

# North Road Community Primary School



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Author/Person Responsible	Sarah Stillie North Road Primary School
Date of Ratification	September 2023
Review Group	FGB
Ratification Group	FGB
Review Frequency	Annually
Review Date	September 2024
Previous Review Amendments/Notes	Working together to improve school attendance – DFE: May 2022 Letter to School Leaders on Mild Illness and School Attendance – DFE: September 2023 Is my child too ill for school – NHS: <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/">https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/</a> School Time Holiday Notice to Fine Appendix A – Roles and Responsibilities Appendix B – Absence Request Form Appendix C – Working Together to Improve Attendance Appendix D - Good attendance: the consequences of missing a few days across the school year
Related Policies	Child Protection Policy – Children Missing Education
Chair of Governor's Signature	

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Part 1: EIA Screening

Policies, Procedures or Practices:	Attendance Policy	Date:	September 2023
EIA Carried Out By:	S Stillie	EIA Approved By:	S Rigby

Groups that may be affected:

Are there concerns that the policy could have a different impact on any of the following groups? (please tick the relevant boxes)	Existing or potential adverse impact	Existing or potential for a positive impact
Age (young people, the elderly; issues surrounding protection and welfare, recruitment, training, pay, promotion)		X
Disability (physical and mental disability, learning difficulties; issues surrounding access to buildings, curriculum and communication)		X
Gender reassignment		X
Marriage and civil partnership		X
Pregnancy and maternity		X
Race		X
Religion and belief (practices of worship, religious or cultural observance, including non-belief)		X
Gender identity		X
Sexual orientation		X



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Our Vision

North Road Primary School is a school where everyone is encouraged to develop a love for learning, fulfil their potential, and discover new talents.

### Rationale

Regular attendance at school is essential for children as it promotes good learning, positive attitudes and maintains continuity in their education and their friendships. It is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason is unavoidable; permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by a parent.

### Aims

- To maximise the attendance of all children.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those attending the school.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.

### Statutory Framework

**Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, a student is required to attend regularly at school where he or she is a registered student or the parents/carers could be liable for prosecution.**

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent/carer does not in itself authorise an absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the school consider authorising an absence. Previous attendance for the child will be taken into consideration when reaching a decision to authorise an absence. **The school will not authorise an absence for a child whose attendance is below 90%, unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

From September 2015, the Government regards any pupil with attendance below 90% as a 'persistent absentee'.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED OR UNAUTHORISED.

## **Absence**

### **Authorised absence**

Absence can be authorised if the pupil is away from school for a good reason such as illness or other unavoidable causes e.g. a day of religious observance, family bereavement, attending an approved off-site activity or special off-site tuition.

All absence starts as unauthorised until a reason is given and accepted by the school.

### **Unauthorised absence**

Absence will be unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming.
- The school does not consider the absence as reasonable and for which no permission has been given. For example, the pupil stays at home to mind the house or look after siblings; the pupil is shopping during school hours; the pupil is away from school due to an exceptional circumstance for a period longer than agreed with the school; the pupil is on a family holiday without permission.

### **Holidays during term time**

The school policy is that all holidays/long weekends should be taken during school holidays. Requests for a holiday will only be granted when 'exceptional circumstances' can be demonstrated.

Examples of exceptional circumstance are:

- A parent, grandparent or other close relative being seriously ill.
- A significant trauma in the family recently.

To make an application to take a holiday during term time, parents/carers must submit an Absence Request Form to the Head Teacher, before making any arrangements. Absence Request Forms can be requested from the main school office. (Appendix B). Each request will be treated on an individual basis. It should, therefore, be understood that not all holiday requests will be authorised by the Head Teacher.

No absence will be authorised in Terms One or Five (in line with LA guidelines due to the importance of settling into a new school year in Term One and National Assessments in Term Five) 'unless in exceptional circumstances'

If the holiday absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the school may request the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice fine. The fine is £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days; rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full before the 28 days allowed, the Local Authority is required to commence legal proceedings in the Magistrates' Court under s444 of the Education Act of 1996 (failure to ensure regular attendance at school).

