



The New North  
Academy

# ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY



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## AIM

The aim of The New North Academy attendance and punctuality policy is to enable the academy to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance and punctuality of all pupils. Regular attendance and punctuality at school is the key to steady pupil progress and aids the enjoyment of learning. Therefore the academy is dedicated to ensuring its attendance and punctuality policy is adhered to.

The New North Academy takes a whole school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and punctuality and that it is the joint responsibility of parents/carers, pupils and all staff to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We work with families to make sure that any issues or circumstances that may result in or lead to poor attendance and punctuality are given appropriate support either directly or via another agency.

This policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

### 1. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Education Act 1996 states that:

#### 1.1 The parent/carer of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

- a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and
- b) to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

#### 1.2 A person begins to be of compulsory school age-

- a) when they attain the age of five, if they attain that age on a prescribed day, and
- b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their attaining that age.

#### 1.3 A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year-

- a) if they attain the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- b) if they attain the age on that day, or
- c) (unless paragraph (a) applies ) if that day is the school leaving date next following their attaining that age.

The New North Academy is dedicated to complying with attendance laws and has set this attendance policy out accordingly.

### 2. ROLES and RESPONSIBILITIES

As part of our whole school approach to maintaining high attendance and punctuality the Governors will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance and punctuality is promoted and that policies are made clear to parents and staff;
- Annually review the academies attendance and punctuality policy and ensure provisions are in place to allow staff, parents/carers, and children to implement the policy effectively;

- Nominate or identify a link governor who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and punctuality and coordinating provision and policies for attendance and punctuality;
- Ensure that all legislation regarding attendance and punctuality is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents/carers, children, and staff;
- Take time at governors meetings to review and discuss attendance and punctuality issues that have arisen in order to 'stay on top of' expected attendance targets for the year;
- Ensure that the academy is implementing effective means of recording attendance and punctuality and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site;
- Ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance and punctuality data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff;
- Use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance and punctuality coordination and target set for the future.

### **3. SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM**

As part of our whole school approach to maintaining high attendance and punctuality, the school leadership will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance and punctuality to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming relationships with families;
- Ensure that the academy's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and punctuality and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance and punctuality for their own progression and achievement;
- Coordinate with governors to monitor the implementation of the attendance and punctuality policy and its effectiveness, with annual full policy review;
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the academy's attendance and punctuality policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance and punctuality issues;
- Ensure that government legislation on attendance and punctuality is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them;
- Nominate or appoint a senior leader to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance and punctuality provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job;
- Report to the governors each term and the lead governors for attendance and punctuality half termly on attendance records, data and provision;
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance and punctuality data are in place and working effectively;
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and punctuality and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend;
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance and punctuality in case of future legal proceedings.

#### **4. TEACHERS and SUPPORT STAFF**

As part of our whole school approach to maintaining high attendance and punctuality, the academy's teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance and punctuality to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the academy's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and punctuality and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance and punctuality for their own personal progression and achievement;
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the academy's policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance and punctuality issue;
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and punctuality and that attendance is taken daily. This is vital for recording and monitoring accurate individual pupil attendance and punctuality;
- Contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed;
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance and punctuality.

#### **5. ATTENDANCE LEADER**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance and punctuality, the school has a designated Attendance Leader who has responsibility for the monitoring of pupil absences. The Attendance Leader will:

- Contribute to raising achievement at New North Academy by improving school attendance and punctuality.
- Oversee the school's attendance and punctuality procedures, ensuring that official registers are accurately maintained and attendance trends monitored.
- In conjunction with the Headteacher, regularly monitor attendance and punctuality patterns. Pupils causing concern are identified, discussed and strategies for improving attendance and punctuality are employed.
- Promote positive attitudes by pupils and families towards education and to ensure that parent/carers are made fully aware of their statutory responsibilities.
- Make contact and where necessary meet with families to assess the reasons impacting on the attendance and punctuality of individual pupils, facilitating their return or access to regular full time education provision.
- Reduce levels of unauthorised absence, persistent absence and poor punctuality and reflect the policies and values of New North Academy.

#### **6. EDUCATION WELFARE OFFICER (EWO)**

The school has employed a designated Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who is responsible for working with the school to ensure that all children are attending school regularly and on time. The EWO will:

- Have regular meetings with the Attendance Officer.
- Liaise with the school regarding concerns about attendance and punctuality percentages.
- Follow up all referrals made by the school by contacting the families concerned.
- Meet with families to discuss concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Make home visits where necessary.
- Report back any action taken.
- Collate evidence of continued absences or lateness.

