

Norwich Steiner School

Whole School Attendance Policy

Revised November 2018

This policy applies to all pupils of compulsory school age (see appendix for clarification), and as such includes kindergarten children after they have reached the age of 5 as well as pupils in lower and upper school. School attendance is subject to various education laws and this policy reflects these laws and guidance produced by the Department for Education (see appendix).

Norwich Steiner School is committed to offering an education designed at every level to meet the needs of each pupil at their various stages of emotional, intellectual and physical development. We aim to provide an education in which each child is seen as a unique individual with his or her own path in life. Our task is to help to remove the obstacles to this path and support the emerging human beings in our care to develop inner freedom within a healthily functioning body endowed with a rich and coherent feeling life, so as to enable them to make their contribution to society while at the same time unfolding their own human potential.

Within this framework, regular and punctual attendance is key to both social and educational development, and the school works with the expectation that all families will support our target of 100% attendance for their children. Equally, although teaching in the school begins at 9.00am, if children are able to arrive at least ten minutes beforehand the social cohesion of the class is enhanced enormously, and lessons can begin promptly.

To support punctual and full attendance, annual school reports will include the child's attendance as a percentage of total school sessions for the year and the following advice for parents:

Percentage attendance	Associated educational advice
96-100%	Excellent attendance, progress maximized
90-95%	Progress will start to be affected
Below 90%	Under achievement unavoidable

Safeguarding

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible. Class teachers will make early contact with parents to discuss the importance of regular attendance and ways of improving the child's

attendance. Attendance will be monitored and teachers will discuss any further absences with the DSLs (Designated Safeguarding Leads), who may then refer to the local Attendance Improvement Officer. Persistent absence is currently set at 90% and therefore intervention should happen **before** attendance falls to this level.

If illness is given as the reason for a developing pattern of frequent or persistent absence then the school can offer a referral to the school nursing team, and will ask for medical evidence (copies of appointment cards or prescriptions, or a letter from the GP or other health care provider). If no such evidence is forthcoming then the school will be unable to authorise further absences. The school can, with parental consent, contact the child's GP directly to obtain evidence of illness, following joint protocol arrangements. If no evidence is available and consent is not given to contact the GP the school will contact the Attendance Improvement Officer and will carefully consider whether to instigate the fast-track to attendance process.

If at any point there is a concern for the wellbeing or safety of a child, the DSLs will be contacted and the school's Safeguarding & Child Protection procedure will be followed, which may include a referral to Children's Social Care.

School Attendance & Absence Procedures

The following measures will be taken throughout the year to record and monitor attendance and absences and to support regular, punctual attendance.

Registers

Morning registration in the school takes place at 9.00am; afternoon registration is at 2.00pm. Registration closes at 9.30am and 2.30pm. In the kindergarten registration takes place at 9.15am, closing at 9.30am. The registers are then returned to the school office and the school secretary identifies and follows up any absences, entering the relevant codes in accordance with Department of Education guidance, and implementing the safeguarding procedure as appropriate.

Absences

Any pupil who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as either:

- **AUTHORISED** - if absent for a reason deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996;
- **ILL** – if unwell and if the school is notified as such;
- **UNAUTHORISED** – If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, or if the reason is not authorised by the school, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised. The school is required to mark family holidays which are taken during term time, for example, as unauthorised.
- **EDUCATIONAL ABSENCE** - An approved educational activity

Lateness

Any pupil arriving after 9am but before the close of registration will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (L) unless there is an acceptable explanation. Equally, pupils who are late for afternoon lessons may incur an (L) in the register. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered once the pupil arrives in school.

Pupils arriving after the end of the registration period will be coded as U, which counts as an unauthorised absence.

Parents should contact the school if their child is going to be late. The school will monitor lateness and if patterns emerge that cause safeguarding concerns we will follow our safeguarding and child protection procedures.

First Day of Absence

Parents are expected to contact the school by phone or email as soon as they know that their child is going to be absent. The school secretary collects this information and transfers it to the registers. The school secretary will contact parents of children for who no reason for absence has been received.

Parents should notify the school office on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, we may request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Third Day of Absence

If a child is absent for a third consecutive day and the school still has not been contacted by or been able to contact parents, a letter will be sent to the parents to request that they contact the school by phone to explain their child's absence.

Continuing Absence

Further attempts at contact will be made each day by phone/email, and another letter will be sent after **5 days**.

Ten Day's Absence

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Staff [this is a legal requirement] stating details of the absence and action that they have taken.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation, or if there is a safeguarding concern, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Frequent and Persistent Absence

The school has a duty to inform the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly.

Within the school it is the responsibility of the class teachers and the school secretary to be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns. The School Secretary monitors attendance on a daily basis, and each half term individual attendance records are produced, which automatically flag attendance below 90%.

Pupils whose attendance level falls below 90% will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance. Action plans will be made by class teachers and/or DSLs, as appropriate, and may include engagement with other agencies that can support the pupil's attendance, for example Norfolk Family Focus or Family Support Process.

Any pupil with attendance below 90% over the school year is known as a persistent absentee, whatever the reason for the absences.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This will include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Planned phased returns may be used for pupils who have been absent due to illness.

Children Missing Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, fulltime education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. 'Children missing education' are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education, and the school follows local procedures.

Appendix

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have.

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

A child is of "compulsory school age" on the 1st January, 1st April or 1st September following their 5th birthday. Children becoming **5** years old between 1st January and 31st March are of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term after 1st April.

In England, school-leaving age depends on when you were born. You can leave school on the last Friday in June as long as you'll be 16 by the end of that year's summer holidays. You must stay in some form of education or training until your **18th** birthday if you were born on or after 1 **September** 1997.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Statutory and Non-statutory Guidance and Legislation

Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE Sept 2018

The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

Children Missing Education 2016

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website.