

Nuneaton Academy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of last central office review:	Sept 2023	Review Period:	1 year (minimum)
Date of next central office review:	Summer Term 2024	Owner:	Andy Dagnall
Date of next school level review:	September 2024		
Type of policy:	United Learning Policy	Local Governing Body	Approves school policy adheres to United Learning Policy

REVIEW TIMETABLE

The Policy will be reviewed annually, as set out below:	
Policy reviewed centrally	Schools Committee: Annually – Autumn Term
Policy tailored by individual schools	December 2023
School policy ratified by Local Governing Bodies	Awaiting
Implementation of Group Policy	December 2023

Contents

Introduction	3
Aims	3
Section 1: Practical procedures	3
The admissions register	3
The attendance register	3
Punctuality and regular attendance.....	4
Lateness.....	4
Absence.....	4
Section 2: Promoting regular attendance.....	5
Promoting and incentivising	5
Data strategy	6
Absence reduction strategy	6
Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities ...	7
Part-time timetables	7
Section 3: Particular responsibilities	8
Section 4: Specific action for failure to attend regularly	8
Legal action to enforce school attendance.....	9
Local Governing Body (LGB) responsibilities:.....	10
Appendices.....	10

Introduction

Here at Nuneaton Academy we acknowledge it is of vital importance that our pupils have good attendance at school. We expect members of our school community to be respectful, responsive and resolute.

Regular attendance at school is of critical importance to a child's education. Evidence tells us that 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 attainment¹. Any absence affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts the learning of others in the same teaching groups by disrupting classroom routines. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at Nuneaton Academy is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from Nuneaton Academy without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Aims

An effective whole school culture of high attendance is underpinned by clear expectations, procedures, and responsibilities. To ensure all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand these expectations, and how they apply at Nuneaton Academy this policy sets out:

- Section 1: The practical procedures to be followed at Nuneaton Academy in relation to attendance
- Section 2: the measures in place at Nuneaton Academy to promote regular attendance by its registered pupils
- Section 3: The responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance
- Section 4: the action to be taken by staff if a registered pupil fails to attend school regularly
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Section 1: Practical procedures

There are clear links from this policy to our safeguarding and child protection duties as set out Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE 2023). Our Safeguarding policy can be found on the Nuneaton Academy website.

The admissions register

As a school, we are responsible for keeping the Admissions Register up to date. This contains specific personal details of every pupil along with the date of admission or readmission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the last school attended.

We also hold emergency contact numbers for each pupil. It is our policy to hold more than one such number, so that we have options to make contact with a responsible adult should the need arise.

A pupil's name can only be lawfully deleted from the admissions register in very limited circumstances.

The attendance register

The register will be taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion, the school will record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

These records will be kept electronically to ensure accuracy and the timely sharing and analysis of information – all of which is critical to ensure good attendance.

Punctuality and regular attendance

The school day starts at 8.40 and finishes at 3.15. The Department for Education has mandated new attendance regulations aimed at promoting consistent school attendance and ensuring that every child receives a quality education. As part of these regulations, stricter measures will be implemented, including the enforcement of fines for non-compliance with attendance requirements.

Lateness

Pupils at Nuneaton Academy are expected to be on time as each day starts with a lesson. Pupils who are late for school will spend a period of time in our reflection room.

The register will stay open until 9.30am, any pupil not present is marked absent. Pupils arriving late will be marked with an 'L' code unless they arrive after the morning register has closed, in which case they will be marked with a 'U' code which is unauthorised absence.

Absence

Parents must contact the school when their child is absent to explain that absence. This can be done as follows through a phone call to the attendance team 02476 341134 and selecting option 1, or by emailing attendance@nuneatonacademy.org.uk or through the school app, with the following details:

- Full name of pupil
- Pupil's year group or form
- Reason for absence
- Full name of person reporting absence and relation to child

Where a reason for the absence is not received by 9:00am on the day of the absence, the school will contact the parent/carers on the same day to understand the reason for the absence.

Where further unexplained absences occur, the school will make further contact with the parent (including foster parents and/ or social workers where appropriate). This should be with the aim of understanding why the absence has occurred, and **when** the pupil will return. When a pupil has not been in school for 3 consecutive days, home visits will be conducted.

The correct absence code will be inputted into the Attendance Register as soon as the reason is ascertained.

Granting a leave of absence will only be made in exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted it is for the Principal to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. It is extremely unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. To request a leave of absence please collect a leave of absence request form from the school reception at least two weeks before the intended absence, except in case of an emergency.

