



Nuneaton Academy Attendance Policy September 2022

Reviewed by Phil Kruse: Reviewed date: September 2022

Overview

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Failure to do so may result in legal action. Missing school causes severe disruption to a child's education and affects their performance in exams and chances later in life. More information can be found at www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

This is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. **The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.**

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms.

Aims

At Nuneaton Academy we recognise that regular attendance is crucial for our pupils to reach their full potential. It influences the levels of attainment, relationships with peers, enjoyment of school and future opportunities. Every single day is an entitlement for each student.

The school will consistently work towards high attendance figures for all our pupils. We recognise the need for pupils, parents and the school to work in close partnership to achieve this. In addition, to support these efforts we employ an Attendance Officer and work closely with Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS)

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this policy is written to reflect these laws and guidance set out by The Department of Education.

Procedures

Registration

Morning registration takes place in tutor time at the start of school and will be taken at 8.45am. Any student arriving after this time will be marked late unless there is an acceptable explanation. Afternoon registration takes place at the start of lesson 3 (11.35am) Registers are also taken at the start of every lesson. A pupil arriving after 9.30am will be marked as U and will lose their mornings attendance mark.

Absence

All absences will be marked as either authorised or unauthorised. If an explanation for an absence is not received or the explanation deemed unsatisfactory then that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. The DfE has allocated various codes for absence and the school uses these to account for the reason for non-attendance.

Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the absence line before 8.30am to report an absence providing a reason. If no contact is made explaining an absence then the school will send a text home or ring home to secure an explanation. A phone call should be made on each day of absence unless previously agreed to by The Principal, Attendance Officer or in exceptional circumstances. A doctor's note or medical evidence will be needed for absences of more than 5 days. Evidence will be required for all absences where possible to support pupils throughout their time at The Nuneaton Academy.

If attendance ***falls below the school target of 96%*** an informal 'stage 1' meeting will take place between the pupil and tutor. Support will also be offered to help improve attendance and any underlying reasons sought. The meeting will be recorded for future reference and discussion.

If attendance ***continues to fall*** a 'stage 2' meeting will be held between the school's attendance officer and parents/carers. This meeting will explore continued lower attendance and reasons for this. The school and parents will work together and look at ways to support the pupil and any barriers to attending school regularly.

Persistent Absence (PA) defined in legislation as 10% or more absences. Either authorised or unauthorised, a child who is persistently absent is at risk of failing to achieve their full potential in college. At this point an absence will only be authorised with evidence to back up why a student is not in college such as an appointment card, prescription or medicine labels.

If ***attendance continues to fall*** without sufficient evidence The school will invite parents/carers back into school for a 'stage 3' meeting with a member of The senior Leadership Team. Any additional support required will be discussed and possible further action will be explained such as parental attendance contracts or a fixed penalty notice.

If there is no improvement in attendance the school will pass the case onto WAS who will contact parents and meet, setting targets and timescales to address poor attendance.

Stage 4 meetings may also take place with representatives of The Trust to further offer support, target set and address continued poor attendance.

Lateness

Pupils arriving after the close of register at 8.45am will be marked as late. Any pupil that arrives late must sign in at reception. The school keeps a record of lateness and will use appropriate sanctions or support to reduce this.

Absence from College

All requests for pupils to be absent from college must be requested through writing, email or a telephone conversation with the attendance team. This is necessary for all absences except for illness.

Term-time Holidays

Legally Term Time holidays and extended leave are not allowed and **will not be authorised** as stated in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2013. If parents/carers take their child out of college the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and will be referred to The L.E.A. and could result in a penalty notice.

Parents/carers may request permission from The Principal to take their child out of school during term time. In turn a response will be made. It is at the Principal's discretion whether absences may be authorised but this would only be in exceptional circumstances and in line with DfE guidelines.

Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities in Managing Attendance, Punctuality and Lateness

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend the Academy regularly and may risk prosecution if they fail in this responsibility.

Parents/carers should also ensure that their children arrive at school on time, with the correct equipment and in full school uniform.

Parents/carers should support the Academy by avoiding, if possible, non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during Academy time.

Parents/carers should be aware that they do not have the automatic right to take their child out of the Academy for a holiday during term time.

It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to inform the Academy of the reason for a child's absence on each day of absence and in line with the Academy's procedures for informing of absence. These procedures can be obtained from the Academy website. If possible, the expected day of return should also be provided. Contact will be made with parent/carers who have not advised the school the reasons for absence. Contact will be by letter, email, phone call, truancy text or home visit.

