



North Town Primary School & Nursery  
Learning today - Leading tomorrow

# North Town Primary School

## Attendance Policy

Signed: .....Head teacher

Signed: .....Chair of Governors

Date: October 2018

To be reviewed in: October 2020



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## 1. Policy Name

Attendance Policy

## 2. Policy Statement

North Town Primary School (“the school”) recognise that regular school attendance is very important for all children as any amount of time off school can damage their educational prospects in both the short and long term. At North Town Primary School the definition of ‘regular’ attendance is 95% or better.

Good habits of attendance need to be encouraged in all pupils and their parents/carers from the very first day at school. The school is committed to promoting to parents/carers the importance of full attendance for all pupils. We will do this by regular communication to all parents/carers as well as one-to-one meetings when required.

Wherever possible we will seek a positive approach to issues concerning pupil attendance. When necessary we will seek the use of statutory duties when required by liaison with the Local Authority.

## 3. Aims

The policy ensures that all staff and governors in the school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils’ achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child’s education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child’s age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.



- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

#### 4. Scope and Application

The policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Head teacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

#### 5. Roles and Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

##### 5.1 Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers.
- Informing the Head teacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary.

##### 5.2 Head teacher

The Head teacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) service.



- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

### 5.3 Administration staff

The Administration Team are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head teacher.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.

### 5.4 Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

## 6. Definitions

### 6.1 Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### 6.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.



## 7. Policy Principles

### 7.1 The Legal Framework

All parents/carers of pupils registered at the School will be expected to ensure the regular attendance of their child, as set out Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that parents/carers are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education.

A child reaches compulsory school age on or after their fifth birthday and continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen. As of September 2013 all 16 year-olds will be required to continue in education or training, until the end of the academic year in which they turn 17. As of September 2015 they will be required to continue until their 18th birthday.

### 7.2 Reviewing Attendance

If the school considers that an enrolled child's attendance is not regular, it will liaise initially with the parents/carers of the child to seek a positive resolution. If this cannot be accomplished the school will liaise with the Local Authority and may seek the use of statutory duties. These can include a School Attendance Order, an Education Supervision Order, Prosecution by Local Authority, Parenting Contracts, Parenting Orders and Penalty Notices.

### 7.3 Penalties

Penalties can be issued where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school. Penalties may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. (The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies).

Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Criteria that will be used to trigger the use of a penalty notice could include: a number of unauthorised absences, perhaps within a rolling academic year, one-off instances of irregular attendances such as holidays taken during term time without the school's permission; and where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

North Town Primary School's attendance policy was updated on 4 October 2016 and complies with Somerset County Council's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct, issued on 21 November 2014.

## 8. Procedures

The school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.



- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the Educational Welfare Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to Somerset County Council and the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Headship Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

## 9. Further Reading

- UNCRC References
  - Article 3 (best interests of the child),
  - Article 28 (right to education),
  - Article 29 (goals of education).



**Authorities / Key dates:**

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Policy custodian	Mike Snowden
Reviewed by Policy Committee on the	18/10/2018
Ratified on the	22/01/2019
To be reviewed on the	October 2020

**Modifications / Amendments history:**

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Date	Modifications / Amendment