

Woodpecker Hall

ACADEMY

Attendance policy

September 2023

Introduction and aims

North Star Community Trust believes that regular attendance is clearly linked to pupils making good progress in their learning. It ensures that pupils settle into the Academy of their choice and experience the stability and security they need in order to achieve their best.

We aim to ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and each school acts early to address patterns of absence.

We aim to improve the overall percentage of pupil attendance at our academies provide support, advice and guidance to parents / carers and pupils and help them overcome any barriers which may prevent that

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based upon the [‘working together to improve school attendance’](#) and [‘school attendance parental responsibility measures’](#) from the Department for Education (DfE).

As per the [Education Act 1996](#): -

- [Section 576](#)
Any person who has care of a child (whether or not they are the parent) or who has parental responsibility is deemed to be a ‘parent’ and is therefore responsible for ensuring regular school attendance of that child.
- [Section 444\(1\)](#)
A parent is guilty of an offence if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at the school where they are registered as a pupil.
- [Section 444 \(1\)\(a\)](#)
A parent is also guilty of an offence they know their child is not attending the school where they are registered as a pupil.
- [Section 444A](#) and [Section 444B](#)
Makes provision for the issuance of penalty notices where there is reason to believe a person has committed an offence under section 444(1)
- [Sections 434\(1\)\(3\)\(4\)&\(6\)](#)
There are expectations schools must follow regarding the registration of pupils


As per the [Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003](#): -

- [Section 23](#)
Outlines the use of penalty notices for parents in cases of pupil truancy

As per [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and the subsequent amendments in [2010](#); [2011](#); [2013](#) and [2016](#)) all absences are considered *unauthorised* until a satisfactory reason for that absence has been given.

Punctuality at the start of the school day

Pupils should be in their class and ready to start their day before the official start of the academy day.

ACADEMY	Academy opens at:	Official start of the day / Time that the late bell will ring:	Academy register closes at:
	8.45 a.m.	8.55 a.m.	9.25.a.m.
		Pupils arriving after this time will be recorded as <i>Late</i>	Pupils arriving after this time without a valid reason may have their attendance recorded as <i>Unauthorised</i>

Pupils who arrive late should report to the main office and a designated member of staff will record the pupil's details and time of arrival. They will be officially marked as '*Late*'.

Persistent lateness (i.e. regular arrival to the academy after the official start to the academy day) is monitored, and parents / carers are informed of this in writing. Where there is no improvement to an individual pupil's punctuality, the parents / carers are invited into the academy to discuss a plan of action.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, unless a valid reason can be supplied (for example evidenced GP / dental appointment), they will be marked in the register with an '*Unauthorised Absence*'.

Attendance Officer to track late pupils through traffic light system;

- **Amber**

If a student arrives late three or more times in a week (i.e. five consecutive school days), parents will receive email and phone call from the Attendance Officer

- **Red**

If late arrivals continue the following week, parents will receive a phone call by a member of the Senior Leadership Team

Any arrivals after the registers have closed are escalated to the Education Welfare Officer.

Roles and responsibilities

We recognise that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. Where staff have concerns about a child, these are reported immediately to a member of the Designated Safeguarding Team for their school in line with our [Safeguarding, Child Protection and associated procedures policy](#) available on policies page of the school website.

Teaching staff

Teaching staff are ultimately responsible for an accurate record of attendance being taken.

On occasion, Support Staff / Teaching Assistants may be required to complete the register on behalf of teachers

- The register must be taken at the start of each morning and afternoon session using the appropriate codes.
- The register must be saved no later than 10 minutes after the beginning of the morning and afternoon session.
- If handed to teaching staff, any completed absence request forms must be returned to the school office.
- Every effort should be made to chase absence notes in support of the office staff who also have a duty to monitor unauthorised absences
- Persistent lateness or any pattern of absence creating a concern to teaching staff should be reported to the Year Lead / Head of Year as well as the Education Welfare Officer.

