

Title:	Attendance and Lateness
Associated Policies	Behaviour Policy Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy

Policy Statement

1	<p>1.1 Full attendance at school is of crucial importance if each student is to achieve their potential. Only by being in school and attending all lessons, every day will each student be able to learn to the best of their ability and achieve success throughout their life. It is a legal requirement that students attend school regularly and it is the responsibility of parents to ensure this.</p> <p>1.2 To achieve this, Northampton School for Girls (NSG) commits to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting good attendance • Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence • Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled • Acting early to address patterns of absence • Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school • Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons
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Who does this policy apply to?

2	<p>This policy applies to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All relevant students, staff, parents/carers at NSG • All governors
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Who is responsible for carrying out this policy?

3	<p>3.1 The governing body is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting the importance of attendance at the school • Ensuring school leaders fulfil their expectations and statutory duties • Regularly reviewing, monitoring and challenging attendance data • Ensuring staff receive adequate training on attendance • Holding the senior leadership team to account for the implementation of this policy <p>3.2 The Headteacher is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors • Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of students • Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies • Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
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3.3 A designated senior leader responsible for attendance will:

- Lead attendance across the school
- Offer a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluate and monitor expectations and processes
- Have an oversight of data analysis
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

3.4 Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the attendance team
- Promoting the importance of strong attendance and impact on students' education

3.5 Parents and carers are, by law, responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly. This means that a child must attend school every day that it is open, except in extenuating circumstance when they are too ill to attend or when they have obtained authorisation from the Headteacher (see section 5.4: Notable Absences). Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school every day and on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence as specified on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.6 Students are expected to attend school every day on time and be punctual for attending lessons within the school day.

What are the principles behind the policy?

4 4.1 At NSG, we believe that **every day is essential**. The principles behind this policy are operated in accordance with Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibility measures. 4.2 These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
 - Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
 - Part 6 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 • The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
 - The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold

4.3 Students are expected to attend regularly when the school is in session and be always punctual. Parents/carers are encouraged to commit their children to regular attendance and to the ethos of the Home School Agreement.

4.4 Parents have a legal responsibility to secure the regular attendance of their compulsory school aged child/children at school. Failure to ensure a regular level of attendance is an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996 and may lead to legal action.

4.5 The School will have due regard to the Keeping Children Safe in Education document with regards to children missing from education and will refer to the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy where there are particular concerns about a child's attendance.

Procedures (Standards)

5 Admissions and Attendance Registers

5.1 NSG is required to keep an admissions and attendance register. As part of this, the School will take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. This will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment made to the admissions and/or attendance register must include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
 - The School will also record:
 - Whether the absence is authorised or not
 - The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
 - The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

5.4 Details of when the register will be taken is included on the School's website. The first register will be taken no longer than 30 minutes after the school day begins.

5.5 Admissions Register:

- The admissions register must contain the personal details of every student at NSG, along with the date of admission or readmission to school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended

- A student can lawfully be deleted from the admissions register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- Every entry in the admission attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made

Unplanned Absence

5.6 Parents/carers must notify the School on the first day of an unplanned absence for their child – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – the timescale by which they need to inform the School is detailed on the School’s website.

5.7 Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the School has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

5.8 If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the School may ask parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor’s note, prescription or appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. The academy will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

5.9 If the School is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned Absence

5.10 Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence as long as the student’s parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents/carers should contact the school reception in the first instance regarding any requests for leave of absence.

5.11 Parents/carers should however try and make appointments out of school hours, to ensure that their child does not miss out on vital learning. Where this is not possible, the student should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Lateness and punctuality

5.12 A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. A student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Following up unexplained absence

5.13 On the first day of absence, the School will:

- Call the student’s parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence and each day thereafter, if applicable, to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student’s emergency contacts, the school may take further measures, such as notifying the Police or other external agencies.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken if necessary,
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and

- identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the School's electronic register or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census.

5.14 Where concerns persist about the level of attendance or lateness, individual meetings will be held with the student and parents/carers to determine strategies to secure improvement in attendance.

5.15 NSG takes cases of persistent absence very seriously. Persistent absence is defined as missing 10 per cent of sessions (equivalent to 28 sessions) a year. In such cases, the School will undertake relevant School-level procedures to promote and support regular attendance.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.16 The School considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion for exceptional circumstances. In general terms, the School will not sanction holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances relevant to the application. Unauthorised term time leave may result in issuing of a Penalty Notice (see paragraph 5.21).

5.17 Any request for the authorisation of an absence should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, **at least two weeks before the absence**. Please refer to the School's website to complete the leave of absence request form. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

5.19 Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 5.5-5.7
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the School will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Approved educational activities

Legal Sanctions

5.20 NSG takes cases of persistent absence very seriously. Persistent absence is defined as missing 10 percent of sessions (equivalent to 38/40 sessions) a year minimum.

5.21 If you take your child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions) (83.33%) over a period of six weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local authority for consideration of legal action. This could include,

A Penalty Notice payable up to £120 fine without further reference to you for a penalty notice this warning is valid for 12 months.

Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1,000.

Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months' imprisonment.

5.22 Penalty notices can be issued by the local authority upon receiving an irregular attendance referral from the school.

5.23 The decision on whether or not to submit an irregular attendance referral ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct regarding attendance. This may take into account:

- A 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 student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

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

Attendance monitoring

5.25 The School will monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify students or cohorts who require support with their attendance. This will be based on contextual factors of these individuals and of the demographic the school is based within. The School will:

- Monitor attendance regularly, at least on a half-termly basis, though it is likely to be much more frequently than this
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

5.26 The School will compare attendance data to the national average, as published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics release.

Analysing attendance

5.27 The School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with staff, students or families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

5.28 Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of students who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Work with each identified student and their parents/carers to understand and address the reasons for absence with temporary or permanent reasonable adjustments, including any in-school barriers. Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Ensure that **support agreed in line with a student’s SEND needs, including provisions outlined in a student’s EHCP**, are accessed and established by the school in line within its capacity.

Policy review

6 **6.1** This policy will be monitored as part of NSG’s annual internal review and reviewed on a **three-year** cycle or as required by legislative changes.