



Blue Sky Federation
Erpingham VC Primary School & Northrepps Primary School

Attendance Policy

Formally adopted by the Governing Body of Blue Sky Federation	
On	2 nd December 2021
Chair of Governors	<i>Sam Lee</i>
Executive Head Teacher	<i>Laura Watts</i>
Last updated	December 2021
Review	December 2022

At the Blue Sky Federation, we are committed to providing learning of the highest quality in a caring and supportive environment that recognises personal growth and development. For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education. The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals and attendance targets. This policy contains the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them. We will work closely with the parents and carers of any child whose attendance is lacking to ensure we support them in improving attendance.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Executive Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the Department of Education and as offered via the management and information system (Pupil Asset).

Registers and Lateness

Morning registration occurs at 8.45am at Northrepps and 9am at Erpingham. Afternoon registration is 1pm at Northrepps and 1.15pm at Erpingham. The registers remain open for twenty minutes.

Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases, for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered. Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late before registers close.

First Day Absence

Parents are expected to contact the school before the start of the school day if their child has to be absent. An answer machine is available or parents can notify via the Pupil Asset App. The class teacher is informed so that the correct mark can be made on the register. If the class teacher recognises a child is absent, they record it as a 'blank' on the register and the office will follow up the absence with a phone call. The school office will phone parents if any child fails to arrive by 9.15am. If there is still no contact made from the pupil's parents, a further telephone call home will be made again that morning. If no response can be gained, the child's named emergency contact will be telephoned. If school cannot make contact with a parent and are concerned about a pupil, a home visit may be carried out.

In certain circumstances the School may also:

- Visit the home of the pupil or request a welfare check to be made by the police
- Write to the parents of a pupil to highlight attendance or punctuality issues
- Invite parents to discuss how school can support the family to make improvement
- Refer to an external agency/ support service to offer support, guidance and advice
- Refer to the Local Authority for joint enquiries to be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures
- Refer to the Local Authority to consider issuing a penalty notice or to consider prosecution when all other interventions have failed, or an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken
- Refer the matter to an appropriate external agency for multi-agency support, such as implementing a Family Support Plan or referring to Children Services, where there are safeguarding concerns

Frequent Absence

Within the school, class teachers are requested to be aware of, and bring to the attention of the Executive Headteacher, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible with parents. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Nurse if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases, the school will seek advice from the school's Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO).

Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school. That decision is at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher. Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include but are not limited to:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Arrangements or appointments for cutting the pupil's hair
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- An unwillingness to attend school, or inability to attend owing to inadequate personal/family organisation
- A refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is actually considered well enough to attend
- Holidays taken without the authorisation of the school

Leave of absence in term time

Leave of absence during term time will be strongly discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The school will consider any application for leave of absence but will only agree to authorise the absence in exceptional circumstances; parents must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence. If a parent does not apply in advance, a term time leave of absence will not be authorised. Leave of absence during term time cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Under LA procedures introduced in September 2020, the Headteacher is obliged to inform the LA of any pupils who have 9 or more consecutive unauthorised absences (4.5 days) in any 6-week period. Parents can potentially be fined if their child falls within this category. Fines will be administered by the Courts. Fines will be £60 per child per parent. The school is not involved in the fines process neither does it benefit from the fines process

Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Blue Sky Federation acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

Support Systems

We recognize that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used may include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Parent Support advisor
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Friendship groups
- 1 to 1 mentoring
- Reward systems
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Engaging the support of other agencies

Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, the Executive Headteacher will consider the use of legal sanctions following consultation with the Local Authority.

Persistent Absence [PA]

Any pupil with attendance below 90% over the school year is known as a persistent absentee, whatever the reason for the absences. The DfE has indicated that the level of absence that defines a child as being classed as PA may be reduced in future years.