Our business support staff

- Monitor registers on a daily basis and ensure that every entry is preserved in line with DfE guidance
- Complete first day calling, amend registers and ensure a manual register is available for emergencies or when the electronic system fails
- Monitor attendance and punctuality and keep records of all action taken
- Complete the required Early intervention before Education Welfare Officer starts casework
- Check absence notifications and amend any unauthorised absence codes as appropriate if a message has been received in the office
- If no message has been received the office will contact the parents / carers requesting that they provide a reason for absence (this is usually by text message).

A *No Reason Absence* letter may be sent home if the office receives no response from parents / carers

- to inform the Education Welfare Officer where a pupil's attendance or punctuality is giving cause for concern and follow the Trusts existing Safeguarding Policy in relation to Children Missing in Education

Our Education Welfare Officer

- Works with parents and pupils to discuss absences and provide support with any difficulties that affect their attendance or punctuality.
- Meetings may be arranged which parents / carers are expected to attend. Action plans and / or *Parent Contracts* may be put in place to improve attendance
- The EWO will prepare documentation required for a referral to the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service if a pupil's attendance remains poor.
- Attendance and punctuality data will be produced for the academy's Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body

Parents / guardians

- By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16 years) must receive appropriate education.
- It is the legal duty of every parent / guardian to ensure that their child attends the academy regularly and on time.
- Where their child may be absent or late, parents / carers must contact the academy and provide a reason; preferably before the start of the school day.
- Where absence is for medical reasons, parents / carers must provide the appropriate information.
- Where pupil attendance is causing concern parents / carers must attend meetings arranged by the Education Welfare Officer and comply with agreed actions
- An '*Absence Request Form*' (found at **APPENDIX 1**) must be completed for any requests for absence that will occur during term time

Promoting good attendance

- The school has a dedicated Attendance officer that will monitor attendance and have weekly meetings with the Deputy Head teacher to identify and discuss interventions for students with attendance concerns

- Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed, in order to help identify patterns, set targets and support students
- Termly attendance display in the school hall and the class/es with best attendance over the term will receive a school based reward
- Classes with the highest attendance will be celebrated in the half termly newsletter in addition to the weekly and termly rewards system

Attendance rewards

Weekly assembly

Class attendance

Winning class(es) with the highest % of attendance will receive an attendance trophy. If there is a class with 100%, each member of the class will receive a 100% pencil.

Class Punctuality

Winning class(es) with the lowest number of lates for the week: will receive the 'Bee on Time' cuddly bee

Half termly

Awards / postcard for individual children whose attendance has improved that half term

End of year

Individual children with 100% at the end of the year can select a book as a prize from school and a certificate

Reducing persistent absence

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.

Quality attendance monitoring and weekly attendance meeting ensures that all children whose attendance is becoming an issue is flagged and appropriate intervention, support and challenge is put in place.

Where a child and their family require additional support to ensure attendance improves the following steps will be taken.

- The school will continue to look for school-based solutions to support improved attendance. Including support from the Trust's Outreach Team, where required.
- Offer targeted agency support from the Early Help Team or other community based organisations, if appropriate.
- Make a MASH referral for more intensive support, where there are safeguarding concerns.



Reporting lateness and contacting the school

If a child is unable to attend school through illness or any other reason or to discuss their child's attendance, parents should contact:

School office telephone: **020 8804 4126**

School attendance email: woodpecker.attendance@northstartrust.org.uk

If parents feel there are circumstances impacting on their child's attendance that the school may not be aware of, please contact:

	Deputy Head teacher Paola Quebrada
	Education Welfare Officer Kumba Sandi 020 8804 4126 (Ext 647) 07948 423 363 ksandi@northstartrust.org.uk

Categorising absence as authorised or unauthorised

Please note, an academy day is split into two sessions, morning and afternoon

All absences are considered *Unauthorised* until a satisfactory reason for that absence has been given.

Only the Head teacher (or head of school) of the academy the pupil attends can authorise an absence.

