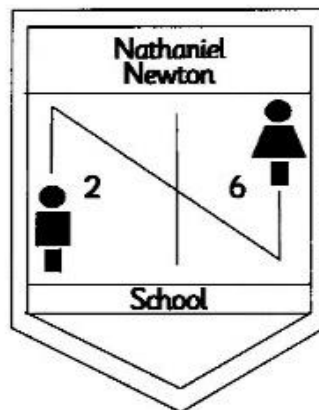


Nathaniel Newton Infant School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy 2022-2023

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The Importance of School Attendance.

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

(page 6 Working together to improve school attendance DFE publication May 2022, applies from September 2022)

Purpose of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy

This policy aims to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and arrive at school on time. It also gives details of the procedures for reporting absence and for requesting family holidays. Research shows that regular attendance at school coupled with prompt arrival has a significant effect on children's educational attainment.

Nathaniel Newton Infant School believes in partnership between school and parents/carers and is committed to work with parents/carers to improve punctuality and attendance. A significant concern is the number and timing of annual family holidays. This policy seeks to clarify times that are inappropriate for leave of absence and the procedures for requesting a leave of absence.

At Nathaniel Newton Infant School we are committed to the safeguarding of every child in our care. Through the adoption of this attendance policy we aim to ensure we know the whereabouts of any child not at school during term time.

This policy has been updated in line with the DFE guidance document 'Working Together to improve school attendance' September 2022. These regulations are also reflected in our Prospectus. The whole school target for attendance is 96%. (September 2022)

Roles and Responsibilities

The Admin Assistant and Attendance Coordinator:

- Ensure that registration has been completed in SIMS by 9 am and 5 minutes after the end of lunchtime for each year group. (Reception by 12.35pm, Y1 and Y2 by 1.05pm).
- Check the registers for any unexplained absences.

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- Send a MyEd message to parents/carers to check the reason for an unexplained absence by 9.30am if we haven't received a reason. If there is no reply from the parent/carer this will be followed up by a telephone call. If the parent/carer doesn't respond to the telephone call then the next contact will be phoned. We will continue to go down the contact numbers provided until we get a response. If this fails, we will keep phoning throughout the day until we get a response. If a child has a social worker, we will contact the social worker if we are unable to contact the parent.
- Close registers at 9.30am.
- Inform the head teacher of any unauthorised absences each week and absences of children where attendance is below 90%.
- Inform the head teacher of absences above 5% at the half termly attendance meeting.
- Inform the head teacher of regular lateness at the half termly attendance meeting.
- Inform the head teacher of any issues regarding the completion of registers.
- Produce absence reports from SIMS when requested by staff.
- Send out letters following half termly attendance meeting to agreed families for absence or lateness.
- Share attendance data with families in newsletters.
- Produce a termly attendance newsletter.

The Attendance Officer/Learning Mentor:

- Phone parents/carers to discuss lateness or attendance and offer support to improve attendance where necessary
- Send appointments to discuss lateness or attendance following a telephone conversation.
- Sign standard holiday request forms.

The Headteacher:

- Check attendance data weekly, particularly children with attendance below 90%
- Meet with parents if support from Attendance Officer/Learning Mentor hasn't improved attendance.

Parents/Carers

- Ensure their child attends school every day arriving by 8.55am except when a statutory reason applies.
- Ensure absences are notified to the school office by 9am on first day of absence.
- Ensure the school office is aware of reasons for continued absence of over 3 school days.
- Make requests for leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances and at least 6 weeks prior to the leave of absence.
- Book medical appointments around the school day where possible, however if this isn't possible, inform school in advance of any medical or other appointments by showing the admin assistant the relevant paperwork.
- If children are absent for more than 10 school days due to illness parents/carers are asked to provide medical evidence.

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Pupils

- If arriving after 8.55am pupils should enter through the main entrance and inform office of arrival.

Registration Procedures

Morning

Registration starts at 8.55am. The registers are completed on SIMS (electronically) and received by the school office by 9am. Any child not in the classroom at 8.55am will be marked late. The registers close at 9.30am. Any child arriving after this time without an authorised reason will be marked late after the register closes. This is marked as an unauthorised absence.

Afternoon

Currently all children stay on the premises for lunch.

Afternoon registration is at 12.30pm for reception and 1pm for Year 1 and 2. Registers are taken on SIMS electronically and received by the office no more than 5 minutes after the start of the afternoon session. Any child not in the classroom at the start of registration will be marked late.

Punctuality

Arriving at school late on a regular basis is detrimental to a child's learning. They miss the beginning of the day which can put them at significant disadvantage. Any children arriving after 8.55am must come through the main entrance and inform the office staff of their arrival, including their reason for being late.

The Attendance Officer monitors lateness and informs the Head Teacher of any children that regularly arrive late. This triggers a phone call followed by a standard letter to parents/carers to remind them of their responsibilities.

Categorisation of Absence

Authorised absence This is an absence that has been authorised by the Head teacher and Attendance Officer e.g. illness, bereavement, medical appointments or a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised absence This is an absence that has not been authorised so includes absences for which no reason has been given and family holidays in term time that have not been authorised. The Head teacher is the only person that can authorise absences. The system for requesting term-time holidays is detailed below. Absences will be authorised for agreed leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, illness, bereavement and medical appointments. The Attendance Officer is responsible for monitoring absences and will inform the Head teacher of any absence rate above 5%. Illnesses are authorised by phoning the school office before 9am on the first day of absence, further contact must be made with the office on the 3rd day of absence to confirm the continued illness.

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First Day Absence Procedure

First day absence must be notified to the school office by 9am either by phone, MyEd or email. If a message has not been received by 9.30am, parents / carers will be contacted to ascertain a reason for absence. If a child is going to be absent for longer than 10 school days then the parent/carer will need to provide medical evidence, such as evidence of medical appointments or copies of prescription or medication.

