

NORTHGATE
High School

Attendance Policy

Respect | Determination | Teamwork

Review period: Annual

Review by: Mrs J Pipe

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Next Review: September 2021

Table of Contents

1	Aim	3
2	Expectations	3
3	Lateness	3
4	Absences	3-4
5	Intervention Strategies	5
6	Fixed Penalty Notices and the Education Attendance Service	6
7	Attendance letters	7-13
8	Exceptional Leave of Absence form	14

Attendance Policy

1. Aim

Northgate High School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. There is clear evidence from educational research to show the link between school attendance and educational achievement. Students with high levels of attendance achieve consistently higher results than those whose attendance is low.

At Northgate High School we believe that every student has a fundamental right to a full education.

The aim of Northgate High School's Attendance Policy is to:

- Encourage an ethos where all our students want to attend school regularly and punctually.
- Encourage students to understand the importance of good attendance for academic success and their future life in the workplace.
- Provide a clear definition of authorised and unauthorised absences that are easily understood by students, staff, governors and parents/carers.
- Aid and support all staff in the management of attendance.
- Ensure that our very high standards of attendance and punctuality are maintained.

The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance and punctuality: parents/carers, students, all school staff and governors.

2 Expectations

Students are expected to attend school every day. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly. Northgate High School will endeavour to support parents/carers and students in this.

The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly.

Section 444 of the Act states: - "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence".

Attendance and punctuality issues can have a detrimental effect on the education that a student receives. Evidence shows that missing out on lessons leaves students vulnerable to falling behind and the tendency for them to achieve less than those students with a good attendance record.

Students are expected to attend all their lessons on time, properly dressed with the right equipment and be ready to learn.

Students are expected to be in their form room by 8.45am for morning registration.

Afternoon registration is taken with their Period 4 lesson at 1.55pm.

If a student arrives after 9am, when form time has finished, then they are expected to register at reception.

3 Lateness

If students arrive late (after 8.45am) they will be marked as late on the register and issued with a B3 (10 minute detention that day).

If a student arrives after 9.20am they will be marked with an unauthorised absence for missing a large part of Period 1 and issued a full 25 minute B3.

4 Absences

If a student is prevented from attending school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to notify the school on the first and each subsequent days of absence.

Medical evidence will be requested following a period of absence lasting more than 8 sessions (4 days). If no evidence is provided further absence will be marked as unauthorised.

It is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

4.1 What reasons for absence will the School accept?

Northgate will accept the following reasons for absence:

- Illness, although the school may request proof of medical evidence if the absence is ongoing.
- Emergency dental/medical appointment: Please try to make routine appointments after school or during the school holidays.
- Family holiday, in exceptional circumstances and only when prior approval has been given. An Exceptional Leave of absence form must be completed in advance, giving full details. Otherwise your request may be refused.
- Day of religious observance.
- Family bereavement, (only for a limited period).
- Attending an interview for a job, college, university, etc
- Participation in an approved public performance for which a licence application has been made and the application approved by the local authority.
- Participation in regional or national competitions in recognised sporting or other activities eg. Horse riding, basketball, chess etc.
- Participation in a recognised youth group event of limited duration eg. Scouts, Air Cadets.

4.2 Will the School contact me if my child is absent?

Northgate High School operates a first-day response to absences: we will endeavour to contact you if we have not heard from you. Parents/carers will initially be contacted by text or email, if no response is received then a telephone call will be made to establish a reason for absence.

The Attendance Officer will meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss attendance issues.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

4.3 Can we take family holidays during term-time?

Northgate High School strongly discourages parents/carers from taking their children out of school, especially during Years 10 and 11 as students take GCSE examinations during these years.

If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to accompany you on an annual family holiday during term-time, you should complete a Leave of Absence application form well in advance of the proposed date, to enable the application to be considered and a decision taken. Applications received late are unlikely to be authorised.

The school has the right to refuse permission and will not consider an application unless all the following conditions are met:

- The holiday is a single annual family holiday which can only be taken in school term-time.

AND

- The attendance of the student has exceeded 95% in the previous 12 months.

AND

- The student will not miss major assessments/ be absent during the important final preparation time for exams or miss the preparation or submission of Non-Examination Assessment.

If a student misses schoolwork as a result of any absence taken during term-time, responsibility for catching up on the missed work lies with the student and the parent/carer.

It is the student's responsibility to ascertain and check examination dates, particularly if the holiday is requested before the exam timetable has been finalised.

