

NORTHILL C OF E VA LOWER SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

PHILOSOPHY

Northill Lower School is committed to maximising attendance for all pupils to enable them to benefit fully from their education. We believe that regular attendance is vital for effective learning.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise the importance of establishing strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance.

We will identify and address, as speedily as possible, any problems affecting attendance and adopt, at all times, a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance.

PRINCIPLES

The school will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. The school will promote positive staff attitudes to those pupils returning from absences.

Staff will be made aware of the registration process and receive updates on registration regulations and education law.

Registers will be completed accurately at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session and attendance regularly monitored using Simms software.

Parents will be encouraged to contact school early on the first day of absence.

PROCEDURE

Rights and Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are required to notify the school of the reason, preferably, on the first day of absence. Parents whose first language is not English or who have literacy problems will be offered support from school in matters of communication.

The school operates a First Response System with regard to absences from school. This means that if the school has not received a letter, phone call or message to explain a child's absence by 09.30, the school will contact parents to check where the child is. This is a precautionary measure to ensure that all children who leave for school in the morning arrive safely.

A pupil's absence from school will remain unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is given by the parent. Parents will be promptly informed of any concerns over their child's

attendance. Parents should avoid, wherever possible, making medical/dental appointments during school hours and taking family holidays during the school term.

School staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Staff should convey high expectations to pupils regarding attendance and punctuality. A range of strategies will be used to encourage good attendance and punctuality and staff will promptly investigate all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents.

With specific regard to the travelling community – who are able to have dual registration (registered at 2 schools), but need to spend a minimum of 200 sessions (half days) during a 12 month period before action is taken by the EWO.

Registration

Registers will be called promptly at 9.05am and at 1.00pm and will be marked as red or black in accordance with the list of symbols as set out in the register front sheet.

Where pupils arrive late and the register is still open, they will be marked late but counted as present for the session. Where pupils miss registration and do not provide an adequate explanation, they will be marked as late but counted as unauthorised absent. Where pupils miss registration but provide an acceptable explanation, they will be marked as late but counted as authorised absent for that session.

Pupils who arrive late enough to use the main entrance will need to sign the School Late Book. This is for monitoring continual late arrival by pupils and to ascertain reasons for doing so.

The Registers will be inspected for absences and lates weekly in order to ensure that correct procedures are being followed. Absences will be totalled and analysed by the Education Welfare Office and the Headteacher of the school.

Recording Absence

All staff must record absences, either as authorised or unauthorised, using the agreed symbols. Consistent criteria should be applied to decision making. Absences should not be authorised once a warning letter for court action has been issued to parents by the Education Welfare Service, unless a medical certificate is received. Advice should be sought from the Education Welfare Service.

Follow Up Of Absence

If no contact is received from the parent of the pupil on the morning of the first absence, the school will contact the parent by telephone, or if the parent is unavailable, write a letter requesting information. If this action does not result in an explanation or the return of the pupil to school, a further letter will be sent after that. The matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service if the absence continues without explanation from the parent.

Action on irregular attendance will initially involve the class teacher contacting the parent to discuss the matter. If the attendance does not improve, the Headteacher will invite the parent to a meeting. The aim of the meeting will be to identify and resolve any difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

If the pupil's difficulties are not resolved and the attendance does not improve, a formal referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service and formal intervention planned.

In the event of a pupil returning after a long term absence, then an individual reintegration programme will be implemented.

REVIEW

Part of the evaluation process will be to consider what interventions have been successful. For instance;

- Has the attendance and punctuality of individual pupils and/or attendance as a whole improved? Have attendance targets been achieved?
- How successful have pupil reintegration plans been?
- Has the school been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school and the local community?
- How well informed are the new pupils about the importance of attendance and the policies and procedures operating within the school?
- Have appropriate, timely, referrals been made to the Education Welfare Service?

CONCLUSION

“Maintaining and improving attendance of the whole school, or groups of individual pupils requires persistent vigilance in every school.” (HM1 (1989), Education Observed at school DES/London)

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body

Ian Malcolm
Chair of Governors

Date: