
1. Introduction

This policy is written with reference to statutory guidance documents DFE-00257-2013 (School Attendance) and DFE-00214-2016 (Pupils Missing Education).

Victoria Primary School believes in the importance of regular attendance at school. It is important that pupil attendance is closely monitored to ensure appropriate intervention to overcome barriers to school attendance. The school will endeavour to recognise high levels of pupil attendance and to challenge and support families where attendance issues are identified.

2. Legal Requirements

Parents/carers of pupils of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that they receive full-time education by regular full time attendance at school or approved home education. The Local Authority are responsible for enforcing the law through working with the families or ultimately through the Courts.

The school has a duty to complete attendance registers twice a day to show which pupils are present and for any pupil that is missing whether it is authorised or unauthorised absence. This information is reported to the Local Authority and Department for Education.

The Governors are required to ensure that the school is properly maintaining the register, making the returns to the Local Authority and Department for Education, and informing parents and carers about attendance levels.

3. Management of Attendance

Registration sessions occur every morning at 08.55 and afternoon at 13.00 for Foundation Stage and KS1 and 13.15 for KS2. Registers close 10 minutes after these registration times. Pupils who arrive at school after 08.55 but before 09.05am are registered with a late mark. Pupils registering after 09.05 will be marked as 'U' on the register which counts as an unauthorised mark. Where a pupil is marked as absent, a reason for absence is requested by automated text message on each occasion.

School Office staff and the Family Support Assistant oversee administration of attendance daily. The Bromcom system is used to manage pupil attendance. The Family Support Assistant is responsible for tracking attendance issues and for initiating concern referrals to the Head of School. Class Teachers are responsible for monitoring day-to-day attendance and acting as the initial liaison point with parents/carers. The Family Support Assistant and Head of School meet on a monthly basis to review attendance issues. The Head of School has overall responsibility for all attendance matters within the school.

4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude. Taking children out of the academic year for unauthorised leave does not allow them to receive an efficient full-time education. The government strongly urges schools not to approve such absence from school.

Only the Head of School can authorise absence and does so at his discretion. Term time leave of absence can only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

The types of reason for authorising absence are:

- illness of the pupil;
- the pupil's appointment to see a doctor or other health professional when the appointment cannot be made outside school hours and when an appointment card can be produced if requested;
- family days of religious observance;
- bereavement in the immediate family; and
- involvement in approved extracurricular activities including visits and residential trips.

Pupils absent from school without a satisfactory reason

Where a pupil is absent from school without a satisfactory reason, the 'O' code is entered on to the register. This is recorded as an unauthorised absence in line with Government guidelines.

Requesting authorisation of absence

All requests for leave during term time need to be submitted on a ***Leave of Absence Request Form*** which can be collected from the main school office or on the school website. **Unless it is for exceptional circumstances, holidays will not be authorised.** If parents choose to take their child out of education for a holiday without authorisation, the Head of School may request legal action from the Local Authority Education Welfare Service to be considered. The Parent or carer will be informed if the leave of absence is to be refused and the possible consequence of this.

5. Pupils arriving at school late

Where a pupil is late and that lateness is 30 minutes after registration has closed, the register should be marked with a 'U'. According to Government Guidelines, a 'U' mark is recorded as an unauthorised absence and steps will be taken to try to address the matter by school staff. However if 'U' marks continue to be accrued a Penalty Notice may be requested from the Local Authority Education Welfare Service.

6. Identifying & improving attendance in respect of Persistent Absence and Persistent Lateness

- When a child's attendance falls below 95%, parents will be alerted to the issue by letter. This will give opportunity for the parent to address the problem pro-actively as it arises, rather than waiting for a more serious concern to develop (**appendix letter 5**).

- When a total of three consecutive sessions of unauthorised absences are accrued (when no satisfactory reason has been received for the absence), a phone call is made to the parent or carer to establish reason for absence and to ascertain when the pupil can be expected to return to school. If contact cannot be made by phone, a home visit will be conducted.