We will review attendance half-termly and all parents of pupils whose attendance level falls below 90% will receive a letter. If attendance does not improve parents may be subject to an action plan to support their child's return to full attendance. These action plans will be set up by the Headteacher. The action plan will include engagement with all parties who can support the pupil's attendance, such as the AIO and the parent support advisor.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should 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.

Attendance Awards

At Blue Sky Federation, we do not intend to use attendance awards. This is in keeping with our ethos of high expectations and aspirations. In normal times, we record weekly attendance for each class on the school newsletter and provide frequent reminders of the benefits which good attendance brings. At the moment this has paused due to the impact of Covid-19 but we continue to tackle poor attendance relentlessly and follow up any concerns with families, supporting them in line with our core values of love and nurture.

The registration system

The following national codes available on Pupil Asset will be used to record attendance information.

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)	Unauthorized 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	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	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

Record preservation

We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers are printed out weekly and kept by the Headteacher for analysis.

Appendices

The Law

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.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part VI Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations (2006) Regulations 2013

Attendance Targets

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education (School Attendance Targets)(England) Regulations 2007

Guidance documents on attendance.

The following DfE documents are used to guide attendance recording.

Absence and Attendance codes (Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities)

Keeping Pupil Registers (Guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations)

These and other guidance documents are available on the DfE website.



Appendix 1: Warning letter FPN for schools

Date

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance at school and legal intervention

Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At Blue Sky Federation our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers that the law requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention through the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice where they have:

- 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time (for absences from 1 September 2017); or
- 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday.

Any pupil at Erpingham Primary School/Northrepps Primary School who meets either of the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If a fixed penalty notice fine is not paid in full within the timescale set out above, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent(s) in the local Magistrates' Court for the offence of failing to ensure their child has attended school regularly. I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Laura Watts

Executive Headteacher

Appendix 2: Leave of absence form pg. 1

Name of School: _____

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Please note: taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress

Full name of child(ren) _____

Address _____

Leave requested from _____ to _____

Total number of school days _____

Reason for application:

I/we have read the information on the reverse of this application and would like to formally request the leave of absence as shown.

Signature of parent(s)/carer(s) _____

Date: _____

The Headteacher will consider your request for leave of absence following government guidelines and the following points

- The child's previous attendance history
- The child's stage of education.
- The time of year (SATS or exams).
- Whether the parents are restricted in terms of leave from their employer.

Your request for leave of absence from school during term time has been considered and has been agreed/not agreed.

Signature of Headteacher _____

Date _____

Please note: Retain the original signed and completed forms in school records and ensure a copy is returned to the parent/carer of the student to confirm authorisation.

Appendix 1: Leave of absence form pg. 2

Leave of absence during Term Time

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is however, a discretionary power to allow leave of absence in exceptional circumstances during term time. This is not an entitlement and purely at the discretion of the school's head teacher. Schools should not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a student's education or if the absences are during school exam periods and SAT's.

Before completing this application we would advise that you consider very seriously how the absences will affect your child's education. National statistics show 10 days absence in any academic year does have a negative effect on attainment. Schools are not obliged to provide work for students taking leave of absence; however some schools may choose to do this.

The government advises that any refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised by the school on the student's records. As you may be aware unauthorised absences may result in legal proceedings against you either through a Fixed Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

Discuss with the school any request for leave of absence prior to making a booking. Your child's school may have a designated person for this. It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure you receive confirmation from the school before the leave is taken. Do not assume permission is granted if you have not received written confirmation.

Fixed Penalty Notices

With the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act (2003) the Local Authority has statutory powers to use Penalty Notices to help tackle irregular school attendance and unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for or the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason for the absence, which is acceptable to the school.

The school will discuss with the Local Authority any cases of unauthorised absence and whether the issuing of a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to a prosecution to the offence and can be issued when it is felt that parents/carers are failing in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.

The penalty is in the form of a £60 fine per parent/carer per child payable within 21 days, this increases to £120 payable per parent/carer per child within 28 days. Failure to pay usually results in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

*(Academic year =school year from September to July)