### **Other Absences**

Other absences from school during term time will be considered on an individual basis and a decision made on whether to authorise the absence. To make an application parents or carers must make an appointment to see the Head teacher, prior to the absence.

## **Lateness**

- The school bell is rung at 8.45am. Children have to be in class by 8.50am for registration. Pupils are marked late between 9am and 9.15am, and Code (L) is entered in the register.
- Pupils who arrive after 9am must report to the office and be entered in the School Late Book.
- If a pupil arrives after 9.15am Code (U) is entered in the register (Late after registration closed). This will be considered unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given.
- Pupils who arrive after 9.30am or 1.30pm will be officially absent for the whole morning or afternoon session.
- Action to address lateness will be taken. A letter will be sent to parents/carers of children who are late on a regular basis.

## **Illness**

- It is considered appropriate to send a child to school with a mild respiratory illness such as cold symptoms, minor cough, runny nose and sore throat. However, children should not be sent to school if they have a temperature of 38C or above.
- Parents/carers should refer to the NHS document 'is my child too ill for school?' for additional guidance on illness and school attendance. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>
- Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of the absence to provide a reason for the absence preferably before 8.30am indicating the type of illness.
- Where office staff are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence they will contact parents/carers by text and telephone on the first day of absence. If no contact is made and no explanation for absence is given, a letter of explanation will be required by the parent / carer on the child's return to school.
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the head teacher should be informed.

## **Anxiety**

- If a child is absent from school due to symptoms of worry and mild or moderate anxiety, please make the school aware at the very earliest opportunity. Whilst these are difficult emotions, they can be a part of normal growing up for many children. Being in school can often help alleviate the underlying issues and allows support to be put in place from our Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA). As a school, we work with pupils and their families to ensure that potential prolonged periods of absence are minimised as this likely to heighten a child's anxiety rather than reduce it.

## **Medical or dental appointments**

- Parents and carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments, where possible, out of school hours.
- Absence from school due to a medical appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are requested to inform the class teacher/office in advance of the appointment. Parents are asked to provide a copy of a Dental Appointment Card. This information will be recorded on the child's electronic record.

## **Reporting to Parents and Carers**

All absences both authorised and unauthorised and lateness will be reported to the parents/carers at the end of the academic year within their child's report.

## **Attendance that is causing concern – Early Intervention**

See also Appendix C: Working Together to Improve Attendance

Parents/carers will be contacted by letter if any of the following criteria are met:

- Their child's attendance falls below 90% by end of term 2.
- Their child has three or more broken weeks in a term.
- There is a regular pattern of absence.
- Their child is regularly late.

If a child is persistently absent (or late) and the school considers efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Any child whose attendance drops below 90% without good reason or who has more than 5 broken weeks for two or more terms each year will be asked to attend an Attendance meeting with the Head Teacher and Parent Support Advisor. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss support strategies, which can be implemented to improve the attendance of the individual pupil. An action plan will be written to record agreed actions to improve the child's attendance.

If following the meeting, attendance does not improve, the Head Teacher with the support of the Education Welfare Officer may call the parents/carers to attend an Attendance Panel meeting and the South Gloucestershire school attendance procedures may be implemented.

## **Promoting attendance and targets for the year**

See also Appendix D: Good attendance: the consequences of missing a few days across the school year

- Parents/carers will be regularly reminded (via newsletters) of the importance of good attendance.
- Appendix A lists people who have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- The school's attendance target is for every pupil to achieve at least 96%.
- The overall school target for 2020 – 2021 is 96%.

## **Children Missing Education**

If a family moves away from the area or wishes to transfer their child to another school, the Head teacher must be informed in writing. As a safeguarding measure, a child cannot be removed from a school roll until the school has been notified by another school that a place has been offered and accepted. When children stop attending and cannot be traced, the school will follow Local Authority guidance and report them to the Local Authority Children Missing Education Officer.

## **POLICY APPROVAL AND REVIEW**

Approved by the Full Governing Body at its meeting: September 2023

Next Planned Review Date: September 2024

# North Road Community Primary School



## Roles and Responsibilities

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

### Governors

- To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

### Headteacher

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil and group and whole school attendance patterns.
- To make a judgement in conjunction with the office staff or teachers as to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and/or punctuality is an issue.
- To provide governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
- To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- To coordinate with the Educational Welfare Office regarding providing work/education for children who are absent for sustained periods.