4.4 What absences are unlikely to be authorised?

- If no permission has been sought in advance
- For annual holidays which could be taken in school holiday time
- For looking after siblings
- For shopping trips including buying school uniform
- For day trips (including birthday "treats")

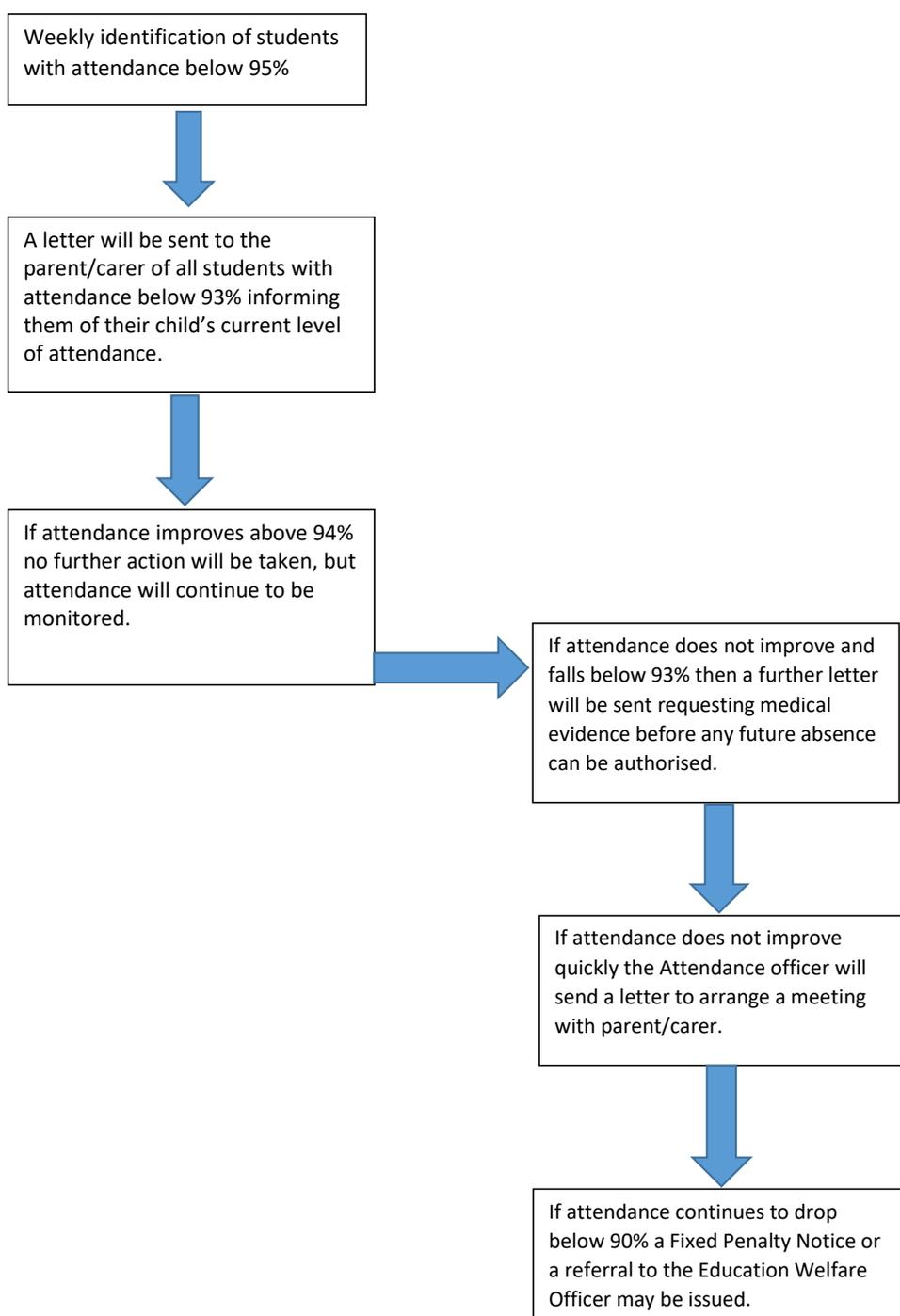
- For visiting relatives
- For unexceptional special occasions eg. the student's birthday, or that of a friend, or ordinary birthdays of relatives
- For family holidays longer than the duration originally authorised, including where flights are delayed
- Waiting in for plumber/electrician or similar.
- Because of financial considerations.
- Students accompanying parents/carers to appointments for translation purposes.

This list is not exhaustive.

4.5 My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Contact your child's Form Tutor, Progress director, Pastoral Officer or keyworker immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – eg difficulties with schoolwork, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. We may involve other agencies to help and support you and your child.

