North Wootton Academy
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Name of policy:	**Attendance**
Lead member of staff with responsibility for this policy:	Mr J Grimsby
Date of governors meeting when policy agreed:	October 5th 2020
Type of governors meeting:	Academy Council
Date of implementation:	1st September 2020
Details of dissemination:	This policy is available on our school website and is available on request from the school office.
Frequency for review:	Annually
Next due for review:	1st September 2021

Introduction

North Wootton Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. The school also has a statutory duty to ensure the safety of our pupils during the school year.

High levels of attendance is a key element of achieving both of these aims and therefore, we want to work together with parents to ensure that all children are as close to 100% attendance as is possible; moreover, that they ensure that the attend school punctually and ready for the learning ahead of them.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets and will work towards achieving these. The school will always aim to achieve above national and Norfolk in terms of the levels that we achieve.

Clearly, during the current climate, these targets and interventions need to take into account the expectation of self-isolation and the policy has been changed to reflect this. However, with a considerable amount of in-school learning already lost since March 2020, the school will obviously aim to maximise school attendance for all pupils.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals and aim to work with families in order to support those pupils who are finding regular attendance a barrier.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets whilst being mindful of the current climate.

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 ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure the safety of our pupils by ensuring regular contact with the teaching staff.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues and absence related to periods of self-isolation.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise 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 Reception age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.

- Work in partnership with pupils, parents and staff 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 in promoting good attendance.
- Ensure that the school's approach is in-line with current COVID-19 guidance.

Responsibility of Parents/Carers

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning; it has been proven that this can create large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations throughout their education. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning. The absence caused by school lockdown has made the need for regular attendance even more vital.

Punctuality

Therefore, the school would view the parent's/carer's responsibility as:
- Ensuring that their children arrive to school on time. The gates normally open from 8:40am with children reach their classroom door between then and 8:55am when school officially begins. However, during the current restrictions the school is required to use a staggered entry with each phase entering at different times within 10-minute slots. Generally, this will begin with the eldest pupils from approximately 8:30am and end with the Reception pupils entering after 9:00am. These times are subject to change and included in the continual school guidance.
- Normally the school registers close at 9:00am when the school gates are shut, with any children arriving after this needing to report to the school office to sign in. Records are kept of the pupils that are late with an L code in the register. Any child that arrives after 9:20am (KS2) and 9:25am (KS1) will be marked with a U code, equivalent to an unauthorised absence. However, within the current restrictions, parents must enter within their 10-minute slots with registers closing 5-minutes after this. Any late arrivals must phone the school office to arrange a gate through which to access in order to maintain appropriate distancing.
- Normally the school day finishes at 3:15pm and parents are expected to be present for Reception – Year 4 pupils. Reception – Year 2 are released by the class teacher to a specified adult whilst Year 3-4 will be supervised with the instruction that they return to school staff if a known adult is not present. Within current restrictions, all pupils will be supervised in their release within set time slots. Reception-Year 4 will still be released to a known adults in-line with parent's collection arrangements.
- Normally, children will be held for approximately 10-minutes after their specified release time (unless the office has been contacted) at which point they will be moved to extended care which may incur a cost if this is a common occurrence.

Whilst it is the school's responsibility to:

- ensure that the school gates open promptly at times specified and that the pupils are ready to be collected.
- ensure that pupils are only released to the adults specified on the collection arrangements.
- assign school staff to oversee their collection/release at the end of the day. The school still expected these pupils to be collected and ask pupils to return to the staff members if they are unsure about who is collecting them. Parents can request for their Year 3/ 4 children to walk home by themselves but, the school would discourage this and would require the request in writing. Pupils in Year 5/6 are allowed to leave unsupervised.

Absence due to illness

Moreover, we would view the parent's/carer's responsibility as:

- notifying the school on the first day of absence before 9:30am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning the school office, emailing or via text message.
- during COVID-19, it is essential that the parents specify the reason for absence including any symptoms; the school must follow-up to ascertain if a period of self-isolation is required.
- ensure that no member of their household attends the school If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new and persistent cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia).
- providing medical evidence wherever appropriate, on the child's return to school.
- ensuring that, as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to notify the school of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- liaising with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer.

