



Attendance Policy

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Rationale

School attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all students can fulfil their potential.

The Government expects:

- Schools and local authorities to:
 - Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
 - Ensure every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
 - Act early to address patterns of absence
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- All students to be punctual to lessons

This Policy sets out how North Chadderton School will fulfil its duties and in so doing takes account of the Education Act 1996; the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and the subsequent amendments in 2010, 2011 and 2013.

1. Targets

The school will:

- Ensure that all students and parents understand the issues and procedures for attendance.
- Ensure that all Governors, administrative, support and non-teaching staff understand the issues and procedures for attendance.
- Aim to allocate resources (e.g. time, space, funding) to support this policy.

2. Admissions

2.1: Admission Register

- North Chadderton School has an admission register, which contains the personal details of every student in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the last school attended.
- Students are entered on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school. For most students this is normally the first day of the school year.

2.2: Children at Risk of Missing Education

North Chadderton School will inform the Local Authority of any student who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical advisor that the student is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school
- Are in custody for a period of more than 4 months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe that they will be returning to the school at the end of that period
- Have been permanently excluded

The Local Authority will be notified in advance of the deletion when the school becomes aware that the deletion will be made.

2.3: Home Educated Children

When the school receives written notification of the intent to home educate, North Chadderton School will inform the Local Authority that the student is to be deleted from the admission register. It will not seek to persuade any parents to educate their children at home as a way of avoiding excluding the child or because the student has a poor attendance record. It will not seek to prevent parents from educating their children outside the school system. There is no requirement for parents to obtain the school's permission or the agreement of the Local Authority to educate their child at home.

However, parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full-time education, but this does not have to be at school.

3. Attendance Register

A student's absence will have a serious impact on his/her attainment. He/she needs to know that every absence is noticed and appropriate action is always taken

3.1: Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day. This shows whether the student is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. The school will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once at the start of the second session. On each occasion the school will record whether every student is:

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- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent; or
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

If a student of compulsory school age is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or another unavoidable cause.

3.2: Morning registration is 8-30 a.m. – 8.45 a.m. Children arriving after this time will have an 'L' recorded on the register. This counts as a present. Continued lateness will result in referral to the Education Attendance Service. Students arriving after 9.30am will have a 'U' recorded on the register. This counts as an unauthorised absence.

Some early morning medical appointments (after 9.30am) may be marked as authorised absence.

3.3: Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an **emergency** (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time. Parents/carers are encouraged to request medical/dental appointments outside school hours where possible. If this is not possible, students should come back to school immediately after any appointment, where possible.

Every member of staff will regularly check the attendance of their class and will follow up a student's absence with appropriate personnel in school.

3.4: This attendance policy includes procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of students. Under the Education Act (Student Registration) Regulations 2006 schools have a duty to refer to the Local Authority any child of compulsory school age who is continuously absent from school for two weeks without explanation or whose attendance is irregular or whose punctuality is an issue.

3.5: All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant

to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

All young people have a right to a quality education. Parents/Carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends regularly and punctually. If a student does not, parents/carers may face legal action.

4. Leave of absence from School

In line with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, the school cannot authorise leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. As such the majority of requests for leave of absence will not be granted and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. School will refer any unauthorised leave of 10 sessions (5 school days) or more to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued per parent. Parents of Year 6 children are informed of the school's attendance policy in the Intake Booklet and at the Intake Evening. Requests for leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances should be put in writing to Mrs Knight, the Attendance Officer, at least 6 weeks before the period of absence requested.

North Chadderton's criteria for exceptional circumstances are as follows:

- Holidays for children of members of the armed forces.
- An emergency visit to a dying relative (proof will be needed that the visit was booked as an emergency).
- Filming or acting commitments – a maximum of 10 days/year, but not when in proximity of public examinations and only if staff certify that the student is up to date with work and is on target.
- Where the child is a carer.

The Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where leave of absence is granted the Headteacher will determine the number of days a student can be away from school and any leave of absence is granted entirely at the discretion of the Head teacher. School will inform parents/carers in writing of the decision made and the reasons for it.

Under the regulations the school will authorise absence that is due to religious observance but the **day** must be exclusively set apart for religious observance and be set apart by the parents/carers religious body (not the parents/carers).