5 Intervention Strategies



6 Fixed Penalty Notices and the Education Attendance Service

6.1 Education Penalty Notices

Suffolk Education Attendance Service will issue Penalty Notices where unauthorised absence occurs. This can include persistently being late for school. These are aimed at reducing the levels of unauthorised absences during a school term and can be issued by the Local Authority, schools or Police.

The penalty is:

£60 if paid within 21 days

£120 if paid between 21 and 28 days

A penalty notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child.

6.2 When will Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) be issued?

- Unauthorised holidays in term time.
- Parentally condoned absence where the parent is deemed capable but unwilling to address attendance problems (e.g. a failure to engage with support measures).
- Where a student is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.
- A parent continually fails to provide an explanation for a student's absence in accordance with the school's procedures.

(Usually, other than for unauthorised holidays, a telephone call will be made, followed by a letter to establish reasons for the absence. If these have not been given, or the school is not satisfied by the reason, or the required medical evidence has not been provided, then a further letter will be sent to indicate we will be pursuing a Fixed Penalty Notice (Fine)).

- The student has a record of unauthorised absences including persistently late after 9.30am when the school register has closed.

*(In circumstances where there are **8 sessions** (am and pm are counted individually) within a 12 week period of unauthorised absence, a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued.*

A Fixed Penalty Notice will also be issued without a formal warning if a formal Warning has already been issued to the parent/carer within the previous twelve months).

- This is not an exhaustive list and each case will be considered individually.

6.3 Non-payment of Fixed Penalty Notices

If payment in full is not received, the parent/carer will be prosecuted under s444(1) Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of a registered student of compulsory school age.

6.4 Withdrawal of Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed Penalty Notices can be withdrawn in certain circumstances. If a parent/carer receives a Fixed Penalty Notice and believes that it should not have been issued, they should follow the procedure for applying for withdrawal of the notice without delay. Detailed information about how to follow this procedure is provided in the explanatory notes accompanying the Fixed Penalty Notice.

6.5 Referral to the Education Attendance Service

Northgate High School may refer a student to the Education Attendance Service (EAS) if a student is regularly absent from school (Attendance Below 90%) and fails to provide adequate reasons and/or medical evidence for continued illness.

7 Attendance letters

«salutation»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

According to our records «forename» was absent from school on the dates shown below, where we have not been informed of a reason.

«periods_of_absence»

Having recently tried to contact you regarding «forename» absence from school, I was unsuccessful. Please contact me as soon as possible with reasons for the recent absence/s.

The Education Attendance Service on behalf of Suffolk County Council will be issuing fixed penalty notice fines when unauthorised absences of 8 sessions (4 days) are recorded.

Any absence should be reported using the absence line on 01473 210123 before 8.45 on the first day and every subsequent day that your child will be absent from school.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Pipe
Attendance Officer

✂.....

Return to: Attendance Officer

Student Name: «forename» «surname»

Form: «year_reg»

Date(s) of Absence: «periods_of_absence»

Reason for Absence:

Signed: _____ Parent/Carer

«salutation»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Dear «salutation»

«chosen_forename» «surname», «reg»: Term Time Absence

According to school attendance records «chosen_forename»'s attendance is currently «percentage_attendance»%. The target for attendance is **96%**.

Whilst we appreciate that on occasion absence from school is unavoidable, a small drop in attendance can lead to a big reduction in student achievement.

We would appreciate your support in ensuring that «chosen_forename»'s attendance improves in the coming weeks.

Students with less than 90% attendance may be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

'The Education Attendance Service on behalf of Suffolk County Council will be issuing fixed penalty notices fines when unauthorised absences of 8 sessions (4 days) are recorded.'

If there are any problems with regards to «chosen_forename» health or attendance at school, please contact me to discuss so we can resolve any issues.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Pipe
Attendance Officer

«salutation»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

Ref: «forename» «surname», «reg»

Dear «salutation»

According to school attendance records «forename» was late to registration a total of «total_lates_both» times this half term.

Arriving late to a lesson is very disruptive for the whole class and often instructions have to be repeated.

If your son or daughter arrives late, they must sign in at Reception before going to their lesson. They will be issued with a 10 minute B3 detention that day. For the safety of all students' accurate registers are essential.

Students arriving after 9.20 will be marked with an unauthorised late and issued a full 25 minute B3 detention.

I would therefore ask you to impress upon «forename» the importance of arriving to school and registration on time.

