



Attendance policy

Approved by:	Date: May 2021
Last reviewed on:	May 2021
Next review due by:	May 2022

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1. Aims

We believe that regular attendance is essential to pupils' good progress.

We understand that all our pupils have additional needs and have many challenges to overcome. They may need to attend a number of hospital appointments. We work with parents to support them in ensuring good attendance.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Sending a clear message that persistent absence is a safeguarding concern and we expect all pupils to attend school on time unless there is a valid reason.
- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education unless there are medical reasons
- Acting early to address patterns of absence which are not explained by medical needs

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), The COVID [Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus \(COVID-19\) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). 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 7 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Nethergate Academy Advisory Council

The AAC is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the Academy
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the AAC
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer

- Monitors attendance data across the Academy and at an individual pupil level
- Report concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Work with education parents to tackle persistent absence
- Arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 Academy office staff

Academy office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record them on SIMS and CPOMS

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each Academy day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment

- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9am and will be kept open until 930. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm and will be kept open until 130pm

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 10am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7)

Parents can contact Nethergate staff by phone or email.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless staff have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the Academy 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.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- If a pupil is persistently late the attendance team will talk to parents to see if any support is needed
- **The parents of pupils who travel independently will be notified if they do not arrive by 930am**

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending regularly, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by a call on the first day of absence
- Discuss concerns with parents
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

- Offer support to parents/carers
- Invite parents to a problem-solving meeting
- Send a letter informing parents of continued concerns
- Inform the SEN team and arrange a meeting with them and parents
- Inform parents school are considering referring to Education Welfare who may decide to take legal action

4.6 Reporting to parents

- Attendance recorded on pupil profiles shared with parents at parent's evenings in the Autumn and Summer term.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as a family bereavement, attending a funeral or a family emergency

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Flexi-schooling requests- in exceptional circumstances such as medical reasons these requests will be considered with the SEN team.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

We use a range of measures to address persistent absence, including:

- Discussion with parents about absence support offered
- Meeting with Headteacher
- Letter informing parent/carer of continued concern
- Meeting with SEN team
- Inform parents that the school is considering referral to Education Welfare
- Referral to Education Welfare

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

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

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Pupils receive termly and annual bronze (above 90%), silver (above 95%) or gold (100%) awards. There are also awards for improved attendance. These awards are presented in assembly and come with a star which can be worn to school.
- Parents are made aware of the importance of good attendance and the high expectations of school when they meet the headteacher before starting at Nethergate.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a child is absent their parent must ring school to explain what is wrong and when they are expected back at school. The parent must ring school if their child does not return when expected to explain why. School will contact parents on this day if parents do not ring school.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee **unless there are medical reasons**.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, for special schools and share this with the Academy Advisory Council.

Attendance data is stored on SIMS.

- Attendance data is collected each term
- Pupils with less than 90% attendance are highlighted and reasons for absence analysed
- Support will be offered if appropriate.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by the school DSL.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Absence codes you need to use and what they mean

Code X: not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus

Use this category where a pupil doesn't attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- Against guidance from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) relating to the incidence of coronavirus or its transmission
- Prohibited by any legislation or statutory directions relating to coronavirus

In this case, you shouldn't penalise parents, and this category will **not count as absence** (either authorised or unauthorised) for data collection purposes.

You should still use code X for pupils of non-compulsory school age who aren't expected to attend a session, like you did before the outbreak (you can use sub-code X01 for this if you wish - see below for more information).

Category X sub-codes

The DfE has published a list of **optional** [sub-codes](#) you can use to consistently record non-attendance relating to coronavirus. The sub-codes can help you:

- Extract attendance data to complete the daily educational setting status form (see the last section of this article)
- Monitor non-attendance relating to coronavirus for your own purposes

These sub-codes have been introduced into management information systems (MIS), but you can continue using your existing way of recording these absences if you wish.

Codes C and I: definitions for other codes you'll need to use

In addition to the categories for coronavirus above, you'll need to continue using other codes you used before the outbreak, such as:

- Code C - leave of absence authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances
- Code I - illness (you can use the optional sub-code I01 for non-coronavirus illnesses and I02 for illnesses due to a confirmed case of coronavirus - see more on page 2 of the DfE's [list of sub-codes](#))

See the below list of scenarios to help you determine when these codes would apply.

When to use the different absence codes

Scenario	Code to use	Reason
Pupils due to attend school who have to self-isolate because they have symptoms, and are waiting for their test results	X or X02	They aren't attending as they're following public health advice
Note: use this code only until they get their test results		
Pupils due to attend school who remain unwell following a negative test result (i.e. with a different illness)	I or I01	They're unwell
Pupils due to attend school who have to continue to self-isolate because they tested positive	I or I02	They're unwell
Pupils due to attend school who have to self-isolate because someone they live with has symptoms or has tested positive	X or X04	They aren't attending as they're following public health advice
Pupils due to attend school who have to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone in school who has tested positive	X or X03	They aren't attending as they're following public health advice
Pupils who are required to shield	X or X06	They aren't attending as they're following public health advice
Where you give approval for a pupil to be absent (for example, to attend the funeral of a close relative)	C	They're taking a leave of absence authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances
Pupils who are self-isolating after returning from a non-exempt country or territory	X or X05	They aren't attending as they're following public health advice

Keep submitting the daily attendance form

Continue to fill out the [educational setting status form](#) by 2pm, each day. If you can't meet the deadline, submit the form as soon as possible.

The DfE has updated the questions on the form to reflect the return of more pupils to school - preview the [list of updated questions](#) to find out what information you need to provide.