



# **Norbriggs Primary School**

***Where Every Child Counts***

## *Attendance and Punctuality Policy*

**Agreed by Headteacher:**

*Arran Tasker*

**Agreed by Governing Body:**

*Karl Richardson*

**Date:**

*September 2025*

**Next Review Date:**

*September 2026*

## **Introduction**

Regular and punctual school attendance is important. Pupils need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Norbriggs Primary School and Nursery fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority. Parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's regular attendance and failure to do so is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

## **Aims and Objectives**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise the awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.

- Ensure that our policy applies to Nursery and Reception aged children to encourage good attendance habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents understand the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

### **Supporting Pupils who face Additional Barriers to Attendance**

At Norbriggs Primary, we work in partnership with our families and strive to build trusting relationships. Our aim is to assist all our children to access their legal entitlement to full-time education suitable to their age, ability and need.

We understand that some students face barriers to attendance for several legitimate reasons. Where this is the case, we are keen to make formal, reasonable adjustments in order to support families and children. We work with Derbyshire County Council and other external agencies where additional support is required.

These adjustments are reviewed regularly by school and parents to ensure best efforts are being made to reflect any changes and to promote the best possible attendance.

## Definitions

### Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

### Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

### Procedures

Our school will undertake to follow the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records on Arbor, which gives detail of any absence and lateness.
- To monitor attendance and punctuality.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- To strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality
- To use assemblies to recognise good attendance

### Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

## **Governors**

The Governors are responsible for:

- Ensuring the Head Teacher monitors attendance.
- Asking challenging questions to ensure actions are put in place to address identified issues.

## **Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance; formal review every half term.
- Providing a report to Governors to keep them informed of trends and patterns.

## **Pastoral care Manager**

Pastoral Care manager is responsible for:

- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the EWO service
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence
- Collating attendance information.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Head Teacher
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance

## **Administration staff**

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence
- Ensuring the Absence/Late marks are recorded on Arbor
- Recording the details and reasons of children who arrive late or go home
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.

## **Class Teacher**

Class Teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers
- Informing the Headship Team where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

## **Parents**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence or logging on Arbor.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

## **Procedures**

### **Registration**

Children should arrive at school after 8.30am. Children enter school at 8.35am and lessons start at 8.45am. All children should be at school by 8.45am.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 8.55am and by 1.10pm.

All attendance records are held electronically and retained for the statutory length of time.

### Lateness

Once the gate is locked all children must enter school via the school office. A child arriving at school after 8.55am will be recorded as late (code L) and the reason recorded. Records are kept of those pupils who are late.

Any child who arrives for school later than 9.15am will be marked as code U having an unauthorised absence.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 8.55am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter following the regular termly review advising them of the concerns; the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.



Parents/carers *Over the course of an academic year* of their child's absence before 8.55am. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence. This can be done via the phone or Arbor.

It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Head Teacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence, we will request these details from parents/carers. If this is not received by the specified date then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O)

### **First Day Contact**

Where a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent we will initiate a first day contact process. The office staff checks all the registers from 9.20am daily, to identify those pupils who are absent as a safeguarding requirement.

If there are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent, and we will contact the parent to check the reasons for the child's absence.

### **Second Day Contact**

If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers on the second day of absence, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact. This will include making enquiries to known friends, wider family and undertaking home visits.

This action will be taken on day one if the child has complex needs or is subject to a safeguarding or welfare action.

### **Illness**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

## **Parental Request for Absence from School**

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Head Teachers **must not** grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively. Any requests should be on an official school absence request form and handed into the school office for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made. You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

The Penalty Notice will result in a charge of £160 per child, per parent which reduces to £80 per child, per parent if this is paid in full within 21 days of receiving the Penalty Notice.

## **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

- The school expects attendance of at least 95%.
- Parents will be advised by letter of their child's attendance termly.
- Parents will be advised by letter if their child's attendance falls below 90% over a half term with no medical reason, or without prior permission for absence.
- If attendance continues to be under the 90% threshold, the school may ask you to attend an Attendance Panel or seek the support of Education Welfare Officers.
- The school will work with the families and Derbyshire County Council to improve attendance and fixed penalty fines may be given if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

## **National Framework for Penalty Notices**

The new national threshold for consideration of legal action is 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence, including lates after close of register (U) and unauthorised leave (G).

## **Monitoring Attendance**

Office staff ensure that all of attendance data is accurately recorded. The Head Teacher will review attendance reports every half term and direct appropriate action to be taken following these reviews.

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Full Governing Body, or at need if legislation changes.

**Appendix 1:**

**Attendance Tracking Procedure**

<p><b>Initial Prevention of Poor Attendance through Whole School Management</b></p>	<p>95% - 100%</p>	<p>Attendance is monitored weekly by the school's Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>A challenge letter maybe sent where inadequate or false information is given relating to a child's absence.</p> <p>Green Letters sent out at the end of each term recognising a child's attendance.</p>
<p><b>Early Intervention to Reduce Absence before it becomes Persistent</b></p>	<p>94% - 91%</p>	<p>Pupils are classed at 'Lower than Expected Attendance'</p> <p>Concerning patterns have been noticed through weekly monitoring by the school's Senior Leadership Team. Additional monitoring checks will be made for 4 weeks.</p> <p>Telephone contact with parents and carers to advise on attendance, and to explore any barriers to attendance that may require support.</p> <p>Pupil voice will be gathered to help decide on the best form of support.</p> <p>If no improvement within the term at the end of the 4-week period, a <b>Parental Responsibility</b> letter will be sent.</p> <p>Amber Letters sent out expressing concerns at the end of each term.</p>
<p><b>Targeted Reengagement and Support for Persistent Absences</b></p>	<p>&gt;90%</p>	<p>Pupils are classed as 'Persistently Absent'</p> <p>Concerning and persistent patterns have been noticed through weekly monitoring by the school's Senior Leadership Team beyond the previous 4-week additional monitoring checks.</p> <p>Attendance Meeting with school are held with parents and carers so that barriers to attendance explored and an attendance plan is agreed for 4 weeks.</p> <p>If no improvement within the term at the end of the 4-week period, a <b>Parental Responsibility</b> letter will be sent.</p> <p>If a lack of parental engagement or failure to improve continues, a <b>Failure to Improve</b> letter will be sent and a referral to Derbyshire County Council will be made.</p> <p>Pupil voice will be gathered to help decide on the best form of support.</p> <p>Red Letter sent out for persistent absences and outlining the next steps.</p> <p>If a student has the equivalent of 10 unauthorised absences within a 10-week rolling period, a referral may automatically be made to Derbyshire County Council.</p>

Appendix 2:

### Morning Procedure

