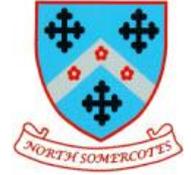


# North Somercotes CE Primary School



## Whole School Attendance Policy

### Attendance Monitoring Group:

Mr Floyd	Headteacher
Mrs Selby	Administrator
Mrs Chapman	Parent Governor
Diane Enderby	Education Welfare Officer

### 1. MISSION STATEMENT:

North Somercotes CE Primary School is committed to providing a full and exciting education for all pupils. The school believes sincerely that all pupils benefit from the education it provides and therefore from regular school attendance. To this end the School will do as much as it can to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems affecting attendance will be dealt with as quickly as possible.

*Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, it is the legal responsibility of parents to see that their child/children receive(s) regular education suitable to their age, aptitude and abilities by regular attendance at school or education otherwise*

### 2. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy received the full agreement of the Governing Body and was agreed at the meeting in Autumn Term 2017

### 3. AIMS

1. We recognise the importance of school attendance in enabling pupils to achieve their maximum educational potential and fully endorse the link between attendance and attainment.
2. The school is committed to working in partnership with families and other agencies in order to achieve the best outcomes for children.
3. Pupils on the roll of North Somercotes CE Primary are required to attend school punctually and regularly and parents have a responsibility in law to ensure that this happens.
4. The school will provide a welcoming and caring environment where all members of the school community feel secure and valued.
5. The school will emphasise the importance of attendance in a variety of ways including PSHE, SEAL, assemblies, posters and leaflets.

6. The school will effectively communicate with pupils and parents to support good attendance and timekeeping and to provide appropriate information and advice.
7. Registers will be kept in accordance with government regulations with weekly class attendance shared with all staff.
8. The registers will be kept open for 30 minutes after the beginning of each school session. Pupils arriving after 9.20 am will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' with a "U" code
9. Parents/carers are required to notify the school on each day of the absence on 01507 358221 to advise that their child is absent and the reason why.
10. The school will make the decision as to whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised.
11. The school will operate a First Day Contact system whereby the parents of pupils who are absent and no notification has been received will be contacted and asked for the reason of absence.
12. Individual pupil's attendance will be regularly monitored and concerns promptly shared with parents/carers and the Education Welfare Service.
13. School staff will work with pupils, parents/carers and other agencies to resolve school related issues which are impacting on a pupil's attendance. All parents/carers of children with Persistent Absence or likely to become Persistent Absentees will be invited to attend a School Attendance Panel with the Headteacher, the Governor responsible for Attendance, the class teacher, The Education Welfare Officer and the School Attendance Administrator(see Appendix 1). From September 2015 any child with 10% or more absence will be classed as a Persistent Absentee.
14. The school will support the reintegration of pupils after an absence, sensitively and involving relevant staff and giving access to counselling or mentoring services as appropriate.
15. North Somercotes CE Primary does not authorise any term time absence except in the most exceptional of circumstances.
  - Parents are required to put any request for leave of absence in writing at least two weeks before the proposed leave. This letter should be written directly to the Headteacher.
16. The school will respond to any such request in writing giving reasons for the decision and include:
  - The expected date of return
  - That parents/carers are expected to advise of any delay in return
  - What action will be taken if the pupil fails to return when expected
17. If a request is rejected and time off from school is still taken this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and the Educational Welfare Services will be involved, possibly with a formal warning letter and/or a fixed penalty notice being issued.
18. We celebrate children attending school regularly through attendance certificates, raffles, highest class attendance of the week etc.

#### **4. SCHOOL ORGANISATION:**

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

Specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

##### **Head Teacher:**

- To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy.
- To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.
- To set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence
- To liaise with the EWO

##### **School Attendance Secretary:**

- To ensure the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents.
- To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
- To report to the Head Teacher on attendance issues.
- To liaise with EWO.

##### **Class Teacher:**

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence
- To inform senior staff of concerns in a timely manner.

##### **Governors:**

- Governors will play a valuable role through representation at school attendance panels.
- Request regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings.

### **Parents:**

- Contact with school on first day of absence or as soon as possible.
- Support their child and the school in achieving maximum attendance.

### **Education Welfare Service:**

The Education Welfare Service has been described as the “attendance enforcement arm” of most local authorities (DES 1991) which complements the role of the school.

Lincolnshire Education Welfare Service will strive to provide a service that recognises the uniqueness of the school and the community it serves.

In accordance with the EWS Service Remit and Procedures they can support schools in a variety of ways:

- Support schools in the establishment and management of school attendance panels.
- Where necessary they will instigate legal proceedings on behalf of the Local Authority including parental prosecutions in the Magistrates’ Court and applying for Education Supervision Orders through the Family Court or the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices.
- Offer strategic/policy advice and support in relation to matters of attendance, the employment of young people and young people involved in performing.