All unexplained absences will be investigated and parents/carers will be kept informed about any attendance concerns relating to their own child. Parents/carers are expected to attend meetings when requested and support the Academy in responding to ongoing attendance concerns.

Students

All students should aim to have an excellent attendance and punctuality record for which there will be appropriate rewards.

All students are expected to be on the Academy site on time and ready to learn. Students are also expected to be punctual to all lessons and preparation/tutor time.

Students who arrive at school late must follow the correct procedures for recording their lateness and entering into their lesson.

Students who need to leave school for a medical appointment must follow the correct procedures for recording that they have permission to leave and have left the building. These procedures can be obtained

Students must not leave the Academy without permission, 'truant'; this will be seen by the school as a Safeguarding concern as well as a Health and Safety concern.

Form Tutors

The form tutor is the key person in promoting regular punctual attendance. The form tutor will:

Provide a good example by always being punctual to registration, give a high profile to attendance and punctuality and praise students who arrive on time;

Keep an accurate and up-to-date register of attendance following the current agreed procedures;

Follow the attendance policy procedures when dealing with absences and punctuality;

Maintain swift action and effective communication with the Attendance Officer on all attendance matters concerning the tutor group;

Ensure that students are aware of the whole Academy attendance target and their own individual attendance target and where appropriate assist them in monitoring their own attendance rates;

Ensure that students receive rewards/sanctions in relation to attendance and punctuality, in line with the Academy Behaviour Policy;

Build a welcoming atmosphere in the tutor group and provide support as necessary when students return after an absence.

Teaching Staff

Teaching staff are key to promoting punctuality to lessons and ensuring that students are actively attending to their learning. They will:

Provide a good example by arriving on time to lessons and welcoming students with a 'meet and greet' approach; ii. carry out a register of the class at the beginning of each lesson (within the first 5 minutes) so that punctuality is promoted and late students are recorded in SIMs and letters sent home to inform parents

Follow up any student missing by informing the Attendance Officer as soon as possible;

Provide relevant, appropriately challenging learning opportunities to engage students in learning and thus promoting attendance and punctuality;

Be supportive of students when they have been absent in providing them with strategies to catch up on any missed work;

In liaison with The Assistant Principal or Attendance Officer provide appropriate work for students on authorised long-term absence, e.g. medical conditions;

Build a welcoming atmosphere in the lesson and provide support as necessary when students return after an absence;

For out of school trips inform the Attendance Officer of those students who are attending the trip and those students who are in alternative curriculum to their timetable and maintain a register whilst participating in the trip.

Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer (AO) reviews the attendance regularly and supports pupils in order to improve their attendance. The AO works closely with those pupils with attendance concerns and investigates pupils who are consistently absent, which is taken very seriously. Furthermore the AO sees and supports pupils at school, visits home and is a key component in our efforts to secure high attendance.

In extreme cases the Attendance Officer (in consultation with WAS) also initiates legal proceedings against parents who have not fulfilled their responsibility for getting their child into school. Before a case goes to court attendance levels will be monitored, setting targets for attendance levels; their intervention may also lead to a fixed penalty notice. The main aim of all action is to get a child to attend school on a regular basis.

The AO is responsible for monitoring the attendance of each year group and regular promotion of attendance and punctuality. They will:-

Ensure that tutor teams are aware of their responsibilities with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality and adherence to the attendance policy and procedures;

Ensure that rewards and sanctions for attendance and punctuality are set in line with and issued in accordance with the Academy Behaviour Policy;

Monitor and track the attendance of vulnerable groups;

Monitor the attendance of individual tutor groups, following up with irregular patterns of absenteeism that are not being effectively addressed;

Liaise effectively with the Assistant Principal and work together on ensuring that appropriate action is taken in the management of absenteeism and poor punctuality;

Attendance as a regular item on all tutor team and line management meetings;

Ensure that contact is made with parents/carers of poor attendees, supporting the Tutor/SLT link where appropriate in dealing with parents/carers directly;

Ensure that data is input daily into the attendance management system;

Ensure that parent/carers of absent students are contacted before 10.30am where notification of absence has not been received;

Respond to any parent/carer seeking support on attendance concerns;

Provide regular attendance and punctuality data for relevant staff and external agencies in line with the agreed Academy procedures and timescales;

Be responsible for disseminating important attendance information including informing the Assistant Principal which students are of concern, in line with the agreed Academy procedures and timescales;

Be responsible for keeping a record of the interventions in place to encourage attendance and for generating all documentation including letters to parent/carers, in line with the agreed Academy procedures and timescales;

Be responsible for liaising closely with the Warwickshire Attendance Service or Education Welfare Service in Leicestershire to ensure that appropriate levels of intervention take place, referrals are made and attendance meetings are set up;

Be responsible for managing and maintaining attendance records and systems.

Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team will promote good attendance and punctuality and will use opportunities in line management meetings and meeting with parent/carers to remind those concerned of the importance of this. They will:

Regularly meet with The Attendance Officer and discuss attendance;

In Warwickshire participate in Pre-Legal meetings with the Warwickshire Attendance Service designated member of staff.

Use attendance data to make links with attendance and academic performance;

Take part in celebrating attendance in reward assemblies;

Ensure that reference to attendance is included in all school documentation e.g. Academy newsletters, letters to parents/carers, school prospectus, information for parents'/carers' booklet;

Ensure that relevant INSET is offered to new/existing staff with respect to attendance and punctuality matters.

Warwickshire Attendance Service, Leicestershire Education Welfare Service

Education Welfare Service are Local Authority services tasked with supporting student attendance. They are able to provide independent advice directly to parents/carers. They also have a role to play in ensuring that students are adequately supported in improving their attendance where required and if necessary instigating legal procedures. Their contact details can be obtained from the Academy or by contacting Leicestershire Local Authority.

Warwickshire Attendance Service is a service commissioned from the Local Authority. Warwickshire Attendance Service representatives have a role to play in ensuring that students are adequately supported in improving their attendance where required. When appropriate the Warwickshire Attendance service will escalate the situation and instigate legal procedures. Their contact details can be obtained from the Academy.

** The school and WAS will endeavour to support families to improve their child's attendance and will offer this support throughout the processes stated below. However, if attendance does not improve after all strategies and offers of support have been exhausted a legal route may have to be taken which will could result in a fine or imprisonment (see below)

PROCESSES

<p>STAGE ONE MEETINGS</p> <p>Below target of 96%</p>	<p>Informal discussion between pupil and form tutor to explore why attendance has dropped below school target (96%) All parents are made aware of these discussions.</p> <p>Any issues or support needs are passed on to parents for further action if required.</p>
<p>STAGE TWO MEETINGS</p> <p>Below 92%</p>	<p>If attendance continues to drop further a formal letter is sent home and a meeting is offered between parents/carers and The Attendance Officer. Once again barriers are discussed and support offered.</p> <p>Attendance below 90% will require medical evidence to support absence.</p>
<p>STAGE THREE MEETINGS</p> <p>Below 90%</p>	<p>If attendance falls further a 2nd formal letter is sent and a meeting arranged with a member of SLT. Further support is offered and targets set. WAS may be asked to manage cases for particularly severe attendance issues and legal intervention</p>
<p>STAGE FOUR MEETINGS</p> <p>Continued drop in attendance</p>	<p>Meetings may also take place with representatives of The Trust to further offer support, target set and address continued poor attendance.</p> <p>WAS asked to manage cases for particularly severe attendance issues and legal interventio</p>

SUMMARY OF RESPONSIBILITIES (DfE guidance May 2022)

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:
<p>Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.</p> <p>Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).</p> <p>Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.</p> <p>Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.</p>	<p>Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</p> <p>Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.</p> <p>Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.</p> <p>Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.</p> <p>Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.</p>	<p>Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.</p> <p>Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.</p> <p>Ensure school staff receive training on attendance.</p>

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.</p> <p>Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.</p> <p>If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peer

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:
<p>Not applicable.</p>	<p>Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.</p> <p>Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.</p> <p>Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.</p> <p>Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.</p> <p>Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>

Support for pupils with a social worker

Parents are expected to:	Schools are expected to:	Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to:
<p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p>	<p>Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.</p>	<p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p>

Routes to improved attendance

Attendance legal intervention

As absence is so often a symptom of wider issues a family is facing, schools, trusts and local authorities should always work together with other local partners to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Where that is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents. Attendance legal intervention can only be used for pupils of compulsory school age and decisions should be made on an individual case by case basis.

VOLUNTARY SUPPORT

Helping parents to access services of their own accord and/or a voluntary whole family plan to tackle the barriers to attendance



FORMAL SUPPORT

A formal parenting contract agreed by the pupil, parent, school and/or local authority

Progressing to a legally binding Education Supervision Order in the Family Court if there is non-engagement and deemed necessary



STATUTORY CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE INVOLVEMENT

Where there are safeguarding concerns and an Education Supervision Order is not appropriate or has not been successful the case should be considered for s.17 or s.47 statutory social care involvement



ATTENDANCE PROSECUTION

Where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate, the case should be considered for attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court (or a FPN for irregular attendance)