



# Attendance & Punctuality Policy

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## Introduction

At Newham Bridge Primary School, we recognise the importance of good attendance and punctuality, these are key to ensuring that our pupils have the best life chances and opportunities. Encouraging good attendance and punctuality sets the foundation for expectations in your child's future. Parents have a vital role to play and at Newham Bridge there is a strong emphasis on maintaining home-school links and good communication systems, which can be utilised whenever there is a concern regarding attendance.

## Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DFE) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance, through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- To encourage regular attendance.
- To identify cases of non-attendance.
- To work with parents planning action in order to solve problems of non-attendance

## Senior leader responsible for attendance

- Mrs Hewitt-Best (headteacher)
- Mrs Barker (assistant headteacher)
- Mr Grierson (inclusion support)

To report an absence, request special leave, discuss any issues with attendance or to request support parent/carers should contact the school office – telephone 01642 816884.

## Attendance Procedures

- Attendance is regularly monitored by the class teacher, Headteacher and SLT.
- If a child is absent from school, parents must notify the school, by a phone call, before 9.25am, when registers close. Parents who do not notify the school will be contacted asking for the reason for absence. This will determine appropriate register coding. If school do not receive a call, a member of staff will call the family to determine the reason for absence.
- If an acceptable reason for absence is not provided the absence will be classified as unauthorised.
- Unauthorised absence may result in intervention from the Education Welfare Officer.

- In the event of persistent non-attendance, and following a set period of intervention with our Education Welfare Officer, we will seek support from the Local Education Authority for statutory action in the form of warnings or a fixed penalty notice.

## Attendance & the Law

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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, and 2016 amendments), The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

All pupils of statutory school age who are registered at a school must attend regularly, in line with the relevant legislation.

Good attendance is important because:

Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.

Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.

Regular attendance encourages pupils to build friendships and develop social groups, working together as a team, sharing ideas and developing life skills.

Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with.

Regular attenders find learning more satisfying and do not miss out on essential learning and social events taking place.

Whilst parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child/children attend school regularly and on time, it is the responsibility of the schools, parents/carers and pupils to work together to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate education. As a school, we will work with families to identify reasons for poor attendance and support them to remove any barriers.

Our attendance policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is part of all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, anti-bullying and behaviour.

## Expectations:

### **We expect that all pupils will:**

Attend school every day.

Be on time for the start of the day, doors open from 8.40 and close at 9am. All children are expected to be in school for the start of our school day.

### **We expect that all parents/carers will:**

Be aware of their legal responsibilities.

Ensure their child/children regularly attend school.

Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually at the start of each day.

Ensure that they contact the school each day that their child is absent before 9.30am and explain the reason for their absence.

Apply to the Headteacher for a period of absence in advance where there are exceptional circumstances.

Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details.

Work with school staff to address any attendance or punctuality concerns which may arise.

Not ignore or condone their child's non-attendance.

Support school attendance by not taking family holidays during term time.

Where possible, aim to make medical/dental appointments outside of school hours.

Support the school attendance and punctuality policy.

### **Newham Bridge Primary School will:**

Meet and greet pupils on entry to school every day.

Provide a safe, nurturing learning environment where pupils want to be every day to develop and thrive.

Provide a welcoming and supportive atmosphere which enhances pupil progress and development through inspirational and innovative teaching and learning.

Promote and recognise outstanding and good attendance and punctuality through a strategic whole school initiative.

Ensure respectful relationships where we respond to any child's or parent's concerns that may impact the pupil's wellbeing, attendance or punctuality.

Maintain regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, ensuring registers are taken by 9am, and missing pupils reported for safeguarding reasons. Registers close at 9.25am.

As a safeguarding priority, ensure that parents/carers are contacted when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.

Monitor and report whole school, cohorts, individual and vulnerable group attendance to all staff to ensure relevant support can be put in place.

Where a child's attendance becomes a concern, meet with parents to set targets for improvement and put attendance contracts in place with appropriate support.

Request medical evidence for absence due to illness.

Work with the Local Authority and other external partners to support pupils and their families with regards to attendance and punctuality.