### **The Importance of Registration:**

- An electronic attendance register must be kept on which, at the **BEGINNING** of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent.
- Accurate marking of registers, and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems can have a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures.
- Attendance registers, and bound copies of electronic registration print outs must be kept for a minimum of 3 years from the date that the last entries were made.

### **Categorising Absence:**

**Symbols to be used in Registers (Categories) (see Appendix 2)**

From 1 September 2006 all schools are required to use a common set of codes to record pupil attendance and absence.

The Department for Education (DfE) believes that these codes are best used within electronic systems for recording attendance and absence of pupils. Such electronic systems are capable of producing the data necessary for absence returns to DfE without time consuming counting up of possible attendances and actual absences.

The use of fixed codes will also assist both LAs and DfE in monitoring not only whether pupils are absent with or without the permission of the school, but why pupils are absent from school.

- **Only the school**, in the context of the law **can authorise absence**, a note or explanation from parents does not guarantee authorisation. If an appropriate member of staff does not accept the explanation offered for absence as a valid reason then the matter must be referred to the Head Teacher.
- Emerging patterns of authorised absence should be reported to the Head Teacher.
- Reasons for absence should be entered in the register by the appropriate code symbol.
- All parental notes to be filed in the office.

#### **Authorised or Unauthorised Absence:**

**Authorised absence** is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised**.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences.

- Illness
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

### **Approved Educational Activity**

Where pupils are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked in the usual way but are counted as present for calculating data for the DfE absence return. To avoid confusion in emergency situations pupils who are off site should not be marked as present.

### **Lateness:**

We actively discourage late arrival by challenging young people who are persistently late or arrive late without reasonable explanation. Registration begins at 8:50am

Registers remain open, thirty minutes from the beginning of registration. In the event of bad weather this period can be extended.

Where a pupil arrives during the period when the register is open they may be marked present.

Where a pupil arrives after register closure without good reason, they should be marked with the letter L to indicate that they are on site.

Registration begins at 8:50am. Pupils who arrive after 9am will be marked as late. After the close of the registers non-attendance will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless school has been notified of the absence.

### **GOOD PRACTICE:**

Research suggests that good practice is associated with:

1. The Head Teacher having specific responsibility for pupil attendance.
2. A list of absentees being produced quickly, ideally by morning break, for use by appropriate teaching and office staff.
3. The school will devise a sensitive scheme for the immediate follow-up of absentees – e.g. either by telephoning home or sending out letters to parents or guardians.
4. Staff with responsibility for pupil attendance having regular meetings with EWO on an agreed basis.
5. Rewards introduced for individual pupils or classes with an excellent attendance record in the form of praise or prizes.

6. Penalties being introduced for pupils who are persistently late.
7. First day of absence contact. Where the schools is able to resource this, a phone call to the homes of all, absentees on their first day of absence has proved to be effective in addressing casual and opportunistic absence. Even short-term use of the strategy can produce long-term benefits.
8. Targeting identified pupils or groups of pupils with unsatisfactory levels of attendance, for example through school attendance panels, can have significant benefits.

**Responding to non-attendance:**

**When a pupil does not attend the school the following procedures are in place:**

- If there are Child Protection concerns then the Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Procedures should be followed immediately.
- If a note or telephone call is not received from parents/guardian, the parents/guardian will be contacted on the day of the absence by text or phone call.
- Where there is no response a phone call will be made on following day, or a letter sent to attempt to identify a reason for the child being absent. Where there is no response, a letter will be sent after three days of unexplained absence, or there may be a visit from a member of the school staff or the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) where the Service is involved.
- Should be a child be absent with no explanation given for a period of 5 days a referral will be made to the Children Missing From Education Team via a phone call to Lincolnshire County Council Customer Service Centre via 01522 782111. Should a child be absent for a total of four weeks without any explanation, and after due investigation, the school is entitled to remove this child from the register. Parents would then have to re-apply for a place in the school should they wish their child to return.
- Where non-attendance continues the case will be discussed with the Education Welfare Officer for the school and further action planned. This could, in appropriate cases, result in a formal referral to Education Services. Parents may be invited to attend a meeting in school. This meeting will include the appropriate staff, EWO, parent and pupil and will aim to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the pupil from attending school.
- School will send termly attendance letters and monitor attendance where attendance has been less than 95%.
- Following this procedure you may be asked to attend a School Attendance Panel meeting with the attendance officer, Head teacher, Attendance Governor and EWO. Targets for the next time period will be set to support improved attendance.
- If at the end of this monitoring period there are ongoing unauthorised absences these could result in legal options being considered such as, Education

Supervision Orders, Fixed Penalty Notice Warning letter / penalty or a Formal Legal Warning Letter being issued in regards to prosecution.

