

Norwich Steiner School

Whole School Attendance Policy

Revised August 2023

(Note- a new policy is being developed following the new (currently non-statutory) DfE guidance Working together to improve school attendance)

This policy applies to all pupils of compulsory school age, and as such includes kindergarten children after they have reached the age of 5 as well as pupils in lower and upper school.

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.

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.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this policy reflects these laws and guidance produced by the Department for Education (see appendix).

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 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 in good time to be in their places, ideally by 8.45. Parents should contact the school if their child is going to be late. The school

secretary monitors lateness and keeps a log of arrival times. Upper school pupils who are late report to the school administrator to explain the lateness.

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

See Annex for attendance and absence codes.

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 not 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 Days 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. The DSL checks the herringbone pattern each Friday. 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 95% 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. 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, which would include differentiation of work.

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.

Relevant government guidance

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children DfE \(July 2018\)](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education DfE \(2023\)](#)
- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance, DfE \(2022\)](#)

Appendix

Attendance and Absence Codes

Present

Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed

A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be recorded as absent using code U, or another absence code that it is more appropriate.

Absent

Authorised Absence from School

Authorised absence means that one of a specific set of circumstances applies, as set out below:

Code C: Leave of absence granted by the school

Specific leaves of absence may also be granted where: A pupil is participating in a performance

A pupil is subject to a temporary part-time timetable

A pupil is pregnant

Code H: leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday granted by the school

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment) includes mental illness

Code M: Medical or dental appointment

If a pupil is present at registration but has a medical appointment during the session in question, no absence needs be recorded for that session.

Code R: Religious observance

Code S: Study leave (we don't use this)

Code T: Traveller absence

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a pupil's absence is not one of the types of absence listed as authorised in regulation 6(2) or where the reason for a pupil's absence has not been provided and cannot be established.

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner.

Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for absence has been established the school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant code.

Where absence is recorded as unexplained in the attendance register, the correct code should be inputted as soon as the reason is ascertained, but no more than 5 working days after the session. Code N should not therefore be left on the pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if a reason for absence cannot be established after 5 working days, schools should amend the pupil's record to Code O.

Code O: Absent without authorisation

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Where a pupil has arrived late after the register has closed and the school is not satisfied that the reason for lateness is an authorised absence.

Attending an approved educational activity

Code E Pupils can only be recorded as attending an off-site activity if it is approved by the school, of an educational nature and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

The activity must take place during the session for which it is recorded and for pupils of compulsory school age the school must record the nature of the activity.

Attending another school at which the pupil is registered

Code D: Dual registered at another school

Attending an educational activity that takes place outside the school

Code B: Off-site educational Activity

Attending an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

For pupils of compulsory school age, schools must also record the nature of the activity, examples are: attending taster days at other schools; attending courses at college; attending unregistered alternative provision arranged or agreed by the school.

Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore, by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised, and measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the educational activity notifies the school of any absences by the pupil. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

This code must not be used for any unsupervised educational activity i.e., when a pupil is at home doing some schoolwork.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

Code V: Educational visit or trip

259. Attendance at an organised visit or trip, including residential trips organised by the

Code W: Work experience

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because:

- the school site or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause at a time when pupils are due to attend; or
- the transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and the pupil's home is not within safe walking distance; or
- a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

Schools must also record the nature of the circumstances in which a pupil is unable to attend school.

Walking distance

In relation to a child under the age of 8, means 2 miles, and for a child of 8 or above, means 3 miles. In each case measured by the nearest available safe route.

Pupil in custody

Code Y is also used where the pupil is in custody; detained under a court order for a period of less than 4 months or is returning to the school at the end of their custodial period.

Administrative codes

Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school

Where a pupil not of compulsory school age is attending school part-time.

For example, where parents have chosen for their 4 year-old child to attend part-

time until later in the school year but not beyond the point at which the child reaches compulsory school age.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance such as:

- days between terms;
- half terms;
- occasional days (for example, bank holidays);
- weekends (where it is required by the management information system);
- up to 5 non-educational days; and
- use of school as a polling station.