The regulations regarding Leave of Absence (The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.) advise:

Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application. Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave. The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides. Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period. Where a leave of absence is requested, but additional days taken either prior to or after the request may be considered as part of the leave of absence and could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to the parent(s).

Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as ‘unauthorised’. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council. The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).

It is important to note, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totalling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £60 each child if paid within 21 days).

Section 2: Promoting regular attendance

This section sets out the measures in place at Nuneaton Academy to **promote** regular attendance by its registered pupils.

Promoting and incentivising

The Nuneaton Academy will:

- Treat all pupils and parents with dignity. Our staff will always seek to model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance
- Set out expectations of attendance and reporting in the home-school agreement and communicate procedures clearly in admission’s interviews
- Regularly inform parents about their child’s attendance and absence levels and also the impact of this on learning
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Identify pupils who need support from wider partners as quickly as possible and make the necessary referrals
- Make the necessary statutory data returns to the local authority
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps. Pastoral leaders will meet with the

pupil on return and agree ways that the pupil can be supported on their return and will monitor their reengagement with school each lesson and support with any ongoing medical needs where necessary

- Celebrate and reward good attendance by individuals and tutor groups through prize draws, attendance trips and through the house competition and make this visible in assemblies and on display around the school

Data strategy

Nuneaton Academy understands that as poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early detection is crucial. We will therefore undertake regular data analysis to:

1. Identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils and/ or pupil cohorts that need it
2. Look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them

The Academy will typically carry out the following analysis:

- Monitoring and analysing weekly attendance (including punctuality) patterns and trends, including whether there are particular issues for some children on certain days
- Patterns of attendance and punctuality within sessions, to ensure that all pupils are attending all timetabled lessons
- Half-termly, termly and full-year data analysis of patterns and trends, including analysis of pupils and cohorts, identifying patterns in use of certain codes, days where attendance is typically poor and (where appropriate) subjects with low lesson attendance
- Benchmarking attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against Trust-level, local, regional and national data and sharing good practice with others for raising attendance

We will use this analysis to identify pupils who need support so that we can focus staff efforts on developing targeted actions for those pupils and to identify any common themes to support improvement planning. We will use the data to inform us regarding the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented, to evaluate approaches or inform action. We will also provide regular attendance reports to class teachers or tutors to facilitate discussions with pupils and to school leaders (including any special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads).

Absence reduction strategy

We will devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data. This may, for example, include pupils in a year group with higher-than-average absence or for specific groups of pupils. Individual pupils will be discussed at the weekly Pupil Support Panel meetings and pastoral leader's meetings will address strategies for particular groups.

Data and reports will be shared with the Local Governing Body.

As part of promoting regular attendance the school will consider the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices, in conjunction with guidance from Warwickshire Local Authority. This will be considered on an individual basis and we will seek to work, where appropriate, with families before this action is taken.

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Nuneaton Academy recognises that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as they are for any other pupil.

In working with their parents to improve attendance, we will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This will include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed
- Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, the school will work with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day. Please see the School's SEN policy for further details on SEN support
- Establishing strategies for removing the in-school barriers pupils may face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements
- Ensuring joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance, recognising that such arrangements can be for a limited time only.
- Ensuring data is regularly monitored for these groups including at board and governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary

Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority. Local authorities are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education.

In all cases, the school will be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents; and talk to pupils and parents and understand how they feel and what they think would help improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. Please note that a part-time cannot be used as a reasonable adjustment for SEND, unless this is on a temporary basis and as advised by an external agency e.g., Educational Psychologist.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. Formal arrangements will also be put in place for regularly reviewing it (minimum monthly) with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore will treat such absence as authorised. We will of course consider how best to support learning when a child is working on a part time timetable.

Section 3: Particular responsibilities

This section outlines responsibilities of particular members of staff in relation to attendance.

- The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school are Mr A Dagnall andy.dagnall@nuneatonacademy.org.uk
- Responsibility for identifying unexplained absences on “day 1” will fall to Sonia Millar, Attendance Officer and the wider attendance team who will work alongside the pastoral and safeguarding teams to identify unexplained absences
- Responsibility for identifying further unexplained absences will fall to Sonia Millar, Attendance Officer and the wider attendance team who will work alongside the pastoral and safeguarding teams to identify unexplained absences
- Information and contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are, form tutor, pastoral leader are those of the Attendance Officer on the main school number of 02476611134
- More detailed support on attendance can be requested from the pastoral team or our safeguarding team. The details of our safeguarding tea can be found on the school website
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Section 4: Specific action for failure to attend regularly

This section sets out the action to be taken by staff if a registered pupil fails to attend the school regularly.

Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school works with and supports the family. Wherever possible, we will keep this person consistent. Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic the school will draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, the school will take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support.

In the first instance, the school will support pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance.

Where barriers are outside of the school’s control, we endeavour to work together with all partners to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need. As a minimum, this will include meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school, agreeing actions or interventions to address them and keeping those actions under regular review in discussion with pupils and families. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. Where absence intensifies, so will the support provided, which will require us to work in tandem with the local authority and other relevant partners, as follows:

- If the needs and barriers are individual to the pupil this may include provision of mentoring, careers advice, 1-2-1 tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision

- Where the needs are wider and a whole family response is more appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment
- Where engagement in support is proving challenging, the school will hold more formal conversations with the parents. This is likely to be led by the senior leader responsible for attendance (Andy Dagnall) and may include the school's point of contact in the local authority School Attendance Support Team. The aim of these meetings will be to clearly explain the consequences of persistent and severe absence to the pupil and family and the potential need for legal intervention in future, but will also be an opportunity to continue to listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and explain the help that is available to avoid those consequences
- Where voluntary support has not been effective and/or has not been engaged with the school will work with the local authority to:
 - Put formal support in place in the form of a parenting contract or an education supervision order
 - Intensify support through statutory children's social care involvement where there are safeguarding concerns, especially where absence becomes severe (below 50% attendance)
 - Issue a fixed penalty notice where support would not be appropriate or has not been successful or engaged with and it is likely to change the parents' behaviour. This would happen where a number of unauthorised absences have happened within a short
 - period of time, according to the latest Warwickshire Local Authority guidelines.
 - Prosecute parents where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate. This could include making the case for a community or parenting order where the parent is convicted to secure engagement with support

In all cases, the school will monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the pupil, parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family. Where interventions are failing, the school will work together with all parties to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.

Legal action to enforce school attendance

Schools can use various legal powers if your child is missing school without a good reason. These can include:

- **Education Supervision Order:** If the council thinks you need support getting your child to go to school but you're not co-operating, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to help your child get in education. The local council can do this instead of prosecuting you, or as well
- **Fine (sometimes known as a 'Fixed Penalty Notice'):** Parents/guardians whose children fail to meet the minimum attendance requirements (95%) without valid reasons may be subject to fines as per the statutory guidelines, and in line with our attendance policy which can be found on the school website. These fines serve as a means of reinforcing the importance of regular school attendance for academic achievement and overall well-being. You could get a fine of £60, which rises to £120 if you don't pay within 21 days. If you don't pay the fine after 28 days, you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school. There is no right to appeal against a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Local Authority can proceed to prosecution or withdraw the notice
- **Parenting Order:** This means you must go to parenting classes. You'll also have to do what the court says to improve your child's school attendance

- Prosecution: You could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or jail sentence up to 3 months. The court also gives you a Parenting Order. The Local Authority can prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice first. There are two offences:
 - Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 – If the child is absent without authorisation, then the parent is guilty of an offence. This is a strict liability offence i.e., all that needs to be shown is a lack of regular attendance. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £1,000.
 - Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 – an aggravated offence. If the child is absent without authorisation and the parent knew about the child’s absence and failed to act, then the parent is guilty of an offence. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £2,500 and a prison sentence of up to 3 months
 - Parents can also be prosecuted by Local Authorities under section 103 Education and Inspections Act 2006, where a pupil of compulsory school age who remains on the Admissions Register is found in a public place during school hours, after being excluded from school. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £1,000
- School Attendance Order: You’ll get a School Attendance Order if the local council thinks your child isn’t getting an education.

Local Governing Body (LGB) responsibilities:

The LGB recognises the importance of school attendance and will:

- Promote it across the school’s ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure Nuneaton Academy staff receive adequate training on attendance

The LGB will also ensure:

- That the attendance policy and its contents are generally made known within the school and to parents of registered pupils at the school, and
- That steps are taken at least once in every school year to bring the attendance policy to the attention of all those parents and pupils and all persons who work at the school (whether or not for payment).

Appendices

[Working together to improve school attendance](#)