Your continued support in this matter is much appreciated and if I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Pipe
Attendance Officer

«salutation»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

«forename» «surname», «reg»

Dear «salutation»

According to school attendance records «chosen_forename»'s attendance is currently «percentage_attendance»%. The target for attendance is **96%**.

Good attendance is vital to a students' success and whilst we appreciate that on occasion absence from school is unavoidable, this level of attendance is a cause for concern.

Unfortunately, I can no longer authorise any more absence without medical evidence. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, letters or medical certificates.

We realise how important the attendance of your child is to you and know that you would only keep them off school when it is absolutely necessary. Therefore, we must ask that all further absence is supported by medical evidence as stated above. If the level of attendance continues to fall below 90% it is likely that Northgate will involve the Local Authority or Education Welfare Officer and a Fixed Penalty Fine may be issued.

'The Education Attendance Service on behalf of Suffolk County Council will be issuing fixed penalty notices fines when unauthorised absences of 8 sessions (4 days) are recorded.'

If you have any queries in relation to this letter or wish to provide any information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Pipe
Attendance Officer

«salutation»

«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

«forename» «surname», «reg»

Dear «salutation»,

I am very pleased to be writing to you in respect of «forename»'s attendance which has shown a positive improvement «percentage_attendance»%.

This is an important step towards «forename»'s academic achievement and it's wonderful to be able to share this good news.

I look forward to seeing this improvement continue and thank you for your support.

Kind regards

Mrs J Pipe
Attendance Officer

«salutation»
«address_block»

«date_of_printing»

«forename» «surname», «reg»

Dear «salutation»

After reviewing «forename»'s attendance, I am writing to invite you to a meeting at school to discuss the reasons for «forename»'s absence from school. I have arranged to meet at the following time:

Date:

Time:

Venue:

The meeting is to discuss with you any additional support that we might be able offer to help your child's attendance going forward. It would be helpful if you could bring any medical evidence relating to «forename»'s absence – this might be a letter from your GP or a Consultant, a Primary Mental Health Worker letter, or other documents related to medical appointments and/or treatments.

Please complete and return to school the attached reply slip confirming that you are able to attend this meeting. If you are unable to attend at this time, please call as soon as possible to arrange a mutually convenient time. It is important that we can work together to improve «forename»'s attendance; further absence could lead to a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Pipe
Attendance Officer

□

Attendance Meeting – reply slip to be returned to Mrs J Pipe, Northgate High School

Name of Student:

Form:

Date of meeting:

Time of meeting:

I/We can/cannot attend the above meeting (please delete as appropriate)

Signed.....(Parent/Carer)

Date.....

Print Name

«salutation»
«address_block»

17 November 2020

«forename» «surname», «reg»

Dear «salutation»

I am writing to you about «forename»'s attendance. I note from my attendance records that «total_unauthorised_absences» sessions have been marked as unauthorised this term.

I must remind you how important it is that you phone absences in by 8.45am to the attendance officer. If we do not receive a call from you and I have been unable to contact you, then the absence will be unauthorised.

The Education Attendance Service on behalf of Suffolk County Council will be issuing a fixed penalty notice fine when a student reaches 8 sessions (equal to 4 days) of unauthorised absence in a 12-week period.

If you would like to discuss ways in which we can improve your child's attendance, then please contact myself or their Progress Director as soon as possible on 01473 210123.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Pipe
Attendance Officer

8 Exceptional Leave of Absence form



NORTHGATE
High School

EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE APPLICATION FORM

Governors have agreed that we will not routinely sanction absence during term time. The effect of such absence is damaging for students and staff because it disrupts learning. The Government have also made it clear that parents should not take their child on holidays during term time and **there is no legal right to do so**. Parents applying for their child to have leave from school in exceptional circumstances should complete this form and return it to the school for authorisation well in advance of the requested absence.

A separate form must be completed for each child attending Northgate High School.

Student Name					
Tutor Group					
Parent/Carer Name					
Student Address:					
Parent/Carer Telephone Number:					
Date requested from		Date requested to		Total number of school days	
Does this Exceptional Leave involve any siblings? YES [] NO [] (✓ as appropriate). If yes please state:					
Name(s):					
School(s):					
Year Group(s):					
Reason for requesting exceptional leave during term:					
Parent/Carer's signature:				Date:	

For school use only

School Response:					
Progress Director's Signature:			Date:		
Authorised – Exceptional circumstances			[] (✓ if appropriate)		
Not Authorised – Not in line with County Guidelines			[] (✓ if appropriate)		
Pass to LA for penalty fine if 4 days (8 sessions) or more unauthorised					
Copied to Attendance Officer []		Copied for student file		Original returned []	

