



Wollaston Primary School

Attendance Policy – September 2024

REVIEWED BY HEADTEACHER: September 2024

Wollaston Primary is committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all our children in school. We believe that pupils have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment which includes the right to protection from all types of abuse. All of our school policies and procedures reflect this priority.

Intent

Importance of good attendance

It is important to recognise the link between attendance and achievement. At Wollaston Primary we encourage all children to attend school regularly. Good attendance at school is essential for a pupils' education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. Pupils learn best when they arrive punctually at academies.

Expectations

The Education Act 1996 requires the adult responsible to ensure their child receives efficient full- time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any other special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Pupils are expected to attend the school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absence;

1. Authorised absence is where the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such a request.
2. Unauthorised absence is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's/carer's request. Please be aware that when a parent/carer telephonesthe school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.

Keeping your child off with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, a text message or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to the Office. (Please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost). If your child has head lice, once they have been treated they can return to school on the same day.

Signing in/out procedure

- Any child arriving at the school after 8.55am must be signed in by their parent or carer at Reception, giving a reason for the late arrival.
- Any child who has to leave school during school hours for a medical appointment or similar reason must have a note requesting this. This should be addressed to the class teacher, who will pass it to the School Office. Parents will be asked to complete a leave of absence form for all appointments.
- Children leaving the school during the school day must be signed out at Reception by their parent or carer.

Attendance Protocol

- Doors to close at 8:50am, any child arriving between 8:55am and 9:05am will be marked as L in the register. The office will record the number of minutes late that theyare.
- Children arriving after 9:05am will be marked as a U in the register. The office will record the number of minutes that they arrive at school after 9:05am.
- First response – this needs to be completed by 9:30am with all relevant information added to Arbor so that the FSW can make phone calls/visits as required.

Dental and medical appointments

Parents and carers are asked most earnestly not to arrange dental and medical appointments during school sessions, except in cases of urgency or hospital appointments, so that considerable interference with school work is avoided. Please do not keep children out of school for the whole day unless absolutely necessary.

Pupils are expected to arrive in the school on time.

Registration Procedures

- Registers are taken twice daily, in the morning and in the afternoon, using Arbor.
- The morning register is closed at 9:05am and in the afternoon the registers are taken 1pm for the Infant's and 1:30pm for the Junior's.
- Any child arriving between 8:55am and 9.05am will be registered as late for that session and recorded on the dated and retained School late forms.
- Any child arriving after 9:05am will be registered as unauthorised.

What happens if pupils are late?

- Pupils who arrive after the doors are locked will need to enter school through the main door and complete a late form
- If a pupil is persistently late contact will be made with the parents to try to resolve the problem.
- If a pupil arrives in school more than 20 minutes late and there is no acceptable explanation, the pupil has to be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.

The school will monitor daily attendance and lateness rates and will notify the Attendance officer if there is cause for concern.

Register Codes

The following codes are applied on the registers:

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|------|--|-------------------------------------|
| / | Present (AM) | Present |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present |
| B | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity |
| C | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| D | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) | Approved Education Activity |
| E | Excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| F | Extended family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| G | Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| H | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| J | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| L | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| M | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| O | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorised absence |
| P | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| S | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| T | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| U | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| V | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| W | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |
| X | Non-compulsory school age absence | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Y | Enforced closure | Not counted in possible attendances |
| Z | Pupil not yet on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| # | School closed to pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |

Parents

- In this instance, under Section 576 Education Act 1996, a parent/carer is defined as any adult who has day to day care of the child during the period in question.
- Under current legislation, parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. Should a child be unable to attend the school for whatever reason or is late, parents are requested to notify the school by telephone before 8.55 a.m. on the first day of absence and on each subsequent day of absence.
- The school must consider a pupil's absence or arrival after the registers are closed to be unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is given by a parent or guardian.
- Parents should always provide a written explanation for the absence upon their child's return to the school even where the school has previously been made aware of the absence.

To help parents monitor their child's attendance and punctuality, attendance rates will be reported at each parents evening and recorded on the child's end of year report. Any concerns with regards to attendance will be spoken about during the two parent's evenings over the year.

Children Missing from Education Procedures

- If a child is absent and initial contacts are not returned, and contact cannot be made with the parent/carer, then the Headteacher will visit the home address in order to establish the safety of the child.
- Letters will be sent to the family and a record will be kept in the school office.
- If a pupil does not return to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register when the school and LA have failed to jointly establish the whereabouts of the child.

