



The Norwood School Attendance Policy

NORWOOD ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Norwood School aims to encourage excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to school. Excellent attendance is linked to students' successful attainment at school, the school intends to enable all students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The school will work with Lambeth to support and reward students for excellent or improved attendance with an expectation that it will receive support from parents/carers. We aim to establish an ethos which enables and encourages all members of the community to aim for excellence. For our young people to gain the greatest benefit from their education and their future it is vital that they attend regularly and students should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Why Regular Attendance is so Important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class/group.

Ensuring students' regular attendance at school is a legal responsibility and parents should not allow absence from school without a good reason. Poor attendance may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, students and staff.

Registration Procedure

It is essential that all staff and parents understand the absence and attendance codes – please see attendance guidance from Lambeth LA

Students are expected to arrive at school by **8.40am for Registration and Form Time/Assembly**. Students arriving after **8.50 am** will be marked in as late by their form tutor and should not be allowed into lessons without a late slip issued by the office or person responsible for attendance. The slip must be presented to the member of staff in charge of the teaching session who will record the student name and give them a late mark in the register. Students must provide an explanation. Morning Register will officially close at **9.00am and arrival after this will be recorded as Unauthorised late after close of registers in the attendance record (code U)**.

Students must be in Lesson 1 by 9.00am. (Fully equipped and ready to learn)

It is a legal requirement that all staff should take their registers punctually for **every period/teaching session.**

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student is late they inevitably miss part of their work and must spend time with their class teacher getting vital information that they have missed. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons; this can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage unauthorised absence/truancy.

The school expects all teachers to take registers and ensure that am and pm registration are up to date on SIMS .The school will rigorously monitor attendance and the up keep of class registers and staff who have failed to meet this legal requirement.

Parents will be informed by letter after **5 unauthorised late marks (code U)**. If students continue to be late, after **10 sessions unauthorised late marks (code U)** their parent will receive a Penalty Notice in accordance with Lambeth LA guidance: **Pupils who continually arrive late to school have a lower overall attendance percentage, which could trigger a meeting with Lambeth's court officer under caution.**

Afternoon Registration

Students are expected to arrive promptly and attend afternoon sessions from **1.10pm** and will be registered promptly by their **teacher**. Staff must register students promptly registers will, for official records, close at **1.10pm**. Arrival after this time will be recorded as **unauthorised late**.

Truancy/School Refuser

Pupils who truant from school by not attending or leaving the school during the day will be marked down in the registers as **an unauthorised absence**. Parents will receive notification via the school's first day text messaging system informing them that their child is not in school, and that safeguarding is of concern as the pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

Truancy is classified as an unauthorised absence; this is an absence without good reason, for which a Penalty Notice can be served.

The law recognises only four reasons for not going to school.

These are:

- Leave has been agreed by the school.

- The child is prevented from attendance because of illness or other unavoidable cause.
- A day of religious observance in the religion of the parents.
- The child lives more than 2 miles (for a child under 8 years of age) or three miles (for a child aged 8 years or over) from the school and the council has failed to provide transport.

The Team:

Heads of Year, Form Tutors and all members of staff are responsible for regular liaison with the AHT responsible for Attendance, Home School Liaison Officer and the Attendance School Administrative Officer responsible for attendance.

The Role of the Form Tutor:

- Completing the register accurately, on time and monitoring pupils' attendance in an attempt to identify irregular patterns of attendance.
- The general identification and monitoring of all pupil registration and attendance.
- The monitoring and registration of pupils at form time and assemblies.
- Discussing with pupils any unexplained incidence of absence or lateness.
- Informing the Head of Year when unexplained absences occur.
- Monitor attendance of known truants carefully including the signing of attendance reports.
- Taking ownership of tutor group; monitoring, praising and rewarding and encourage good attendance.

The Role of the Head of Year:

- Overseeing Form Tutors in their year group with regard to pupil attendance.
- Developing strategies where a regular pattern of poor attendance has been identified – under 90%.
- Identifying with the form tutor failing attendance and rewarding positive attendance.
- Organising with Form Tutor, contact with parent/carer/guardian and issuing attendance reports where appropriate. Discussing with pupil's

(individuals/classes/Year Groups) incidents of absence, truancy or regular lateness.

- Organising support for pupils where long absence is authorised to assist reintegration to school.

Role of the AHT Responsible for Attendance

- Responsible for day to day implementation of this policy and specifically.
- Have weekly oversight of whole school attendance statistics for monitoring and comparison to local and national targets.
- Setting attendance targets with the Lambeth Education and producing attendance data for reports to governors.
- Monitoring attendance figures below 90% closely with a view to identifying pupils where attendance is deteriorating.
- Meeting regularly with the Head of Year.
- Meeting regularly with Home School Liaison Officer to discuss attendance statistics and individual pupil attendance.