- Where attendance (including through lateness) falls below 90%, pro-active action will follow:

- 1 A letter will be sent to parents/carers requesting an explanation for the absence and offer support in a monitoring letter (**appendix letter 1**).

When this monitoring letter is issued, the start date of monitoring period is specified on that letter. We make sure that the monitoring period starts after the letter is posted and in time for the parent to receive that letter.

Pupils will then be placed on a monitoring list for twelve weeks to see significant improvement for four continuous weeks. If further unauthorised absence occurs then there is an immediate follow up phone-call. Attendance will be reviewed on a weekly basis by the Head of School and further action may be considered.

- 2 If attendance improves and there are no unauthorised absences, **appendix letter 2** will be sent and parents/carers will be informed that medical evidence will be required in future before any absences are authorised.
- 3 If attendance fails to improved significantly and further unauthorised absences are accrued, a meeting will be arranged to try to address any issues which may be impacting on a pupil's attendance. (**appendix letter 3**).
- 4 Should a pupil accrue 10% unauthorised absence in a 10 week period and efforts to address the issue with parent/carers has not brought about a significant improvement, a Request for Service may be made to the Education Welfare Service for legal action to be considered (**appendix letter 4**).

7. Rewarding good attendance

Our policy acknowledges the importance of good attendance. School recognises high levels of attendance in the following ways:

- **Weekly** via hall display plus five minutes extra play awarded to the best attending class in each key stage during celebration assembly.
- **Termly** each pupil will receive a certificate for 100% attendance in a half term and the pupil with the most improved attendance in a term will also receive a certificate
- **Annually** via an end of year enrichment activity afternoon (as chosen by 100% attendance pupils) and a positive acknowledgment letter to parents

8. Use of Penalty Notices

The Head of School is authorised to request the issuance of Penalty Notices for Truancy, Excluded Pupils, Persistent Lateness and Unauthorised Holidays. The school adheres to the Nottingham City Council Code of Conduct in relation to Penalty Notices. See appendix 1.

9. Safeguarding through attendance monitoring, including Children Missing Education.

In addition to its own regular monitoring of attendance data, Victoria Primary School recognises its legal responsibility to take account of each pupil's attendance from the first day that has been agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. This statement applies whether the child has arrived for their expected first day or not. In this instance, where an unauthorised absence is recorded, the Office Manager will bring this to the attention of a Designated Person for Safeguarding. The Designated Person will always consider unauthorised absence and persistent absence with due regard to safeguarding procedures.

At non-statutory transition points, the school will notify Nottingham City Council within five days when it adds a pupil's name to the register, including all details contained within the admissions register for the new pupil.

At non-statutory transition points, when the school receives notification from a parent that a pupil(s) will live at another address, this will be recorded in the admissions register and Nottingham City Council Admissions notified. The notification will include:

- the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- the new address;
- the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

At non-statutory transition points, if the school receives notification from a parent that a pupil(s) is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in the future, the school will record in the admission register and transfer, through the Bromcom leavers report, to the Local Authority:-

- the name of the new school
- the date when the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

At non-statutory transition points, when removing a pupil's name from the register, the school will pass the following information to the Local Authority:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the parent normally resides;
- at least one telephone number of the parent;
- the pupil's future address and destination school if applicable;
- the grounds under regulation 8, under which the pupil's name is to be removed from the admissions register. The school will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the Local Authority before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1) sub para's (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).

The school will notify Nottingham City Council of any pupil (including at statutory transition points) of any pupils who:

- have been taken out of school by their parents or carers 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;
- have a medical condition certified by the School Nurse that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school; or
- have been permanently excluded.

The school recognises its safeguarding responsibility for any pupil up to the point where their education is confirmed as transferred to another school or recognised alternative provision including home education.

Attendance registers are preserved for three full years after the last mark was made.