Information taken from the DFE Children Missing Education – Statutory guidance for Local Authorities September 2016. Guidance for this to be reviewed in September 2019.

Leave of Absence (including term time holidays)

- In April 2013, the Government made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration England) Regulations, these came into effect on 1st September 2013.
- Head teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances', (for example a family crisis, the funeral of a close relative, an entrance exam or an arts performance.)
- Authorisation for term time absence is at the discretion of the Head teacher and Governors.

This means that Head teachers are no longer able to authorise holidays taken in term time.

Requests for leave of absence must be put in writing to the Head teacher. An absence request form is available from the Office or on the website

- Young children often suffer from early childhood illnesses (e.g. chickenpox) and to offset absence caused by these unavoidable times off school it is important that all unnecessary absences are avoided. Schools cannot authorise leave of absence for holidays. We urge parents to consider very seriously whether any time off school

is necessary.

If parent/guardians take their child out of school for an accumulative total of 5 days or more (10 sessions am/pm) (83.3%) over a period of six weeks, the school will deem this as irregular attendance and will consider a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of legal action.

This could include; -

- A Penalty Notice payable of up to £180 fine without further reference to you for a penalty notice, this warning is valid for 12 months. - Prosecution under s444 (1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted you may be fined up to £1000
- . - Prosecution under s444 (1) (a) Education Act 1996 where if convicted you may be fined up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

If parents wish to apply for a leave of absence they should follow this procedure:

- • Read the school's attendance and leave of absence policy thoroughly.
- • Note the school procedure in relation to authorising absence.
- • If there are exceptional or compassionate reasons for applying for a leave of absence, then they should complete a leave of absence form & make an appointment to see the head of school
- . • It is at the Head teacher's discretion whether a leave of absence is authorised or not. Only where there are strong compassionate reasons or extenuating circumstances is any leave of absence likely to be authorised.
- • No leave of absence will be authorised unless an appointment has taken place with the Headteacher.

Systems

- Individual attendance levels will be monitored and steps taken if a child's attendance is below 95%, there has been 12 sessions of unauthorised absence in the previous 6 weeks or there has been 5 consecutive days of unauthorised absence.
- If a child's cumulative attendance falls below 95% then the Stage 1 standard letter will be sent to inform parents/carers.
- If cumulative attendance remains below 95% for a second month then the Stage 2 letter will be sent inviting the parents to a 'Parent Contract Meeting' (PCM). Notes to explain the purpose of this meeting will also be sent. A Parent Contract Meeting (PCM) will take place to set targets for attendance and identify any support required. All meeting notes will be recorded on standard form (*see Appendix 6*).
- If parents/carers fail to engage with the PCM process then the Stage 3 letter will be sent inviting the parents to implement an EHA with the Family Support Worker.
- An EHA will be offered for all PCM cases. If it is declined, this will be recorded on the pupil's file and confirmed in writing to the parents. The child's views will be sought. From this point absences will not be authorised without medical evidence.
- A review period of 5 weeks will be set.
- After 5 weeks a review will take place and the outcome will be recorded. If targets are met, then there is no longer a need for the contract. If there has been some improvement monitor for a further 5 weeks. If no improvement, we will seek advice from Educational and Inclusion Partnership Team and possibly make a referral.
- If a child has 5 consecutive days of unauthorised absence then a referral will be made to Education and Inclusion Partnership Team and the parent informed in writing.
- If a child's attendance continues to be a concern then a referral to the Education and Inclusion Partnership Team could result in legal action being taken.

Monitoring

- Individual pupil attendance data will be reported to parents at least annually.
- School attendance data will be monitored monthly including analysis and trends for different groups of pupils.
- Attendance reports will be shared at Full Governor Meetings including the number of children at each stage of the process.

Late Collection

- If children are not collected when school finishes at 3.15pm at the Infants and 3:30pm at the Junior school then parents will be contacted.

Appendix 1: Application for leave of absence in term time

Wollaston Primary, the Local Authority and Government believe that absence during term time should be avoided as they can have a damaging effect on pupils' education and overall achievement. However, it can be recognised that there may be exceptional reasons that may justify authorisation of the absence by the head Teacher.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory notes states:

Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

As a result of the changes, we at Wollaston Primary School, have revised our attendance policy which will include the following:

- Application is to be made in advance by the parent on the form obtained from the school office and the website.
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Head Teacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Entitlement Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each responsible adult for each child.