An authorised absence may be granted under the following circumstances: -

- exclusion
- absences during term time which have been both requested by parents using the absence request form (found at **APPENDIX 1**) and agreed by the Head teacher in writing.
- on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs
- medical / dental appointments with proof of appointment provided to the office at least 24 hours prior to the appointment. All medical / dental appointments should be arranged, where possible, outside of school hours.
- illness:
This does not include minor sickness (such as headaches, coughs and colds); *and*

- a) the academy should be informed by the pupil's parent / carer on the morning of the first day of absence and regularly throughout the period of illness (this does not automatically condone absence, only the Head teacher of the academy can do that).
 - b) if medical advice was sought, the parent / carer must provide the academy with a medical note and supporting evidence (e.g. prescription, appointment card, medical certificate) on the pupil's return.
- prevention from attending by exceptional circumstances

The following will be considered as being 'present'

- education visit or trip
- educated off site
- approved sporting activity.
- pupils who take time out to visit prospective schools / academies, colleges or Sixth Forms will be marked with an authorised absence code if evidence is provided. However, parents / carers must consider the level of disruption that repeated visits may cause to their own and other pupils learning.

Where no reason is provided for absence

Where a pupil is absent and no reason has been provided: -

- the academy office will contact the parents / carers requesting that they provide a reason for absence (this is usually by text message but may be by phone call). This process is often known as 'First day calling'.
- if a parent / carer fails to respond or update the academy, they may be sent a *No Reason Absence* letter.
- any absences for which no reason or evidence (where requested) is provided will be recorded as *unauthorised*.

Children missing in education

The Department for Education (DfE) defines children missing education (CME) as "*a child of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise (e.g. privately or in alternative provision) and who has been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time (usually four weeks or more).*"

www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education

Schools have the responsibility for notifying the Local Authority's Education Welfare Service (EWS) of any pupils that are potentially CME (Children Missing Education).

Where pupils have been absent from school for 10 days (or 5 days if the pupils are subject to a Child Protection Plan or are Children in Care) and the absence has not been authorised by the school, the office staff use a range of strategies within that time to ascertain the reason for absence such as: -

- telephone calls to all contact numbers on record.
- asking class teacher / other staff / other parents.
- informing the Education Welfare Officer so a welfare check can be completed (if appropriate)

In the event of no contact with the family being established by the above action and the whereabouts of the student remains unclear, the school requests additional support from the Trust's Education Welfare Officer who provides support to the schools by;

- continuing to make attempts to contact the family and emergency contacts
- contact the local authority to request a council tax / benefits check
- conduct further visits to the home address
- check with local schools for siblings
- writing to the family at their last known address
- write to forwarding address and contact the receiving borough's CME Officer / Education Welfare Service

In the event of no contact with the family being established by the above and the whereabouts of the pupil remains unclear, the Trust's Education Welfare Officer will provide a completed CME (Child Missing Education) referral form, checklist and evidence of correspondence to the local authority's CME officer following 20 school days' absence.

If the Trust's Education Welfare Officer is able to establish the child's new address, a referral will be completed and sent to the CME officer / Education Welfare of the receiving borough.

All schools are required to notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be added or deleted from the admission register.

Where a pupil is to be removed under any of the grounds prescribed in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, this should be done as soon as a ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

Parental requests for absence during term time

Any requests for absence during term time must be made by completing an '*Absence Request Form*' (available from the school office and can be found at **APPENDIX 1**)

The Head teacher of the academy will give due consideration to the request with the circumstances of each case being taken into account along with the pupil's attendance record. Evidence for the absence may be requested from the parent / carer concerned before a decision can be made.

The final decision rests with the Head teacher (or head of school) and parents / carers will be informed of that decision in writing.

If the Head teacher agrees a term time absence, it will be recorded as *Authorised*.

If the Head teacher does not agree a term time absence, it will be recorded as *Unauthorised*.

Persistent absence

Our academies strive for a minimum of 96% attendance.