<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/welfare/school-attendance-the-law/29470.article>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>

### **Effect of Penalty Notice being issued**

- The penalty notice is presumed to be served on the parent / carer to whom it is sent on the second working day after it was posted.
- If a parent / carer pays the penalty notice within 21 days from the date it is served the sum due from the parent to discharge the penalty notice is £60.00
- The parent / carer can still pay the notice after 21 days but the payment increases to £120 and this must be paid before 28 days have passed from the date of service.
- If a parent / carer pays the amount due within the times set out above then no further action will be taken against that parent for the offence on the date(s) set out in the penalty notice.
- Once a penalty notice has been issued no prosecution for the offence detailed in the penalty notice can be brought against the parent until the payment period has passed and the fixed penalty has not been paid.
- All payments must be made to the Local Authority.

### **Procedure for Issuing Penalty Notices**

Penalty Notices will only be issued within the terms of the Code of Conduct. Lincolnshire County Council is responsible for the administration and issue of penalty notices in Lincolnshire. The Local Authority will ensure that penalty notices are properly issued and will only issue them for offences where the Local Authority is satisfied that the matter meets the threshold for a prosecution.

Further information including copies of the code of conduct can be found on Lincolnshire County Council's website,

<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/welfare>

When requesting a FPN it is important to include the details of those parents/carers who have day-to-day care of the child (meaning those who reside with the child). Equally it is important that warning letters go separately to each parent, this is so that if the case does go to prosecution we can clearly evidence that both parents have been clearly informed. (Templates of these letters are available from the Inclusion & Attendance Team).

### **Use of Fixed Penalty Notices**

- Regulations allow both the Local Authority and schools to issue fixed penalty notices. Payment is always made to Local Authority.

- Fixed penalties are only one of the tools available to the Local Authority in tackling school attendance and anti-social behaviour issues and where thought appropriate alternative approaches such as Education Supervision Orders and prosecution may be utilised at the discretion of the Local Authority.
- If a penalty notice is issued whether paid or not it may be used in evidence in subsequent criminal proceedings in relation to either non-school attendance or being in a public place during school hours whilst excluded from school.

### **Leave of absence during term time.**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 have removed the reference to holidays during term time and now provides that a leave of absence during term time will only be granted where an application is made in advance to the school and the school consider that the leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

“Exceptional circumstances” will not be authorised for the following reasons:

- a holiday can only be afforded in term time
- a parent is unable to take leave during school holidays (this is a matter between the parent and their employer).

The Headteacher will also consider asking for evidence of the circumstances that has arisen, where appropriate.

- Parents must write to the Headteacher request the term time absence
- The Headteacher will then respond to the request in writing
- The EWO Officer will be notified
- In the event of unauthorised absence Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued by the Local Authority.

### **Procedure for Issuing Penalty Notices**

- Penalty Notices will only be issued within the terms of the Code of Conduct. The Local Authority Inclusion and Attendance Team are responsible for the administration and issue of penalty notices in Lincolnshire. The Local Authority will ensure that penalty notices are properly issued and will only issue them for offences where the Local Authority is satisfied that the matter meets the threshold for a prosecution.
- Requests for fixed penalty notices can be found on Lincolnshire County Council's website, <http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/welfare>.
- Once the application is completed it should be emailed with the correct supporting information to [fjn@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:fjn@lincolnshire.gov.uk). The Inclusion & Attendance Team will acknowledge receipt of the application and notify school once the period of 28 days have passed and advise whether or not the fine has been paid.
- Requests for the issue of fixed penalty notices will be accepted from Schools in Lincolnshire and the Lincolnshire Police and from within the Local Authority and must be in writing.

- Where an application for a formal warning or fixed penalty notice is accepted the Local Authority will issue the warning or notice in writing to the parent(s) concerned and where there is more than one parent a separate written notification will be sent to each parent for each child that the notice relates to. The notice will be sent to the parent by first class post.

### **Appeal against the Penalty Notice**

There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice and a parent can either accept and pay the same or decline payment subject to them being aware that further action as set out below may be taken by the Local Authority if the penalty notice remains unpaid.

However, the Local Authority has the discretion to withdraw the notice if they are satisfied that:

- The fixed penalty notice has been sent to the wrong person
- It contains a material error (in these circumstances a fresh amended penalty notice could still be issued).
- If for any other reason the Local Authority are of the opinion that it should not have been issued.