Role of Home School Liaison Officer /Pastoral Leader:

- Identifying and monitor Persistent Absence (PA) .
- Arranging SAP panels for identified pupils.
- Initiation of CAF (Common Framework Assessment)
- Monitor and report pupil attendance to AHT (attendance) and Heads of Year .
- Home visits.
- Preparation for court cases.
- Liaison with social services and external agencies.
- Attendance at TAC meetings/ Core Group meetings/ CP Conferences.
- SAP agreement aimed at improving attendance.

Interventions

Where no improvement occurs parents should be made aware of the following interventions:

- Truancy calls to be issued on the first day of unauthorised absence.
- School Warning Letters issued in relation to failing attendance.
- School Attendance Panels (SAP) to be held in our school at least twice per term to deal with those failing the required attendance averages and those identified as being persistently absent from school (PA) children missing 14 sessions or more of education each half term.
- Medical Panels (including our school nurses) will be held for those students where poor attendance maybe linked to chronic or repeated incidences of illness.
- Pastoral Support Programmes (PSP) and Common Assessment Frameworks (CAFs) will be used to support students identified as having problems with school attendance which may lead to the involvement of other agencies and external resources.

Penalty Notices and Court Appearances for the most persistent and chronically offending families

Penalty notices

Penalty Notices

Local Code of Conduct

Role and responsibility of LA

1. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, which came into effect on 1st September 2007, set out the framework for the operation of the penalty notice scheme in respect of unauthorised absence from school and the whereabouts of excluded pupils in the first 5 days of an exclusion. The Regulations require each LA to draw up a local Code of Conduct which sets out measures to ensure consistency in the issuing of penalty notices.
2. Specifically, a PN may be issued as an early alternative to prosecution or other forms of intervention as follows depending on the individual circumstances:
 - Where a pupil has at least 10 days unauthorised absence during any given continuous 3 month period (school time only) and the parent(s) are not co-operating with the LA and/or school to resolve the problem.

- The parent has received a formal warning of the possibility of a PN being issued and given a minimum of 15 school days to effect an improvement.
 - Where a pupil is required to attend alternative education provision at a named site, school or pupil referral unit and fails to attend on or after the first day.
3. In addition, in the following exceptional circumstances, a PN may be issued without formal written notification to the parent depending on the individual circumstances:
- Where a parent has taken the pupil on holiday during term-time without the school's authorisation or (in cases where the school has authorised absence for a holiday) has failed to return the pupil to school on the date agreed with the school; or
 - Where a pupil and parent(s) have been stopped by a truancy sweep, the parent(s) cannot provide an acceptable reason for absence and the parent is known to have condoned absence previously;
 - Where a child is excluded from school and is seen in a public place during normal school hours on the first five days of each and every fixed period or permanent exclusion;
 - Where a child is excluded from school and is seen in a public place during normal school hours causing anti-social behaviour on the first five days of each and every fixed period of permanent exclusion;
 - Consideration will be given to whether there is reasonable justification for the pupil to be in a public place. This will depend on individual circumstances but it is recognised that there may be some circumstances where it is necessary for a child to be in a public place during school hours on a day when they are excluded.
 - Justifiable reasons could be:
 - The child having a pre-arranged medical appointment
 - A medical emergency which requires immediate attention
 - A pressing need for the parents to seek medical help and may feel it inappropriate to leave their child alone at home and unable to make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child.

Payment and collection of fines

4. All penalties will be paid to the LA which will retain the revenue to cover the costs of issuing or enforcing notices, or the cost of prosecuting recipients

who do not pay. The penalty is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the invoice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt of the invoice (an invoice served by post is deemed to have been received on the second day after posting it by first class post).

Prosecution for non-payment of fines

5. The parent cannot be prosecuted for the particular offence for which the notice was issued until after the final deadline for payment has passed (42 days after receipt of the invoice – see paragraph 22 above) and cannot be convicted of that offence if they pay a penalty in accordance with the notice.
6. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 42 day period the LA must either:
 - Prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies; or
 - Withdraw the notice (can only be done in limited circumstances – see paragraphs 18-20 above).

NB: Unlike other penalty notice schemes the prosecution is not for non-payment. If there is a prosecution it will follow the usual procedures of a prosecution for irregular attendance. Prosecutions will be brought by the LA under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Strategies to Emphasise the Important of Excellent Attendance

1. During Parent Consultation meetings and other scheduled meetings with staff, parents will be up-dated with details on individual attendance. The school will involve external agencies to support and reinforce good attendance.
2. Report to parents at least termly on how a student is performing in school. The student's HOY will know what their attendance and punctuality record is and how this correlates with pupil's attainment. Students will be rewarded for excellent attendance both individually and as a member of her Year group. The school will take appropriate action to support individuals. The school will report termly to Governors on attendance.
3. The Norwood will celebrate excellent attendance by displaying individual and group achievements on a termly basis.
4. Reward good or improving attendance through class and Learning Community competitions, Behaviour Watch points, certificates and outings/events.
5. Have regular progress meetings throughout the year when parents, students and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school. Every week the Social Inclusion Team will review and discuss any patterns

of attendance, non -attendance and punctuality issues using an action plan to resolve attendance issues.