Request Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence where in-school support and support from the school Educational Welfare Officer has failed

Make a copy of the policy available on the school website

Will communicate with parents/carers regarding attendance through school reports, personalised letters (where concerns arise) and the school newsletter.

### Unauthorised absence is defined as:

Absence in term time where permission has not been given by the school. This means that parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school during term time.

Examples of unauthorised absences include:

- Any absence that the school has not been informed of by letter or by telephone
  - Unexplained absence. Any child whose absence is on-going and remains unexplained for an extended period (10 days) will be referred to the Local Authority as a Child Missing Education (CME)
- Other examples of where absence will not be authorised:
- Staying at home to care for younger children or sick relatives
  - Birthdays;

Family celebrations;

- Parents' Weddings
- Transport issues or car broken down;
- Holidays in term time (following the Department for Education's Guidelines)
- Taking the rest of the day off before or after a medical appointment. • Visiting sick relatives

## Punctuality and Registers

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. At Newham Bridge Primary School:

- School doors open at 8.40am and close at 9am
- If a pupil arrives after 9am (when doors will be closed), they will be required to register at the school office before going to their classroom. Pupils registering at the office will be recorded as late (L on the register). When a child is late, parents/carers will be asked to come with the child to the office to let school know the reason.
- Registers close at 9.25, children coming to school after this time will be marked U, late after register closes.
- All lateness will be challenged.
- Afternoon registration takes place immediately after the lunch break, between 12.15pm and 12.50pm depending upon the year group.

## Pupils Leaving During the School Day

Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time; only urgent appointments should be attended during the school day. Parents are requested to confirm by phone, letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time. Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school at the school office.

## Leave of Absence

Newham Bridge Primary School term times and holiday dates are published a year in advance and are published on the school website. School training days are published as soon as the school have agreed these but may be subject to change. The school will ensure they communicate any changes to parents/carers through either text, email, newsletter or on the website. From 1 September 2013, a change to government legislation means that schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for pupils to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time. In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised. Only exceptional circumstances warrant

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an authorised leave of absence. Parents/carers should make any request well in advance and in writing (a form is available from the school office).

Where a parental request has been refused, and parents continue to take their child out of school, this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. We reserve the right to apply to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

### Understanding barriers to attendance

Where attendance is falling to a level causing concern parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss and address any potential in school barriers. Where barriers are out of our control, we will meet with pupils and parents/carers to enable us to understand the barriers and agree actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. Where absence intensifies, so will the support. We will work with pupils, parents/carers, the local authority, and all other relevant partners. Where appropriate, formal meetings will take place involving parents/carers, the pupil and the senior leader responsible for attendance. These meetings will clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future, but, importantly, will also provide an opportunity to continue to listen to, understand and empathise with the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available. It is important to note that whilst our policy will be applied fairly and consistently, we will always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families with regards to specific barriers to attendance. Measures described in paragraph 40 of ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’ will be implemented as and when the need arises. Where appropriate we will liaise with external partners such as the local authority and/or Medical Services to ensure that all pupils are able to access education.

In very exceptional cases, and where it is in the pupil’s best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. These will be discussed and agreed with the designated senior leader and will be regularly reviewed.

### Persistent Absence Indicator

The Department for Education regards attendance of 90% or below as persistent absenteeism. The table below shows an indication of approximately how many days a pupil needs to miss per half term to meet the threshold of persistent absenteeism.

Half Term	Persistent absence
1	3.5 Days
2	7 Days
3	10 Days
4	12.5 Days
5	15.5 Days
6	19 Days



## Attendance Procedures Stage 1 – Monitor

This section describes the role of school in relation to improving attendance.

The class teacher has responsibility for maintaining an accurate register. Teachers promote the importance and benefits of regular attendance in school through their strong, positive relationships with pupils and families.

- All pupils that fall in the range between 91-96% are regularly monitored by the Attendance Team and SLT.
- Early intervention might include a phone call, letter or meeting with parents/carers.
- Further support may be needed to work with parents and pupils to better understand underlying factors for poor attendance and offer appropriate support.

