



## Policy for Pupil Attendance

### 1. Introduction

NeneGate School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full time education which provides every opportunity for all pupils to realise their full potential. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play.

**NeneGate** expects attendance at school to be **100%**, unless there are exceptional or unavoidable reasons for absence, which would then be authorised.

**Note: This policy applies to all full time and bespoke time pupils including off site provisions attending NeneGate School**

### School's responsibility regarding attendance matters

Parents/carers will be notified if their child is absent from school. In the event that no contact has been made with the school by 9.15 the school will attempt to contact parents to confirm the absence.

The main register will be taken as students enter school. Further registers will be taken throughout the day and class Teaching Assistants will report any absences to the school Office Manager. Parents will be informed immediately should their child not be present.

Attendance at school will be monitored each half term by the Attendance Lead/Head Teacher. A report will be issued to Governors and the Local Authority.

To ensure consistency the register symbols outlined in Appendix 1 will be used.

### Attendance Leader

The Office Manager/Attendance Lead will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the schools work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. S/he will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Head Teacher. S/he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

### Safeguarding

Your child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses:-



Attendance  
Behaviour Management  
Health and Safety  
Access to the Curriculum  
Anti-Bullying

Falling to attend school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

## 2. The Law Relating to Attendance/Safeguarding

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient, full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs a child might have.

The Isle of Wight Council v Platt case considered by the Supreme Court makes it clear that regular attendance shall mean attendance in accordance with the school rules. Therefore, any non-attendance which is not in accordance with the school rules will be deemed unauthorised. The school rules are the days the school is open for pupils to attend.

Under this judgement a child should attend 100% of the time unless there are exceptional circumstances that prevent this.

*Section 175 of the Educational Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.*

## 3. Understanding types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**AUTHORISED** absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

**UNAUTHORISED** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been authorised. This includes:

- 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 get a mark;
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- Day trips in term time not authorised as an exceptional/unavoidable circumstances.

The type of absence can lead to Peterborough City Council Attendance Service using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

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**Note: If attendance falls below 95% parents will be asked to provide medical or other evidence for non school attendance.**

## **Persistent Absence (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss **10%** or more schooling within an agreed period of time **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level may cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need full parental support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is at risk of moving towards the PA level is given priority and you will be informed immediately.

***In the event that a medical or dental appointment has to be made during school time it is expected that the school will be notified prior to the appointment. A copy of the appointment card or letter must be provided to the school. Whenever possible appointments should be made outside of school hours.***

## **Absence Procedures**

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Send a note on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence-you must do this even if you have already telephoned us;
- Call into school and report to the office, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with you;

If your child is absent the school will:

- Telephone, text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with school if need be;
- Take legal action if there are persistent absences, which may be in the form of Penalty Notices issued to each parent/carer for each child;

## **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence.

The main school register will close at 9.15 for full time pupils and for bespoke pupils a 10 minute grace period will be given according to their timetable start. Pupils arriving late will need to report to the main office in order to be marked present. We are aware that as most students attend by taxi those delays may sometimes be unavoidable. In these instances we will communicate directly with Transport to enquire as to an estimated time of arrival

In accordance with the Regulations Lateness, other than transport issues will be monitored and reported to parents.



**Note: Late mark is classified as an unauthorised mark and this may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.**

### **Leave of Absence**

Taking leave of absence without exceptional/unavoidable circumstances in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parent/carers to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Leave of absence requests should be submitted in writing **4 weeks in advance** to the Headteacher in the first instance, clearly outlining the reasons for the absence during term time, along with the amount of time required.

It is important that you understand that we may only authorise such absences in exceptional/unavoidable circumstances.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school (with at least four week' notice) and/or different from that agreed by the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice per parent/carer per child.

**Request for leave will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.**

### **Internal Truancy**

A student that has absence below 95% will have their attendance in lessons monitored. If they fail to attend more than 3 lessons in a week, parents will be asked to attend a meeting where a parental contract will be agreed. If this fails, a Parental Order, which is a legal agreement between home and school will be issued. Failure to meet the conditions would then result to local authority involvement.

### **4. Penalty Notices**

If a pupil is absent without authorisation from school the parent/carer is guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Should a parent/carer take their child out of school without authorisation, then this may result in a penalty notice being issued from the Local Authority. A Penalty Notice is a fine of **£60 per parent, per child** and must be paid within 21 days. After 21 days, this amount increases to **£120 per parent per child** if paid by the 28<sup>th</sup> day. Failure to pay the fine can result in a Prosecution by the Local Authority in accordance with Department of Education, where convicted you may be fined up to £1,000. Prosecution under Section 444(1a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence.

***Penalty Notices and pursuing non school attendance prosecutions as appropriate including Year 11 Pupils until the end of the Summer Half Term.***

Penalty Notices may be issued by the Local Authority if one of the following criteria can be met:



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- Level of unauthorised absence leads to an unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more within a period in any 8 school weeks and there is usually more than one instance (**up to 2 penalty notices may be issued in any academic year**).
- A single unauthorised absence event of at least 2 consecutive days or 4 consecutive sessions, without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice.
- Persistent late arrival at school after register has closed contribute to a level of unauthorised absence at **10%** or more.
- Lack of adherence to the dates agreed for any authorised leave of absence without reasonable justification contribute to a cumulative unauthorised absence rate of **10%** or more over a period in any 8 school weeks.
- Pupils identified in a public place whilst excluded from school (during the first five days of the exclusion period) without reasonable justification.

**Penalty Notices will not be issued in respect of children who are Looked After, with whom other interventions will be used.**

**For further information regarding Penalty Notices please refer to the Peterborough City Council Code of Conduct which is available on the Peterborough City Council Website.**

## **5. Procedures the School will use to follow up irregular/non attendance**

In the event of an absence from school where no contact has been made by the family or carer by 10am, the school will initiate a **first day response**. This will be a phone call to the pupil's house to investigate the absence. **Absence will not be authorised for students where we do not receive notification of absence**. If after 3 days we have been unable to make contact with the parent/carer a home visit will be arranged to check on the wellbeing of the student. If we are still unable to make contact after 5 days a police welfare check will be initiated.

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Local Authority Attendance Officer from Peterborough City Council Attendance Service. S/he 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 recommend that the Local Authority use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

## **6. How is attendance promoted within School**

School attendance is closely linked to the school behaviour management system. In order to benefit from our Rewards System pupils need to attend on a regular basis. Any unauthorised absence will mean a 'Catch Up' for that day.

We have adopted a whole school approach to attendance and as such all staff will ensure that pupils attend on a regular basis and will consistently and fairly apply the procedures outlined in this policy.

The importance of attendance will be communicated to pupils on an ongoing basis.

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Good attendance will be recognised and rewarded in end of term assemblies and by letters home.

## Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

7. This policy will be reviewed every two years or at any time following a change in legislation.

## Authorisation:

Signed: .....

Name: .....

Date: .....

Chair of the Governing Body

Date for Review: .....

## Revision History:

Rev. No.	Date	Changes	Sign
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			



### Appendix 1

Attendance Codes	
Code	Description
-	Attendance not required
#	Planned whole or partial school closure
*	Not yet marked
/	Present
B	Educated off site (not dual reg)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual Registration (Attend elsewhere)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision)
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (not medical or dental)
J	Interview
L	Late (before register closes)
M	Medical/Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after register closes)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Non- compulsory school age absence
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
Z	Pupil not on roll