The rate per parent/carer per child will be £60 if paid within 21 days and rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

If the penalty notice is not paid, each parent/carer may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or fine to a maximum of £1000 plus costs.

Appendix 2: Northamptonshire Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct
Penalty Notices to Address Absences and Poor
Attendance at
School or Alternative Provision



Rationale

1. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure that the associated powers are applied consistently and fairly across the Local Authority area and that suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of Penalty Notices.
2. Regular and punctual attendance at school, or alternative provision, is both a legal requirement and essential for children and young people to maximise their educational opportunities. Penalty Notices offer a swift intervention which Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) will use to deal with issues of unauthorised absence before they become entrenched.
3. An offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at school, or alternative provision, at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school, or alternative provision.
4. In addition a Penalty Notice can be used to help ensure parents fulfil their responsibilities to ensure their child is not out in a public place without reasonable justification during the first five days of every exclusion from school.

Authorisation

1. The primary responsibility for the issuing of Penalty Notices rests with the Local Authority. Educational Inclusion & Partnership Team (EIPT) of NCC will therefore issue Penalty Notices in Northamptonshire. This ensures consistency and will prevent conflict with other enforcement sanctions
2. Although professionals other than those within the Local Authority (e.g. Head Teachers, the Police etc.) are accredited persons within the legislation, able to issue Penalty Notices, there is no requirement for them to do so. In Northamptonshire it has been agreed that the Police will not issue Penalty Notices. If a Head Teacher feels it is appropriate for a Penalty Notice to be issued they must refer to the EIPT. This will avoid a Penalty Notice being issued when the EIPT is instigating legal intervention proceedings for irregular school attendance or where a Penalty Notice is not deemed an appropriate form of intervention.
3. Penalty Notices will be issued by First Class post to satisfy evidential requirements.
4. EIP will act upon requests to issue Penalty Notices from academies, academies, or alternative education providers and Northamptonshire Police, provided that;
 - a) All relevant information is supplied in the specified manner;
 - b) The circumstances of the pupil's absence meets the requirements of this Code of Conduct; and
 - c) The issuing of a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other interventions strategies in place or other enforcement sanctions already in process.

Criteria for Issuing Penalty Notices

1. Penalty Notices are issued to parents as defined under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, in relation to children of compulsory school age. Under the Act the term “parent” includes;
 - All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
 - Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person;
 - Any person although not a natural parent has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with a child.
2. They may be issued for children at maintained academies, academies, free academies and alternative provision providers in Northamptonshire.
3. In accordance with the definition of parent, and thereby parental responsibility for non-school attendance, more than one person may be liable for the offence. In such circumstances, separate notices will be issued to each person.
4. Penalty Notices may be issued when:
 - Where there has been an unacceptable level of unauthorised absence from an educational establishment and enforcement is necessary to improve attendance. Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from a head teacher or other authorised representative from the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences. The categories of authorised and unauthorised absence are explained in the Guidance to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
 - A minimum of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 6 school week period will usually have occurred. However, a shorter period of time may be considered appropriate in some circumstances.
 - In the case of a unauthorised holiday taken during term time, if;
 - Parents have not sought permission from the Head Teacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term time.
 - The Head Teacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway; or
 - A pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation.
 - And there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 6 school week period.
 - Each case is considered on its own individual merits.
 - A pupil is persistently late to school, i.e. arrives after the register has closed;
 - Under truancy sweeps carried out under Crime and Disorder Act 1998 powers, a minimum of 5 sessions of unauthorised absence may generate a Penalty Notice, if these unauthorised absences occur in the 6 school weeks (maximum) after the child was stopped on a the truancy sweep; and
 - When an excluded child is present in a public place during school hours on a day which is one of the first 5 school days to which the exclusion relates or, where that exclusion is for a fixed period of 5 days or less, any of the days to which the exclusion relates, under the protocol for Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Alternative action may need to be considered if school attendance offences re-occur, in the light of advice from Legal Services.

Withdrawal of Penalty Notices

Once issued a Penalty Notice can only be withdrawn in the following circumstance;

- The Penalty Notice has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- Evidence has been established that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person.
- There are material errors in the information leading to the issue of the Penalty Notice.
- The period for payment has expired and the Local Authority does not intend to institute legal proceedings for which the Penalty Notice relates.

Payment of Penalty Notices

The arrangements for the paying of Penalty Notices will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.