Preventing illness

The School nursing team provides yearly workshops for children focussing on the importance of hygiene in school to reduce the risk of spreading infection.

Regular sessions take place in the classroom led by the class teacher remind children about the importance of handwashing and of ways to reduce the spread of infection.

Children are sent to regularly wash their hands throughout the school day and sanitise in between.

Parents are advised correctly using information from the Warwickshire Local Authority and Public Health on the procedure of keeping a child off from school through common childhood illnesses such as chickenpox or sickness and diarrhoea.

Recording absences

The Admin Assistant checks the MyEd app, telephone messages and emails for absence messages from parents.

They update SIMS by adding in the correct code and the reason for absence to the comments section in SIMS

Print the 'SIMS Attendance Absence List', which is a report generated by SIMS.

Monitoring absence and punctuality

We have an attendance committee consisting of the following people:

- Head teacher
- Administrative Assistant
- Attendance Officer
- Governor with responsibility for attendance

The committee meet half termly to analyse attendance and punctuality.

At the meetings attendance below 95% is discussed and a course of action is agreed for anyone below 90%. This may be a letter outlining the attendance concern, a phone call to the parent/carer from the Attendance Officer, followed by a letter outlining the telephone discussion. If attendance doesn't improve over the next half term families will

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be required to attend a meeting with the Head teacher and Attendance Officer to discuss issues and seek to find a resolution, offering support where appropriate.

Where we have children with known medical conditions we will make reasonable adjustments to attendance calculations for the purpose of rewards and recognition.

Leave of Absence (including holidays) during term time

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

As headteachers should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

(page 13 of Working together to improve school attendance DFE publication May 2022, applies from September 2022)

Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Requests for term-time holidays must be made on the official leave of absence request form. The request must be made at least six weeks before the date of departure. The Head teacher (or acting Head teacher) is the only person able to authorise term-time holidays.

Leave of absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

There are certain times of the year that leave of absence will not be authorised even in exceptional circumstances.

For all children

- The first two weeks of the academic year in September

For Year 2 children

- The period after the Easter holiday until the end of May due to Key Stage 1 tests taking place

For Year 1 children and Year 2 retakes

- Phonics screening check week which is usually the 2nd week in June

Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.

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If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Guidelines are available for families requesting term-time leave of absence longer than 10 days to visit relatives in heritage cultures e.g. India, Pakistan, Australia. The head teacher will consider the request in the light of the effect on the child's education. Longer periods are only authorised in exceptional circumstances.

This type of request for leave of absence will only be authorised ONCE in the child's three years of education at Nathaniel Newton Infant School.

If parents do not follow the procedures or take longer term-time holidays than authorised, fixed-term penalty notices may be issued.

Leave of absence for children with parents serving in the military forces will be authorised due to these exceptional circumstances.

Recording authorised and unauthorised absences

If decisions over absence are given verbally this will be recorded on SIMs on the date the decision was given. The decision will also be followed up by a letter sent home to parent/carers using the sample letter from the Warwickshire Attendance Service. Any wording on the letter which is highlighted or in bold cannot be altered as this has been passed and authorised by Warwickshire legal team.

Fixed Penalty Notice

It is the school's decision whether to apply for a fixed penalty notice against the parents/carers who choose to take children out of school during term time for family holidays. If this decision is made, the parents will be informed of this decision before they go on holiday or take the child out of school for leave of absence.

Parents of children who are separated

If parents are separated and both have parental rights then both parents must receive a letter to inform them of the leave of absence decision. If a fixed penalty notice is served then it would only be given to the parent of the child who takes the child on an unauthorised leave of absence.

Engaging parents

Parents receive data on their child's attendance through the MyEd app. This always shows the most up to date attendance.

Data on their child's attendance is included in the annual report to parents/carers that is sent out in July each year.

Collection and use of attendance data

Attendance data is collected by the Admin Assistant on 'SIMS.net'. This data is collected electronically by the DfE.

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Parent/carers to be informed of the whole school and class attendance through the school newsletter and displays around school.

How we encourage good attendance and punctuality in school

Class rewards

Each week during our 'Congratulations assembly' the class with the highest overall percentage for the previous week is given 'Monty' (our attendance cuddly dog) to look after in their classroom for the week and they receive a class star.

At the end of each half term the class with the best attendance will have a movie afternoon.

During the weekly 'Congratulations assembly' the class with the most children arriving on time will be given 'Snowflake' (our cuddly punctuality penguin)

Individual rewards

Each half term – Certificates will be awarded to those children with improved attendance and this will be decided upon by the attendance committee.

Each term – Certificates will be awarded to children as follows:

Gold certificate and 5 stars awarded for 100% attendance

Silver certificate and 4 stars awarded for 99-98% attendance

Bronze certificate and 3 stars awarded for 97-96% attendance

End of the academic year – Certificates will be awarded to children as follows:

Gold certificate and a small prize for 100% attendance.

Silver certificate awarded for attendance between 99%-98%

Bronze certificate awarded for attendance between 97%-96%

Where we have children with known medical conditions we will make reasonable adjustment to our attendance calculations for the purpose of rewards and recognition.

Role of Governing Body

It is the role of the Governing Body to take an active role in attendance improvement by supporting the school to prioritise attendance and work with school leaders to set and promote whole school cultures. Governors should ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. They should regularly review attendance data and help school leaders to focus support on the pupils who need it. The Attendance Governor's role is to attend half termly attendance meetings to challenge and support the school in ensuring the best possible attendance can be achieved.

Review dates for policy

Policy review date: **September- 2024**

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