### Class Teacher

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
- To record the reasons for absence given to them on SIMs or the appropriate recording sheet.
- To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.

### School Administrator

- To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the SIMS Attendance Manager System.
- To monitor and track attendance patterns, in conjunction with the Head teacher, for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
- To contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish the reason.
- To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child.
- To make a judgement in conjunction with the Head teacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.



**Education Welfare Officer**

- To enforce the law regarding school attendance.
- To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and monitoring individual children's attendance.

**Administration**

- The school uses Attendance Manager provided by SIMS to store and monitor its legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance.
- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions.
- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.



# North Road Community Primary School

## ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

Please read carefully the letter on the other side of this form

Dear Head Teacher,

I/We request that the Head Teacher “authorise” the following requested absences:

Name of child ..... Class .....

Name of child ..... Class .....

Name of child ..... Class .....

First missed school day .....

Last missed school day .....

Total number of SCHOOL days each child will miss if the absence is authorised .....

For the following purpose...

### **THIS SECTION MUST BE COMPLETED**

The exceptional circumstances are...

Signed .....

Date .....

Print Name.....

### North Road Community Primary School – Absence during Term Time

Dear .....

Date: .....

Your request for absence **will/will not** be granted, in line with DFE Guidelines and school policy.

Signed:.....Sarah Stillie, Headteacher

## **ABSENCE REQUEST FORM**

The law says that parents/carers do not have a legal right to take their children out of school for holidays in term time.

However, schools can allow parents/carers to take their child out of school providing there are **exceptional** circumstances for the request and the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides makes an application in advance. Only in **exceptional** circumstances will more than 10 school days absence be granted in any school year.

When deciding whether to allow time off, the school will consider:

- If there are **exceptional** circumstances for the request.
- The time of year of the holiday.
- How long the holiday will be and how much it will disrupt the child's education.
- Previous similar requests.
- The child's attendance record.

Schools will take into account government guidance when considering what exceptional circumstances are. The following are not considered exceptional circumstances:

- Availability of cheap holidays.
- Availability of desired accommodation.
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods.
- Overlapping with beginning or end of term.

