



# ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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1. Parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause his child to receive efficient full-time education –
  - a) To his/her age ability and aptitude and
  - b) To any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

## EDUCATION ACT 1996

### 2. Aims

In accordance with Authority's aim for attendance Northern House School will –

- To encourage attendance
- To monitor and record attendance.
- To alert parents on a daily basis, and the LA at an early stage, about pupils with poor or irregular patterns of attendance.
- To ensure the safety of all pupils to the best of our ability:
- To report absconding pupils to parents/carers after fifteen minutes of absence
- After assessment of risk and consultation with parent/carer, to report absconding pupils to the police as "missing person".
- To liaise with the Education Welfare Service to proactively plan to reduce individual patterns of poor attendance.
- Keep unauthorised absence to a minimum.

### 3. ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE

Attendance at school is seen as the most important pre requisite to learning. All pupils are actively encouraged to attend school. In the weekly "credit tuck" sessions attendance over **95%** is rewarded and half termly and termly prizes are given to those boys who attend over **95%** of the time. At the end of each year a major prize is awarded to the one boy/girl who has the best overall attendance in School for that year.

Further the School works closely with the EWO service to provide back-up support and rewards for those boys/girls who need to improve their attendance. Where attendance is poor (below **93%**) parents are sent warning letters from the School before a formal referral is made to the EWO services.

### 4. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

The School will:

- Contact parents on the first day if there is unexplained absence

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- Consult parents if it is felt that authorized absence is affecting progress
- Encourage Punctuality and good attendance through the GOAL system (Secondary) and Bricks (Primary)
- Discuss with parents any problems with attendance and punctuality
- It is School's responsibility to record, monitor and encourage attendance and to alert the LA in cases of continuing absence.
- In some cases where attendance is consistently poor despite the above, the School may decide (with the Educational Social Worker) to initiate "fast track" proceedings which may result in parent/guardian prosecution
- It is an LA's responsibility to enforce attendance and to offer support to schools, parents/carers and pupils to promote a positive attendance culture.
- Monitor erratic or poor attendance, referring to Education Welfare.
- Establishing effective communication with parents/carers
- Celebrate excellent attendance throughout school with certificates awarded to individual children during the academic year.

## 5. Monitoring & Recording

Formal registers are taken at morning and afternoon registration. The main office operates a running spreadsheet, which tracks the attendance record of all pupils. A record of all transport difficulties, which may contribute to poor attendance or punctuality, is kept in the main office.

## 6. Following through non-attendance

All cases of non-attendance at school are followed up with a telephone call or a letter to parents. Where transport difficulties have contributed to attendance problems the parent or carer is contacted initially to obtain details of the problem or issue. The LA School Transport Department is then contacted and notified of the issue. The School's Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) visits the school on a regular basis to take note of pupils whose attendance is causing concern and follows this up with parents. The EWO will inform the school of any action taken. In addition, the EWO services will act for the school in the presentation of non-attendees to the Legal Services of the LA. Cases of persistent nonattendance will be referred to the Court Service.

A "Multi-Professional" and/or "Pastoral Support Planning" meeting will be convened where ongoing "non-attendance" or "absconding" issued cannot be resolved satisfactory as an internal school matter.

## 7. Parental Responsibility

By law parents have a duty to educate their children by regular attendance at school.

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In order to facilitate this process, parents with children at Northern House School are expected to:

- Inform School by telephone on the first morning of any absence before 9.30 am
- Provide a note to cover the absence on the child's return to School
- Ensure that their child gets to School on time
- Not to take family holidays during term time
- To ask permission from School for time off for "special circumstances". Only School may authorize such absences. Absences without permission from school will be registered as unauthorised.
- It is the parents"/carers" responsibility to ensure that their child receives full time education. This extends beyond ensuring regular and punctual attendance and requires that the child is in a fit state to learn.
- Encourage regular school attendance

## 8. Student's responsibilities and procedures

Appreciate the importance of good attendance and punctuality and the effect that both will have though out their life.

## 9. Leave of Absence

Following Dfe Guidance, in place from September 2013, absence in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

School Holidays, Inset days and examination seasons are published to all parents/carers via the school website with sufficient notice.

Leave taken without prior authorisation from the Head teacher will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and possibly be referred to Education Welfare Service and a penalty notice may be issued without further warning. Payment of a penalty notice within 21 days is

£60 per parent/carer per child between and 28 days it is £120.0 Penalty notices are issued to each parent, per child. Further details are available on the Wokingham council website or from the Education Welfare Service. If the fine is not paid by the 28-day deadline, the matter will be taken to court.

## 10. "Special Circumstances" include

- Caring for a relative in time of crisis, but not long term absence
- Illness of students
- Special religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Employer/further education/school interview

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- Exceptional circumstances at the discretion of school. The pupil's attendance record will be taken into account when deciding whether to or not to grant permission for leave

## 11. "Special Circumstances" DO NOT include:

- Minding the house
- Looking after siblings
- Birthday or other celebrations
- Shopping

## 12. Prosecution

The offence under Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 carries a maximum fine of £1000 and the council will also seek to recover cost.

The More serious offence under Section 444 (1) (a) has a range of sentencing options for the court to impose on each responsible parent, including:

- Fine of up to £2,500
- Community based sentence
- Three months imprisonment
- Subject to a Parenting Order – can be additional to other sentences.