## Stage 2 – Stepping Up Support

- Where early intervention has demonstrated a lack of sustained improvement, school will intensify monitoring and levels of support.
- A Parent Contract (individual attendance plan with set targets) will be put in place alongside appropriate support and will be reviewed regularly for a period of 4 weeks.
- Parents will be offered support via Early Help, ELSA, external agencies, etc.
- Parents/carers will be asked to visit the school to discuss attendance and strategies to improve, with the Attendance Team in order to formalise support.

## Stage 3 – Enforce

Parents and pupils are supported by the school's Education Welfare Officer and by the Local Authority to overcome issues that prevent regular school attendance through a wide range of intervention strategies. Where this intervention fails, a penalty notice can be issued for unauthorised absence and if a parent/carer fails to ensure improved attendance.

If attendance falls below 90% the Education Welfare Officer discusses the pupil with the School Attendance Team and/or Head Teacher. If appropriate, the parent will be contacted by the school's Education Welfare Officer and maybe invited into school where an Initial Assessment of need is completed. If required, a referral will be made to statutory services including social care and an Attendance Support Plan will be put in place (the pupil's attendance will continue to be monitored for 4 weeks). The Education Welfare Officer to complete home visits as necessary for the duration of the plan.

Should the pupil's attendance continue to cause concern, then the Education Welfare Officer will consider further action in line with Local Authority Attendance procedures (details of which can be found at <https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/schoolsandeducation/school-attendance>). This may include inviting parents into school to an Attendance Case Conference. The Education Welfare Officer may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting that a Fixed Penalty Warning Letter to be issued to parent(s). If a pupil's attendance continues to cause concern, and in-line with local authority attendance procedures, the Education Welfare Officer will

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complete the unauthorised absences referral form and refer the matter to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service who on receipt will action the referral within 10 school days.

## Fixed Penalty Notice

The Education Act 1996 clearly states: 'If any child of compulsory School age who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly, the parents of the child shall be guilty of an offence.'

This may result in each parent or carer being issued with a £80 fixed penalty notice, if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 to be paid within 28 days.

The school will consider applying to the local authority for the issue of fixed penalty notices in the following circumstances:

- Overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps).
- Parentally-condoned absences.
- Unauthorised Leave of Absence in term time.
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays or authorised Leave of Absence without prior school agreement.
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed).

## Nursery

Although Nursery Education is not statutory, it is important that good attendance and punctuality habits are formed. Our Nursery places are filling up quickly each year and so it is important parents use their allocated places. Children with persistent unexplained absence may lose their Nursery place.

- Attendance is regularly monitored by the nursery teacher.
- If regular absence is not covered by a phone call, parents will be contacted asking the reason for absence.
- If no satisfactory reason is forthcoming, a letter will be sent to parents expressing the school's concern.
- If the child continues to be absent, parents will be informed that their child's place at nursery has been withdrawn.

## Promoting good attendance and punctuality

Staff will take every opportunity to encourage and praise regular attendance and punctuality. Regular written communication with home will aim to remind parents of the need to ensure children attain maximum attendance. The importance and benefits of regular attendance

and punctuality are actively promoted to parents and children at Newham Bridge Primary School through:

- Welcome assemblies
- Parent consultations– attendance and punctuality are discussed
- Weekly attendance data shown on the weekly newsletters and shared on our school website.

Attendance and punctuality information included in pupil reports

- Communication with parents e.g. personalised letters, newsletters and school website

Rewards and inclusive incentives:

- Attendance rewards for each class above 96% attendance.
- Attendance rewards given to pupils with improving attendance week.
- Termly rewards for those children achieving 100% attendance.
- Attendance trophy shared to the class with the highest attendance each week in assembly.

This Attendance Policy has due regard to the related statutory legislation including: Parental Responsibility Measures; Children Missing Education; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at School; Exclusions Policy; Alternative Provision; Safeguarding (KCSiE); The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006; SEND Code of Practice; The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); The Equality Act 2010; UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.