If a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc. or in a prolonged case, the school will request consent for medical sharing with your child's doctor. With your consent, any documentation will be held securely in support of why your child's absence is low. The school will most likely request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday.

It is the school's responsibility to ensure the safety of your child by:

- contacting the parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence. This will involve a text at 9:30am and a phone call after 10:30am
- passing the names of any pupils with unknown absence to a Designated Safeguarding Lead to decide the follow up required.
- continue to try to make contact through any known associates including their workplace.
- contacting parent's work, alternative contacts and conducting a home visit for those pupils from whom we have had no contact for 3 days to ensure that the pupil is safe.
- contacting the Attendance Team for any child whose absence is unexplained for more than one week.

Absence due to Self-Isolation

Within any households where a member is symptomatic, all householder members must follow the guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection, which sets out that:
- those who are symptomatic should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should arrange to have a test to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19).
- if they have tested positive whilst not experiencing symptoms but develop symptoms during the isolation period, they should restart the 10-day isolation period from the day they develop symptoms.
- other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

In these circumstances, their absence will be marked as follows on the school registers in order to track this absence again those for general illness.
'X' code will be used whilst waiting for a test or self isolating, once a test result has been received the code will be 'I' if the child is still ill or the test was positive.

Absence for Holidays or Exceptional Circumstances

Parents/carers are legally required to ensure their children have regular attendance and therefore, considering the likelihood of some illness throughout the year, parents are not expected to take their children on holiday during the school term.

However, it is understood that there may be exceptional circumstances linked to life events that may mean this is necessary, parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Principal and they will use their discretion whilst applying government requirements. However, authorisation is only given in rare instances.

Therefore, we would view the parent's/carer's responsibility as:
- ensuring that holidays are booked within the 14 weeks of school holiday.
- obtaining a leave of absence form from the school office.
- completing and submitting the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).

Whilst it is the school's responsibility to:
- publish a school holiday calendar in advance as far as is logistically possible
- only authorise holiday requests in exceptional circumstances in line with government requirements.
- recommend Fixed Penalty Notices are issued by the Education Welfare Service for unauthorised holiday absence during term time in which 9.5 sessions (4.5 days) of learning have been missed. This fine is payable at £60 per child, per parent to the Local Authority and may result in further legal action if not paid.

Monitoring

Whole school attendance is monitored monthly by the Principal and Attendance Lead, in addition to the daily monitoring of unexplained absences discussed before.

At the end of each half term, pupil's absence will be categorized as one of the following:
- **100 - 95% Attendance is within normal limits** as we assume that all children will require some sick days

- **95 - 90% Attendance is a cause for concern** as the pupil could potentially miss between 50 and 100 lessons over the course of the year. Parents will be issued letter simply highlighting them of their pupil's attendance.

- **Below 90% Attendance is significantly below** the pupil could potentially miss almost one-half term's worth of learning; this will have a drastic impact upon their learning and therefore steps must be taken to ensure their attendance improve. Parents will therefore be asked to meet with the Principal to discuss ways in which the school can improve the pupil's attendance.

During this academic year, absence for self-isolation reasons will be taken into account.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

Attendance Awards
The school will use the following system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance.
- Weekly class certificates and a trophy in KS1 and KS2 awarded to the class with the highest attendance.
- Termly attendance certificates in KS1 and KS2 awarded to the class with the highest attendance.
- Termly attendance certificates awarded to all children who achieve 100% attendance.
- Annual attendance certificate in KS1 and KS2 awarded to the class with the highest annual attendance.
- Annual attendance certificates awarded to all children who achieve 100% for the year.

Attendance Targets
The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our schools targets are: 2020/2021 96.4% (once the impact of self-isolation has been factored in)

The registration system

The School will use Pupil Asset for keeping the school computerised attendance records.

The following national codes 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 another establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised 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 Currently used for COVID related absence (pre-testing & self-isolation)	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

Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years.

Computer registers must be printed out at least once a month and bound into annual volumes. Alternatively, electronic back-ups or micro-fiche copies can be made. These also need preserving for at least three year.

Entries in paper registers must be in ink.

All corrections must be visible (no correcting fluid)

Register Security

The registers must be safely stored electronically.

Appendices

1   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 V1 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

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2020
REVIEW ANNUALLY