Equality Duty

This policy has been reviewed in the context of Equality Impact and assessed as: Neutral

This policy was last reviewed in: June 2019

Name of reviewer: Mr R Gray

Appendix 1

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Penalty Notices for Truancy, Excluded Pupils, Persistent Lateness, Unauthorised Holidays in Term Time- Local Code of Conduct

Introduction

1. This Code of Conduct will govern all Penalty Notices issued in respect of children of compulsory school age who are registered at a maintained school, a Pupil Referral Unit, an Academy, a City Technology College, or a City College for the Technology of the Arts, and those attending alternative provision within the jurisdiction of Nottingham City Council, hence referred to as the LA (Local Authority).
2. In the context of the Local Code of Conduct the term "school" will cover all the above-mentioned educational establishments, including Pupil Referral Units and attendance at alternative provision arranged by the LA.
3. The purpose of the Code is to ensure that Penalty Notices are issued consistently and fairly across the LA.
4. Penalties are set at £60 if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is paid, the absence covered by the Penalty Notice cannot be cited again.
5. The LA is responsible for the operation and administration of the Penalty Notice scheme. To ensure consistency all Penalty Notices shall be issued by the LA for and on behalf of those persons designated by the regulations as having authority, i.e. schools, limited to Head Teachers, Deputy Head Teachers and Assistant Heads Teachers, authorised LA staff, the Police, Community Support Officers and other accredited persons.

An unauthorised absence level of 10% or more will be used as a general trigger guide.

Penalty Notices that can be issued by the LA on behalf of schools

6. When a child has been absent without the authorisation of the school in accordance with paragraph 6.
7. Holidays taken in term time not authorised by the school.
8. Persistent lateness after the register has closed, where there has been a minimum of 10 Us in a 4 week period
9. Excluded pupils failing to attend provision after the fifth day of exclusion.
10. Excluded pupils seen in a public place within the first five days of the exclusion.

Penalty Notices that can be issued directly by the LA or on behalf of other partners

11. Cases recommended by a Legal Intervention Officer following a case recommendation.
12. As part of the LA's fast-track to attendance procedure.
13. Where a pupil has been stopped on more than one occasion during a three-month period by the Youth Issues Team or other accredited persons having authority to do so.
14. On behalf of neighbouring local authorities in accordance with agreed protocols.

Limitations

15. A parent will be issued with no more than three Penalty Notices, relating to the same child, in any twelve month period.
16. A Penalty Notice shall only be issued in compliance with the Local Code of Conduct. The Education Welfare officer must be informed if they are involved with the case
17. Penalty Notices shall not be issued if legal proceedings under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 are under consideration or are in progress, unless used within the framework of the LA's fast-track procedure.
18. The LA reserves the right to limit or restrict the use of Penalty Notices at any time if the number of requests or court cases resulting from non-payment compromises the effective administration and/or integrity of the scheme.

Non-payment

19. If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full before the expiry of the period for paying it, the LA shall institute proceedings in accordance with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Withdrawal of Penalty Notice

20. The LA may only withdraw a Penalty Notice where:
 - it ought not to have been issued i.e. it has been issued outside the terms of the Local Code of Conduct or where no offence has been committed; or
 - it has been issued to the wrong person; or
 - it contains material errors.

Service of Penalty Notices

21. Service will be by first class post and 2 days are allowed for postal delivery.

Definition of parent

22. The term "parent" used in the code of conduct is that defined by Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and Section 2 of the Children Act 1989.

**IF YOU HAVE ANY ENQUIRIES RELATING TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT PLEASE TELEPHONE (0115) 876 2965
IF YOU PREFER LARGER PRINT PLEASE TELEPHONE (0115) 876 2965**

Appendix Letter 1

Parent / Carer name and address

Date

Dear parent/carer's name

I am writing to highlight your child's attendance/punctuality which is causing concern.