Revenue generated from the Penalty Notices will be used to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices, or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Non-Payment of Penalty Notices

The Penalty is £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice (assumed as 2 working days following the Notice being sent by first class mail), or £160 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice

The council can give each parent a fine of £80, rising to £160 if you do not pay within 21 days.

From the 2024 to 2025 school year, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period.

If you get a second fine in 3 years it will be £160. If you do not pay the fine in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school.

If your child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years you will not be fined but may be taken to court

A record will be kept of all prosecutions relating to offence for which a Penalty Notice was issued. **Legislation**

1. Section 23 Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers authorised officers of a Local Authority, Head Teachers (and Deputy and Assistant Head Teachers authorised by the Head) and Police Officers (including Community Support Officers) to issue a Penalty Notice in cases of unauthorised absence from school, or alternative provision.
2. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27th February 2004.
3. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 require the Local Authority, in consultation with the above, to develop a code of conduct for issuing of Penalty Notices. Any person issue a Penalty Notice must do so within the terms of this code of conduct (the Code of Conduct”).

4. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2005 extends the issuing of Penalty Notices to alternative provision.

5. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 confirms the increase in the amount of penalty where the offence are alleged to have been wholly or partly committed after 1st September 2012.
6. Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 confirm that the penalty of £80 must be paid within 21 days or after that period increase to £160 to be paid within 28days.
7. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 remove all reference to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. Amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
8. The education provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 apply to all parents who fall within the definition of parent as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996.
9. Penalty Notices supplement existing sanctions currently available under Section 444 Education Act 1996 or Section 36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school or alternative provision.
10. Education and Inspections Act 2006; giving authorisation to Penalty Notices when a child has been excluded.
11. This Code of Conduct complies with the requirements set out in Sections 14-16 of the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.
12. The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to all requirements of the Human Rights Act and Equal Opportunities legislation.

Appendix 2: Penalty Notices, a guide for parents

Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team A Brief Guide to Penalty Notices



Sections 444 Education Act 1996
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
Crime and Disorder Act 1998

This leaflet offers you a brief summary about the (PN) scheme and what it could mean for you.

What is a PN?

A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution and requires the parent(s) to pay a fixed amount as a fine for their child's irregular attendance at school.

It is issued per parent, per child. Please note only a head teacher can authorise absence from school.

Who issues them?

In Northamptonshire the Local Authority issues them through the Educational Inclusion and Partnerships team.

When are they used?

When a pupil has a minimum of 10 school sessions recorded as unauthorised in a 6 school week period; an school day is two sessions (morning and afternoon)

This includes;

Any absence marked in the register as unauthorised.

Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken and is recorded as an unauthorised absence.

An absence in term time which has not been authorised by the head teacher. The Government has directed that head teachers may only grant leave in exceptional circumstances.

PNs can also be used during the first 5 days of exclusion. Parents are made aware of the consequences by letter when a child is excluded from school.

Please note

If the school refers a period of absence that is longer than 15 consecutive school days; the Educational and Inclusion Partnership team may consider that a PN is not appropriate.

In these instances the matter may proceed to a prosecution.

Determination about whether it is appropriate to use a penalty notice will be based on the individual circumstances of each case.

If a parent knows that their child is failing to attend school regularly and there is reasonable justification for not ensuring that their child attends then it is for the parent/carers to prove that reasonable justification.

How much is the PN?

The PN is issued with an invoice for £120 and 28 days are given for you to settle the Penalty. If the PN is paid within the first 21 days the amount payable is reduced to £60.

How do I pay?

The information on how to pay is included on the PN. Payment cannot be made in part or by instalments.

What happens if I don't pay?

If you don't pay within the 28 days the Local Authority will consider instigating a prosecution in the Magistrates Court for the offence of irregular school attendance. If proven this could result in a criminal conviction, fine of up to £1000 per parent per child and/or a parenting order or a community service order and also costs.

Can I appeal?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a PN has been issued.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the Penalty Notice?

You cannot be prosecuted for the period of absence identified in the Penalty Notice. You may subsequently be prosecuted for further periods of unauthorised absence from school.

Each case is considered on an individual basis

**** REMEMBER ****

School staff would much rather work with parents/carers to resolve irregular attendance than resort to enforcement actions like Penalty Notices or Court.

For further information please contact

Educational Inclusion & Partnership Team

attendance-admin@northamptonshire.gov.uk

<http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/en/councilservices/EducationandLearning/Parents/Attend/Pages/truancy.aspx>