## 7. PARENTS and CARERS

As part of the whole school approach to maintaining high attendance and punctuality, we request that parents/carers:

- Engage with their children's education - support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school;
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home;
- Encourage and support their children's aspirations;
- Follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school, and include an expected date of return;
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours;
- Use the academy as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the academy so that there is easy communication when a problem arises;
- Keep the academy informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance and punctuality;
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. So that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at the academy about the importance of attendance and punctuality;
- Do not take their children out of school during term time. If parents/carers would like to make a special request for this, they need to do so to the Principal
- Sign a home school agreement
- Provide a note of explanation for all absences from school
- Ensure that they follow the correct set academy procedure if they arrive late. This also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.
- Parents must contact school daily in the event of a child's absence before the start of the school day. Consecutive days absence will need to be supported by medical evidence or where patterns of absence emerge.

## 8. PUPILS

As part of the whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance and punctuality, we request that pupils:

- Be aware of the academy's attendance and punctuality policy. This will be communicated to them through the academy staff, parents/carers, and the academy timetable;
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance and punctuality.

## 9. CATEGORIES of ABSENCE and PROCEDURE for REPORTING ABSENCES

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to authorise any child's absence from school. Therefore, absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation is given to the school. **Parents/carers cannot authorise absences and should be aware that either calling the school or providing a note for an absence does not automatically mean it will be authorised.** Staff will make it clear on the school register when recording attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents/carers should inform the academy by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know when what date they expect the child to return.

Wherever possible we encourage families to pass the school a note to explain their child's absence which is then kept in the child's personal file. If a note is not provided attendance staff use SIMs to record conversations they have had with parents.

#### **10. CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

- All children, regardless of their age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs they may have, are entitled to a full-time education. Our school recognises that a child missing education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and will follow the school procedures for unauthorised absence and for children missing education.
- Wherever possible the school will hold at least 2 emergency contact numbers for each child and will use both numbers, if necessary, as part of the First Day calling process.
- Parents should always inform us of the reason for any absence. Where contact is not made, a referral may be made to another appropriate agency (Pupil Services, Access and Engagement, Social Care or the Police).
- Our school must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without school permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

#### **11. ILLNESS**

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/carers should alert the academy on the first day of absence.

Parents must contact school daily in the event of a child's absence before the start of the school day. Consecutive days absence will need to be supported by medical evidence or where patterns of absence emerge.

#### **12. MEDICAL or DENTAL APPOINTMENTS**

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure that these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

#### **13. AUTHORISED ABSENCES**

There may be some exceptional circumstances where the school will authorise absence such as:

- Religious observances.
- Family bereavement.
- Visits to prospective new schools, external exams or educational assessments.
- Exclusion from school.

#### **14. EXCLUSION**

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. The Academy will arrange for work to be sent home in cases where children have been excluded.

Exclusions of 6 days or more will result in Local Authority intervention.

#### **15. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

These are absences which the school does not consider reasonable and for which “leave” of absence has not been given. This type of absence can lead to the school requesting that the Local Authority use sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Some examples of this type of absence include:

- Parents/carers keeping their child away from school unnecessarily – this can be due to child care arrangements, to look after siblings/relatives or because parents are unwell. In this case, alternative arrangements should be in place to ensure the child attends school.
- Shopping trips.
- Birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed by the Headteacher.

#### **16. FAMILY HOLIDAYS and EXTENDED LEAVE**

Parents/carers should ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of term time. There is no automatic right to remove a child from school during term time. All requests must be made in advance to the Headteacher in writing, stating the specific number of days in advance. Requests will not be considered retrospectively. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel abroad parents must contact the school at the earliest possible time and write explaining their absence on their return.

Decisions around approving leave will be based on the individual circumstances of each case.

All requests submitted to the Headteacher will be responded to in writing, and will outline details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents/carers should contact the academy immediately if there is any cause for delay in the child’s return.

When deciding whether to authorise the absence, the Headteacher will take the following into account:

- Past & current attendance history
- Previous holiday requests/taken

Holidays during term time will not be authorised and may be subject to a Penalty Notice by the LA.

#### **17. RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE**

The New North Academy recognises that there are times when children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall within term time, and will allow authorised absences for these times in line with the LA Faith calendar which has been agreed with key faith leaders.

