate sanction for persistent lateness. If a pupil continues to arrive late, they will be placed on an attendance card and/or be required to complete the relevant detention according to the number of offences occurred. The Attendance Officer will also contact parents/carers if this remains an issue.

When a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open, they will be marked late using the appropriate code for why they were late. Where a pupil arrives after registers have closed, they must go to Main Reception to sign in. They must have a note to explain why they are late, and they will require evidence of any appointments they have been to for the absence to be authorised.

Should a pupil arrive at a lesson having been marked absent at Tutor Period, they must be sent to Reception to sign in on the Late Register. Failure to do so will have significant Health and Safety implications, as pupils are recorded as being in school according to registers and these are used in the event of an emergency.

11. 6th FORM:

- **6TH form students are subject to the same rules for attendance and punctuality as the rest of the school-see Whole School Attendance Policy**
- The expectation is that ALL STUDENTS attend every morning registration. **THIS IS COMPULSORY.** Persistent lateness affects attendance and is not acceptable. You need to be in school by **8.45am** just like everyone else
- **You are expected to attend assemblies, all lessons and all study sessions**
- If you have a **planned absence** then you need to complete a Leave of Absence form at least **2 days prior to the absence** (from main reception) and return IN PERSON to Mrs Scattergood along with any evidence
- If you are absent for a reason that could not have been predicted, the school will consider whether your absence was really unavoidable, and then decide if it is authorised or not. But **you must ring school on the day to inform us** of the absence. Any absence is considered unauthorised unless a valid reason is given
- Any students with 95% or less will be challenged, with interventions and sanctions put in place for those not meeting the required attendance target
- **You are not permitted to arrange driving lessons/tests during school time or work during school hours**

12. REMOVAL FROM THE SCHOOL ROLL:

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 as amended 1997 and in the Schools Administration handbook (section A2). **Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.**

- * Where a school has been notified that the pupil has been registered as a pupil at another school
- * Where a pupil has ceased to attend the school and the parent(s) have satisfied the County Council that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school
- * Where the school has been notified by the School Medical Officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state to attend school before becoming legally exempt from the obligation to attend school
- * Where the pupil has been absent without reasonable cause for four academic weeks and the Head Teacher of the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry to contact parents/carers
- * Where the Head Teacher has been notified that the pupil has died
- * If a pupil has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a leave of absence in term time
- * Except in the case of a boarder, the pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer ordinarily resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school
- * Where a pupil will cease to be of compulsory school age and the school has been notified of an intention to discontinue in attendance
- * Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Pupil Discipline Committee.

13. ENSURING PUPIL INFORMATION IS UP TO DATE:

Schools should ensure, as far as possible, that the information they hold on pupils and parents/carers is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is effective and that referrals to outside agencies can be actioned effectively.

Principle 4 of the Data Protection Act 1998 states ‘Personal Data shall be accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date’.

14. ATTENDANCE TARGETS

To improve whole school attendance to 95.5% in school year 2017/2018.

A Parent's Guide to School Attendance

The academy believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from a full and efficient education and therefore from regular attendance. To this end the academy will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems are acted upon as quickly as possible. Good attendance helps pupils to learn, to socialise with their peers and prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

It has been proven that poor attendance significantly impacts upon educational progress and it will disrupt pupils learning and mean that they fall behind their peers. Frequent absence from school places pupils at a significant disadvantage academically – there is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance and low levels of achievement.

The greater the attendance - the greater the achievement.

- Of pupils who miss more than 50% of school, only 6% manage to achieve 5 A*-C's including English and Maths
- Of pupils who miss between 10-20% of school, only 39% manage to achieve 5 A*-C's including English and Maths
- Of pupils who miss less than 5% of school, 71% achieve 5 A*-C's including English and Maths
- 17 missed school days a year = a GCSE grade drop in achievement.

School's expectations from pupils

- Pupils must arrive at 8.43am ready to be in Tutor Period for 8.45am
- Pupils will tell school if they are going to be absent via a signed note from home
- Pupils must sign in if they arrive late and sign out if they leave, at Reception. They must have a note along with evidence for any appointments. Arrival after registration is treated as an absence for legal purposes.

School's expectations from parents/carers

- To contact school if your child is absent on the first day of absence and subsequent days if necessary. To provide medical evidence for absences of 3 consecutive days or more
- To make dental/medical appointments outside of school hours. **Parents/carers are asked not to make these appointments unless** vital or due to an emergency. Evidence will be required and if not received the absence will be unauthorised.
- Schools are not obliged to authorise these and evidence will be required
- To take all leave of absence in set school holidays. Government regulations state that when it comes to dealing with requests for leave of absence, schools are no longer permitted to authorise family holidays or time off for other family occasions, as they are not classed as exceptional circumstances.
- To provide school with up to date telephone/mobile/email/address details to enable us to contact when necessary
- To ensure that their child attends school as the law states that this is the parents/carers responsibility. Parents/carers do not have the right to authorise any absences. This remains the responsibility of the school and we may ask for clarification which may include medical notes or medical form of consent.

What parents/carers and pupils can expect from school

- We will attempt to contact you on the first day of absence if we have not already heard from you

- We will respond swiftly and efficiently when a pupil does not attend school following school procedures
- We will use computerised systems to promote speedy evaluation and timely responses when monitoring attendance
- We will work in partnership with external agencies wherever appropriate. Research has shown that this has a greater impact on school attendance.

THE FULL ATTENDANCE POLICY IS AVAILABLE TO READ ON THE SCHOOL WEBSITE.

School contact details

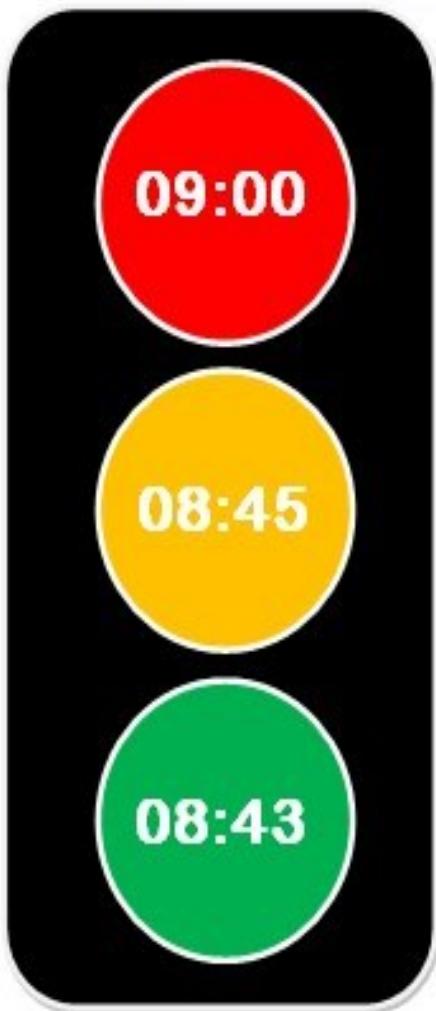
All enquiries regarding attendance or to let school know your child will be absent please contact the school's Attendance Team on: - 01522-881010 (voicemail service is available)

Or email: - susan.harrison@nkschool.lincs.sch.uk



Appendix 2

Punctuality Counts



Arriving late counts
as poor attendance

Punctuality is
important

Be on time!

Raise your attendance, raise
your chances



What is your attendance level?

90% attendance = $\frac{1}{2}$ a day missed every week!

= 4 weeks of lessons missed in a year

= $\frac{1}{2}$ a school year missed over 5 years

90% means you are a persistent absentee

Raise your attendance, raise your chances