### **Non Payment of the Penalty Notice**

- Non-payment of a fixed term penalty notice is not of itself an offence. The fixed penalty notice is issued as an alternative to bringing a prosecution in the magistrates' court for the offence set out in the notice. However, if the offer of dealing with the offence as a fixed penalty matter is not taken up by payment of the sum due within the 28 day period then consideration will be given to issuing criminal proceedings against the parent in the magistrates' court.
- If a fixed penalty notice has not been paid after 28 days from the day it is taken to be served then the Local Authority will contact the school or police officer who made the application for the penalty notice to be issued and discuss with them the available evidence to bring proceedings in the magistrates' court for the alleged offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or Section 103 of the Education and Inspection Act 2006.
- If it is the view of the Local Authority that prosecution is a viable option then a request will be made that the school or police officer concerned submits a report to the Inclusion and Attendance Team for a formal decision to be taken to proceed with the matter by issuing criminal proceedings before the magistrates' court.
- Prosecution of offences is a matter within the discretion of the local authority and a decision will be taken in line with the Local Authority prosecution policy for these matters and proceedings, where commenced, will be issued by the Local Authority
- If a prosecution is brought and the parent is found guilty or pleads guilty then a conviction for an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 or for an offence under Section 103 of the Education and inspection Act 2006

both carry a fine of up to a maximum of £1000 and in addition the Local Authority will seek to recover costs in respect of bringing the proceedings. Further, a successful prosecution will result in a parent having a criminal record which could be disclosed should they apply for a position where a DBS check is required.

### **Reintegration following absence or reduced timetable:**

- The return to school for a pupil after long-term absence or reduced timetable requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfE Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance
- Designated staff should be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and for the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual need and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in class as appropriate. Support from the Inclusion Manager / SENCO may be required.
- The Children and Families Act 2014 places a duty on maintained schools and academies to make arrangements to support pupils with medical conditions. Individual healthcare plans will normally specify the type and level of support required to meet the medical needs of such pupils. Where children and young people also have SEN, their provision should be planned and delivered in a co-ordinated way with the healthcare plan. Schools are required to have regard to statutory guidance 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

The success of the Pastoral Support Programme will require the involvement of appropriate school staff, other agencies, the young person and parents. Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary. Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees via the morning briefings.

### **Identifying children at risk of missing education**

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 placed a duty on all Local Authorities in England and Wales for them to make arrangements to identify children missing education in their area. The duty applies to all children of compulsory school age, in any school, who are not on a school roll and are not receiving a suitable education. As part of its attendance strategy and duty, the Local Authority seek to identify all children who are missing education or at risk of missing education. As a school we must support this process.

As outlined in the Children Missing Education policy (June 2012), a child at risk of missing education is defined as;

- *Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is on roll of a school but has less than 50% attendance in a school term*
- *Any child of compulsory school age (5-16) who is subject to a modified/reduced timetable for more than one school term*

The Local authority will identify children who meet these criteria based on the data we provide through the school census.

If our school has children who meet the criteria, we will receive an email requesting information regarding the attendance of these children.

The local authority will then track the attendance of these identified children through to the next census to monitor improvements.

**Agreed by Governors Autumn Term 2017**

**Policy to be reviewed annually**

**NORTH SOMERCOTES CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL  
ATTENDANCE PANEL MEETING (SAP)  
ACTION PLAN**

<p><b>Name of Child:</b></p> <p><b>D.O.B.</b></p> <p><b>School:</b></p> <p><b>Form Group:</b></p> <p><b>Current Attendance:</b>  <b>Authorised:   %   Unauthorised:   %</b></p>	<p><b>Date of SAP:</b></p> <p><b>Venue:</b></p> <p><b>Panel Members:</b></p> <p><b>Attended by parent:   YES/NO</b></p> <p><b>Attended by young person:   YES/NO</b></p>
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**Issues raised:**

<b>Key Actions:</b>	<b>By Whom:</b>	<b>Timescale:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> <li>•</li> </ul>

**Target Attendance:**

Your child's attendance will be reviewed one week before the end of term.  
 You will be notified if further action is required.

**Signed By:**

..... <b>Education Welfare Officer</b>	..... <b>Parent</b>
..... <b>Headteacher</b>	..... <b>Student</b>

**Attendance Codes:**

- B - Educated off site (NOT Dual reg.)
- C - Other Authorised Circumstances
- E - Excluded (no alternative provision)
- F - Extended family holiday (agreed)
- G - Family holiday (NOT agreed)
- H - Family holiday (agreed)
- I - Illness (NOT medical or dental)
- J – Interview
- L - Late (before registers closed)
- M - Medical/Dental appointments
- N - No reason yet provided for absence
- O – Unauthorised Absence
- P - Approved sporting activity
- R - Religious observance
- S - Study leave
- T - Traveller absence
- U - Late (after registers closed)
- V - Educational visit or trip
- W - Work experience