Parents/ carers will be aware that written notification should be given to the academy in advance.

#### **18. PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they are absent from school for 10% or more across the school year for whatever reason. The reasons can be both authorised and unauthorised.

Absence below 90% will do considerable damage to any child's educational achievement and future prospects. We will need the full support and co-operation of all parents/carers to both avoid and where necessary tackle this.

Pupils who have reached the PA level will be tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system. The parents/carers of PA pupils will be invited to a meeting with the School Attendance Officer, the Education Welfare Officer and/or the Headteacher to discuss their child's attendance.

#### **19. LATE ARRIVAL**

Registration begins at 9.00am. Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late. Pupils who arrive after this time must sign in at reception and give a reason for lateness. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised.

It is vital that pupils sign in at reception to ensure that all health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils on site are accounted for.

The registration period ends at 9.30am.

Persistent late arrivals may result in legal proceedings being taken against the parent/carer.

#### **20. SCHOOL ACTION: follow up absences**

Where there are unexplained absences the academy will contact the parent/carer to ascertain reasons for absence and if necessary discuss any support the academy can offer to enable the child to attend school.

##### **Addressing Attendance Concerns**

The school expects attendance of at least 96%. Where a pupil's attendance falls below this level, parents/carers will be informed by letter. If there is further absence parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting at school and a plan to improve attendance will be agreed.

If a child's attendance drops below 90% they are considered to be persistently absent. If parents have received a letter and had a school meeting but attendance does not improve, they may be issued with a penalty notice – minimum £60 – by the Access and Engagement Service in Islington.

Where students have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on learning and any work that they have missed.

### **Monitoring and Tracking**

The attendance and punctuality of all children is monitored all year round in the following ways:

- Weekly monitoring – attendance and punctuality % by class, which is shared with all staff. Intervention monitoring (see below for more details) and tracking for any children below 96% attendance.
- Termly monitoring – this is a more detailed breakdown of the data, looking at specific groups of children and identifying patterns and trends to address and feeds directly into the Headteacher’s report to Governors.

### **Rewards for Good Attendance**

Attendance figures are provided to class teachers, pupils and parents on a weekly basis. An assembly is used to share the figures with the pupils and award the class trophy to the class with the best overall attendance figure for the week. The attendance figures are then posted on the school website and noticeboard for parents to see.

Once a month there is an attendance focus week. This is used as a way of raising the profile of good attendance and punctuality with parents and pupils. At the end of this week, certificates are awarded to those pupils with 100% attendance and the class with the highest overall attendance % receives certificates and a trophy.

Towards the end of the school year (end of summer term), all those pupils with 100% attendance will receive vouchers or be invited to attend a trip. Certificates are awarded to all pupils with 96% attendance (the academy’s target) or above, as well as to those pupils who have made significant effort to improve.

## Thresholds for Intervention

Threshold	Intervention	By whom
<b>100-96%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weekly monitoring takes place.</li> <li>Assembly is used to share attendance figures with pupils and award the class with the highest attendance figure the attendance trophy.</li> <li>Attendance figures are posted onto the school's website and noticeboard for parents to see.</li> <li>Letters sent out to any parents who cannot be contacted re: pupil absence from school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance Leader</li> <li>Class teacher liaises with parents informally and encourages/monitors children's attendance</li> </ul>
<b>96-93%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If attendance dips below 96% a letter informing parents of this is sent out, requesting an initial meeting with the Attendance Leader/Phase Leader/EWO.</li> <li>Two week period of monitoring takes place.</li> <li>Follow up with the family.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance Leader</li> <li>Education Welfare Officer</li> <li>Phase Leader encourages/monitors children's attendance</li> </ul>
<b>93-90%</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If attendance dips below 94% a letter informing parents of this is sent out, requesting an initial meeting with the Deputy Headteacher.</li> <li>Two week period of monitoring takes place.</li> <li>Follow up with the family.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance Leader</li> <li>Education Welfare Officer</li> <li>Deputy Headteacher</li> </ul>
<b>90% and below</b>	<p>PA threshold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with the Headteacher to discuss and agree on a plan of action.</li> <li>Two week period of monitoring takes place.</li> <li>Follow up with the family.</li> <li>Where there is no improvement, then a referral to Islington's Access and Engagement Service for statutory action should be considered.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance Leader</li> <li>Education Welfare Officer</li> <li>Headteacher</li> <li>Access and Engagement Service</li> </ul>