

Norwich Steiner School

Whole School Attendance Policy

Revised April 2019

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).

Regular and punctual school attendance is key to social development as well as educational achievement, and the school works with the expectation that all families will support our target of 100% attendance for their children.

School Attendance & Absence Procedures

The following measures are taken throughout the year to record, monitor, analyse and improve attendance and punctuality. **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.**

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 immediately follows up any unaccounted absences- by contacting parents or the alternative contact.

Lateness

Teaching in the school begins at 9.00am, and we ask that where possible children arrive by 8.45. Parents should contact the school if their child is going to be late. The school secretary monitors lateness, keeping a log of times, notifies class teachers and class guardians and reports to the weekly safeguarding meetings.

Pupils arriving after 9am will be marked as absent at registration (L). Equally, pupils who are late for afternoon lessons will incur an (L) in the register.

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

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, or the alternative contact, when reason for absence has been received.

Illness

Parents should notify the school office on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness.

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.

Frequent and Persistent Absence

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

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

If illness is given as the reason for a developing pattern of 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 may be unable to authorise further absences. The school can, with parental consent, contact the child's GP directly to obtain evidence of illness, via 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 consider instigation of the Fast Track process.

Monitoring Absences and Improving Attendance

The School Secretary checks absences and punctuality on a daily basis, and provides weekly reports to the safeguarding team. Class teachers should also be aware of and bring attention to any emerging attendance concerns. At the end of each half term electronic attendance records are completed, which automatically flag attendance below 95% and 90%. This allows us to analyse absence data and to work with families to improve attendance. Pupils whose attendance level falls below 90% are flagged to their class teacher and letters are sent to parents. Letters are also sent to parents of pupils with high levels of lateness. Individual attendance and punctuality figures are included in school reports. From September 2019 we will automatically send letters to parents whose child's attendance is below 95%. Referrals are made to Early Help or the Local Authority Attendance and Entitlement Officers as appropriate. (see appended flowchart).

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 safeguarding procedures, including the notification of Children Missing Education and Services to Home Educators when pupils leave the school, and we notify the attendance and entitlement team if we think that a child is at risk of missing education.

Appendix

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.

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