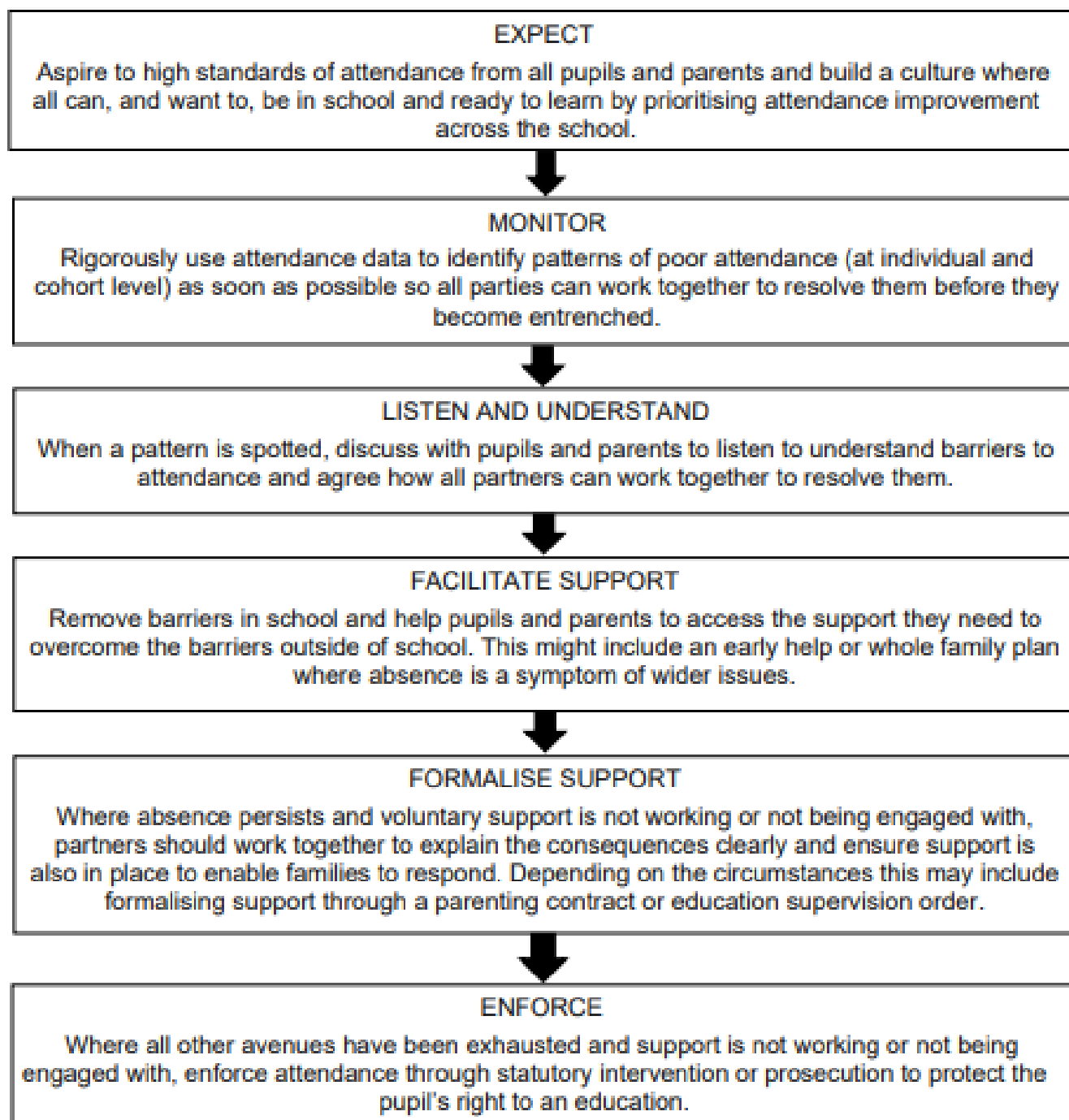
Examples of exceptional circumstances are:

- A parent, grandparent or other close relative being seriously ill.
- A significant trauma in the family recently.



# North Road Community Primary School

## Working Together to Improve Attendance





## North Road Community Primary School

### Good attendance: the consequences of missing a few days across the school year

In the last academic year, at North Road Primary School, attendance was 96.3%

Attendance	Number of school days missed	
<b>100%</b>	<b>Zero days off</b>	<b>Excellent!</b> A child can take advantage of all learning opportunities.
<b>98% +</b>	<b>Less than a week</b>	<b>Very good</b> – This will help all aspects of their progress and life in school. A child should reach his/her full potential, leading to the best possible start to their formal education.
<b>97-98%</b>	<b>5 days – a school week</b>	
<b>96-97%</b>	<b>6 days</b>	<b>Good attendance</b> – A child has a good start to their schooling and can make the most of all opportunities to do their best.
<b>95.2-96%</b>	<b>8 days</b>	<b>Satisfactory just above the average</b> – A child is likely to achieve their targets; however, they should strive to build on this.
<b>93-95%</b>	<b>10 days – two school weeks</b>	<b>Below the average attendance nationally</b> - If a child has more than two weeks away from school they may fail to make the progress expected.
<b>91-93%</b>	<b>15 days – three school weeks</b>	<b>Poor attendance</b> – absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. Parents will need to work with the school to improve the situation.
<b>Below 90%</b>	<b>20 days – four school weeks</b>	<b>Unacceptable</b> – A child will now be finding it extremely difficult to keep up and achieve their best. Below 90%, attendance is considered persistent absenteeism and the Local Authority may become involved to take action. Where this is due to a genuine medical reason, an Individual Health Care Plan will be considered.
<b>Below 80%</b>		Children with this attendance are <b>missing a day for every week in school</b> . Absence is causing <b>SERIOUS CONCERN</b> . It is seriously affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting the child's learning. Where the absences are unauthorised, the school will be supported by the Local Authority to take action against the parents/carers.