5. Procedures for reporting absence

General absences

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

1. The school telephone line is used for parents to report reasons for absence - there is an option on this line to report your child's absence. This is: 0161 624 9939.
2. Each day your child is absent you should call the school telephone number above clearly stating your child's name, form group, date of absence and reason for the absence.
3. The school uses an electronic messaging service to alert parents to the absence of their child. Replies can be made by text to give a reason for the absence.
4. If you prefer, you can write into school detailing your child's absence; this letter should be handed into the Attendance Office.
5. We would ask that, wherever possible, doctor and dental appointments are made outside the school day. If this is not possible, your child's attendance record will be marked 'M'. This represents an authorised absence. The student should sign in at the Student Reception on their arrival in school.
6. In order to keep absence due to illness to a minimum, the school asks for medical evidence in the following cases:
 - Where a child has had 5 or more days of absence for illness – these do not have to be consecutive days
 - Where the school is notified of an operation or lengthy medical treatment

Medical evidence can be in the form of the following:

- A medical appointment card
- A medical appointment letter
- A copy of a prescription with the name of the child and the date
- Medication with a chemist's label showing the name and the date
- An "unfit for School" declaration or letter from your GP
- A hospital discharge letter

Where a child is absent for 3 consecutive days a home visit or contact via telephone will be made as standard school practice.

When your child returns to school after 5 or more days of absence, he/she should bring the medical evidence to Mrs Knight. Medical evidence must be brought within one week of the period of absence or the absence will not be authorised.

Absences of 5 or more days without medical evidence will not be authorised and as such may be subject to a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

6. Persistent Absentees

The definition of a persistently absent student as set by the DfE, is a student with 10% or more absence (90% or less attendance). This means that students can reach this threshold by missing 5-7 sessions (half school days) each half term.

It is therefore vitally important that all parents/carers work in partnership with the school to try and ensure that their child does not reach this threshold. Schools need to be certain that any absences for illness are justified, and this will be the context of any conversation with parents/carers to discuss absences from school.

7. Promoting good attendance

The school believes that good attendance is vital for all our students if they are to gain the most from the education it provides. The greater the attendance, the greater the achievement! Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The school will promote good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials and good attendance by students will be recognised and rewarded appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The school hopes that parents will assist us in our work of raising attendance levels throughout the school by:

- Ensuring the regular attendance of their child.
- Informing the school when their child is absent from school and the reason for the absence.
- Attending any meetings about their child's attendance, which may be necessary.

The school believes in early intervention. Where absences are unexplained, a first day response is initiated, using our electronic messaging service.

The importance of good attendance is highlighted in Assemblies and a reward system is in place. Displays and inter-form competitions also promote the value of good attendance.

The absence lists are reviewed on a daily and weekly basis, to ensure that patterns of absence are quickly responded to. Individual action plans will be initiated as a result.

Parents are able to view their child's attendance record on the school reports and via the Parent App. In addition and can meet staff at Parents Evenings. Regular contact with school is encouraged.

Parents are encouraged to inform the school of any issues which may be affecting their child's ability to cope in school i.e. family bereavement, changes in family circumstances, possible bullying issues.

Students are encouraged to discuss their fears and anxieties about school with Form Teachers, friends, any adult in school and Peer Mentors. In this way, problems can be responded to before they also become an attendance issue.

The Achievement and Wellbeing Team meets on a Year Group rotation to look at the achievement data, including attendance data, and to put interventions in place. The School Attendance Officer

undertakes home visits when necessary and holds discussion with both the internal staff and external agencies i.e. School Health, Social Care.

Students whose attendance falls below 96% are discussed with the LA Education Attendance Service and appropriate actions are taken. i.e. series of letters, home visits. Failure to improve attendance can result in Health Panels, Police Panels, Parents Contracts, Fast Track Attendance monitoring and Fixed Penalty Notices.

The SIMS system provides a lesson by lesson attendance mark for every student. This quickly highlights students' absence at the beginning of every lesson and the relevant Raising Achievement Team is alerted, so that the student can be located and parents informed if necessary.

8. Legal Measures

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, the parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority.

Penalty notices are fines imposed on parents and can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences. If a penalty notice is left unpaid the Local Authority will proceed to prosecution.

9. Monitoring & Evaluation

This attendance policy will be evaluated on an annual basis. This will be carried out in partnership with the Education Attendance Service. The results of this process, including the achievements for the current year and the targets for the coming academic year, will be presented to the Governing Body.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents, to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.