Pupils who are absent from school miss important information and work, and may find it harder to achieve their full potential.

Please find enclosed a copy of your child's registration certificate, which shows your child's attendance level. Unauthorised absence is indicated by the code 'O'.

This means no satisfactory reason has been received for your child's absence.

We would expect your child to be in school unless if there is good reason not to be, such as an illness. For the next 4 weeks, school will start an attendance monitoring period, which will commence 2 days after the date of this letter.

Should your child's attendance fail to improve significantly I may contact you before the end of the monitoring period to invite you into school for a meeting to discuss any support I may be able to offer.

We are constantly working to improve attendance and would be grateful if you would keep your child's absence to a minimum. Any future absences will not be authorised unless medical evidence is received. This could be an appointment card or copy of a prescription (given).

If there are any difficulties which are affecting your child's school attendance please do not hesitate to talk to me or the class teacher.

Yours sincerely

Head of School

Appendix Letter 2

Parent / Carer name and address

Date

Dear parent/ carer's name

Please find enclosed a copy of your child's attendance certificate which shows his/her attendance level.

We are pleased to say that your child has made a significant improvement in his/her attendance since we last contacted you.

We want to continue to support your child and make sure he/she does not miss out on any opportunities the school offers and so we hope this improvement can be maintained.

We will continue to closely monitor your child's attendance and any absences will still be unauthorised unless medical evidence is received. If you have anything you wish to discuss with us please do not hesitate to contact us.

We thank you for your continued support and co-operation,

Yours sincerely

Head of School

Appendix Letter 3

Parent / Carer name and address

Date

Please find enclosed a copy of your child's attendance certificate which shows his/her attendance level. I am disappointed to see that your child's attendance has not improved significantly since I last contacted you.

We want to continue to support your child and make sure he/she does not miss out on any opportunities the school offers and would therefore like to invite you into school to discuss any support we may be able to offer or any issues which are affecting your child's attendance.

Please come to the school office and ask for xxxxxxxxxx on;

Date and day
time

if this time is not convenient please contact xxxxxxxx and rearrange this

I should inform you that should unauthorised absence continue to be accrued a Request for Service may be made to the Education Welfare Service for consideration of legal action.

We thank you for your continued support and co-operation,

Yours sincerely

Head of School

Appendix Letter 4

Parent / Carer name and address

Date

Dear parent/ carer's name

I am disappointed to see that your child's attendance has not improved and continues to cause concern.

I have written to you on xxxxxxxxxxxxxx and phone calls have been made to try to speak to you about your child's attendance but there has been no significant improvement.

On the xxxxxx date of meeting you agreed that your child's attendance would improve and the following arrangements were put in place *summarise the agreement made here* to support your child..... **or**

On the xxxxxdate of meeting you did not attend the meeting and you did not call to rearrange this....

Unfortunately your child's attendance is on track to becoming considered as persistent absence.

We want to continue to support your child and make sure he/she does not miss out on any opportunities the school offers but I have no option but to refer the matter to the Local Authority for legal action to be considered.

Yours sincerely

Head of School

Appendix Letter 5

Parent / Carer name and address

Date

Dear parent/ carer's name

I am writing to draw attention to your child's attendance, which is in danger of being below acceptable levels.

Attached is your child's attendance record for your reference. I would expect to see that your child's percentage attendance is above 96%. As you can see, your child's attendance is less than this.

Please ensure that your child attends school unless they are too ill. School register is taken at 0855 each morning and again after lunch. Late marks do count towards absence levels as children who are late miss out on school time.

Attendance is monitored carefully in school. Families are monitored formally where attendance drops below 90%. Attendance below 90% is placed on a child's permanent record I look forward to seeing your child's attendance improve so that they can gain fully from the learning on offer in school.

If there are any issues that are preventing your child's attendance, you can speak to your child's teacher or TA in confidence – they will help you or direct you to support wherever possible.

Yours sincerely,

Head of School