Appropriate staff members continually monitor attendance and where there is persistent absence or a pattern of non-attendance: -

- the officer responsible for attendance will inform parents / carers in writing via a letter of concern and the pupil's attendance will then be monitored by the Education Welfare Officer and academy staff
- if there is no improvement, a second letter of concern will be sent to parents / carers and the pupils attendance will then be monitored for a period of two weeks
- if attendance does not improve then the academy will invite parents / carers to a School Based Meeting which may involve a member of the Senior Leadership Team
- an action plan for improved attendance will be established. If attendance does not improve the case will be escalated to the Trust's Education Welfare Officer.
- academies may also implement targeted attendance improvement strategies for parents who fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly
- **Where attendance is 93% or less** and where no acceptable reason has been given, the Education Welfare Officer will formally write to parents / carers to address this. Action plans and / or *Parent Contracts* may be put in place. The Education Welfare Officer can also request additional support for parents / carers with their consent.
- If there is still no improvement after support has been provided, a request will be made to the Local Authority's Education Welfare service for a pre-court meeting (which can also be known as a Court assessment Meeting)

Referrals to the local authority's Education Welfare Service

The Local Authority's Education Welfare Service (EWS) has a legal responsibility to monitor school attendance and enforce the law when an offence has been made.

Issuing fines / Penalty notice

In some cases of persistent absence or where a pattern of non-attendance is found, the academy will consider issuing '*Fixed Penalty Notices*' to parents and carers who are considered capable of, but unwilling to work towards improving their child's attendance as per Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

A Penalty Notice is a fine issued to parents or carers and can be either £60 (per parent / carer per child) which rises to £120 if it is not paid within 21 days. If the full fine is not paid after 28 days in total, parents / carers may be prosecuted for failing to ensure their child attends their registered school.

Prosecution of parents

Where a referral is made, the Education Welfare Service will require parents / carers to attend a pre-court meeting to consider whether court action is required. Parents / carers are given the opportunity to discuss concerns and agree a plan to improve attendance and if satisfied, no court action will be taken and a review will take place after a monitoring period.

If attendance does not improve and all other means of support have failed, the Local Authority Education Welfare Service will prosecute and a court date will be sent to parents / carers.

The Academy will be asked provide the following evidence to the court: -

- a Registration Certificate signed by the Head teacher (The magistrates will accept this as a record of attendance from the school register)
- a record of all communications and attempts at communication with parents / carers
- a record of all meetings with parents / carers and copies of any *Parent Contracts*

Prosecution may result in a fine of up to £2,500 for each parent, a jail sentence of up to three months or a community sentence.

The Education Welfare Service will explain to parents / carers their rights to challenge any non-attendance recorded in the register.

Information with regard to the legal action used to enforce attendance can be found both at the [school attendance and absence](#) section of the Gov.uk website and at the [absence and attendance](#) section of the Local Authority website.





Absence request form

There is no automatic right for parents / carers to take their children out of school during term time.

Since 1st September 2013, the Department of Education will only allow a Head teacher to grant a leave of absence if there are **exceptional circumstances**. It is for the Head teacher to determine whether or not an absence in such circumstances can be authorised and the number of days a child can be away from school **if** the leave is granted.

Letters will **not** be accepted. **All absence requests must be completed on this form.**

The form **plus supporting evidence** should be returned to the school a minimum of 14 days before the start of the absence.

Academy (please tick): -			
 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>	 <input type="checkbox"/>
Pupil's name: _____	Class: _____		
Home address and postcode			
First date of absence: _____	Date of return to the academy: _____		
I / we request to take my / our child out of school during term time for the following reasons: -			

I understand that if the request is unauthorised, the Education Welfare Service may be notified and a Penalty Notice may be issued. I understand that a penalty is issued to *each* parent for *each* child taken out of school and that this is a fine of £60 which increases to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days. I understand that non-payment will result in legal action.

Name of parent / carer making application: _____	_____
Signed: _____	Date: _____

You will be notified in writing of the school's decision

FOR ACADEMY USE ONLY

Pupil's name:	
Pupil's class:	
Current attendance: _____ %	Current unauthorised: _____ %
Dates requested from: _____	To: _____
Term time days in total: _____	
Term time sessions in total: _____	

DECISION AUTHORISED

The request has been authorised for the following dates:

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 UNAUTHORISED

The request is unauthorised for the following dates:

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 Parents informed of the decision in writing Information entered on database / pupil record

Signed: _____ (Head teacher) Date: _____