Understanding Different Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school will be classified **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Information about the cause of any absence is always required in writing from the parents and should be given to the student's HOY in the first instance. This information will be passed to the School office who will liaise with the school's Attendance Data Officer.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which cannot be rearranged to fall outside school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes. Copies of appointment letters /cards are required as confirmation.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" or permission from the Headteacher have been given. The school will take action on this type of absence which could, if continued, lead to sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

The following are some of the occasions when further action may be applied:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to be marked present
- Absence for shopping, looking after other children or birthday celebrations
- Day-trips and holidays in term time which are not authorised by the Headteacher.
- The school may grant, in exceptional circumstances, up to 10 school days absence but only at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- A sustained period of absence of 4 weeks or more may result in the student being removed from the school roll.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

The DFE currently defines persistent absentees as school age children missing more than **15%** of sessions in a school year, they have now advised Local Authorities and schools that from **September 2015** the persistent absent threshold will go up from **85% to 90%**, so parents of pupils missing more than 10% of sessions will now be referred for court action sooner. Any child whose attendance falls below **95%** will trigger a meeting with Lambeth's Education Welfare officer.

A student becomes a '**persistent absentee**' when they miss **15%** or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level will adversely affect the student's educational prospects and we will work with parents and the local authority to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case

that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be invited to attend a school review meeting or a school attendance panel.

PA students are tracked and monitored fortnightly and the school will involve external support where any absence affects attainment. All PA students and their parents are subject to an Action Plan which may include allocation of additional support through a mentor. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

Absence Procedures

If a student is absent:

- A phone call to the school is expected from the parents/carers to the school office on the day of absence before **10.00am**.
- The school expects a written note of explanation/ a note in the pupil's school planner to be given to the student on the first day of return. The note needs to be passed on to the form tutor/school office who will ensure records are updated.
- The school will/may accept an electronic reply to the school's text message on the first day of absence.
- If absences persist, the Home School Liaison officer will invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation with their child. The school expects parents/carers to make an appointment to meet with a member of staff to share any concerns about attendance.
- If attendance falls below 90% the school will follow Lambeth's AIM procedure
- The school office will telephone or text the parents/carers on the first day of absence if the family has not made contact .The school will continue to call every day until the fifth day of absence.
- On the fifth day of absence the school will send a **first school warning letter** requesting the parents to respond to give a reason for absence and when their child will return to school.
- If the warning letter is not responded to after three days, the parent will then be sent a **second school warning letter**.
- The Home School Liaison Officer will contact home and arrange a home visit and or a **School Attendance Panel (SAP)** meeting, where

parents/cares, student and appropriate staff will attend.

- Targets will be set and appropriate support may be offered if necessary.

We expect that in the majority of cases support will be effective. If not, the following procedures may be applied.

- If no response has been received and no meeting has taken place with parents/ carers and student, then a **first court warning letter will be sent** at the end of the second week.
- If the situation persists (for a further two weeks) where there is no adequate response from phone calls, home visits and ‘failure to attend’ letters, then a **second court warning letter will be sent**. The school will continue to monitor via phone calls, home visits and invitations to attend a SAP. If after a further 14 sessions there has been no contact with the family a **second home visit will be conducted**.

Referral to the LA for Legal Action

If the situation persists despite letters, phone calls and failed visits then the following will apply:

- Referral to court proceedings (school and LA)
- Letter sent to home and to court’s officer
- Court panel is arranged/court action
- Dependent on response, file is referred back to court’s officer
- Summons to attend court as necessary.
- Penalty Notices applied

Reintegration

If there are on-going issues the school may consider one or more of the following alternative provision:

- A phased reintegration back to school
- An amended timetable – personalised learning programme in the Support for Learning Faculty
- External support and counseling for the family

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

Parents are expected to contact school at an **early stage** and to work with the staff in resolving **any** problems together. In persistent absence cases, the school will refer the child to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child’s attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these officers can use sanctions such as Penalty

Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority.

Rewards

The school has targets to improve attendance and we will have an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and students should take time to study them.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **97%** and the school will keep regular updates on progress.

The school will strive to reward students in the following areas every half term:

- Those students with 100% attendance – Excellent (certificate and reward voucher)
- Behaviour Watch points given for good attendance and punctuality.

Students will be rewarded with tokens, certificates, trips, vouchers, tickets, letters and postcards home.

Assistant Headteacher

Heads of Year

Home School Liaison officer

Pastoral Leader

External EWO and LA officers

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.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible

The Norwood School is committed to working with our students and their parents/guardians to improve attendance and educational opportunities to ensure that we are '*Creating Success Together*'.

Consultation, Evaluation and Review

This policy will be evaluated at the end of each term by The Leadership Team, Student Council and is accessible for comment by parents via the school's website. The policy will also be formally reviewed as part of the Governors' cycle of review of policies.

Signed: _____

Date: _____