



Attendance Policy

We are committed to igniting aspiration and ambition in our communities. This includes promoting and safeguarding the welfare of all our children.

Non-negotiables

- Every child is expected to attend school every day.
- The aim is for 100% attendance for all children. When pupils' attendance is not regular, they become a concern for senior leaders. Attendance is monitored weekly henceforward.
- Regular (fortnightly) contact is made with the parents of pupils whose attendance is a concern.
- Good attendance is rewarded and celebrated publicly.
- Pupils who are persistently absent are closely monitored and parents are contacted weekly to celebrate improvements or remind of targets. Records are kept of this contact.
- All parents are informed of attendance expectations at transition into school including pupils who join midyear.
- Reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with medically diagnosed serious illness. Termly meetings are held with parents and medical professionals to update next steps.
- Parents should try to make Medical appointments outside of the school day where possible.
- Unauthorised leave will lead to penalty notices.

Northgate Primary is committed to providing a happy, caring and safe learning environment for all within a value led context, where everyone feels valued and grows in confidence and independence.

Vision and ethos

Ethos

ASPIRE, BELIEVE, ACHIEVE

Vision

Our vision for the children at Northgate Primary School is for all children to **succeed** by challenging them to meet high expectations. We are committed to a **nurturing** and supportive environment for the whole community, stressing the importance of **inclusion and acceptance**.

Challenge and succeed

Nurture and support

Acceptance and inclusion

Introduction and Background

Northgate Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child the best educational experience possible. This policy is written with the above statement in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- safeguard and promote children's wellbeing
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open. It is a rule of the school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher, not the parent, is the only person who can authorise the absence.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and impacts negatively on the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution. Where parents are separated both parents have equal responsibility in law for their child's attendance at school.

This policy seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed that attendance matters in school. All are committed to the aims of “attendance matters”. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

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.

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.

The DfE has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: Working together to improve school attendance. Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

Promoting Regular Attendance

At Northgate Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school’s vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The name and contact details of the Headteacher, who is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance can be found on the school website.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents details on attendance in our newsletters
- Report to parents at least three times a year in reports on their child’s attendance.
- Contact parent(s)/Carers listed on school admissions forms should their child’s attendance fall below the school’s target for attendance.
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements

- Reward individuals and group good or improving attendance
- Refer poor attendance to other agencies including the NCC compliance team

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a “session”.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a justified reason like illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), urgent medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no ‘leave’ has been given. Unauthorised absences are coded with an O code. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, however, this is not exhaustive:

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for noninfectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn;
- absences which have never been adequately explained to school leaders;
- children who arrive at school too late to get a “U” mark on the attendance register to indicate they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however, this is counted as an absence for the session;
- shopping trips;
- family events;
- Problems with the distance travelled to school;
- looking after other children/ family members or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments;
- their own or family birthdays;
- holidays taken during term time without leave - unauthorised absence will lead to a penalty notice being triggered by the Local Authority;
- day trips;
- other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed.

School Attendance and the Law

By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, then under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a ‘parent’, in relation to a child or young person, includes any

person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

Unauthorised absence may result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This may include issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice for £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days or referring the matter to the Magistrates Court whereby each parent may receive a fine up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

There is no longer any entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday. In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2013. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that the heads of school may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they no longer have the discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

At Northgate Primary School, leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the Headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the Headteacher or their designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request. All applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school (please see office). Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice will be requested by this school.

A Penalty Notice may be issued where there have been at least **9.5** consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday (one session = half of a school day). (see Appendix 3)

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse, the NCC attendance compliance team or the school's pastoral/ attendance worker.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to access learning via the web links on the school website.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason; this can be **authorised or unauthorised absences**. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any child's education and we need a parent's fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, rigorously. If a child is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark we will inform the parent immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to a school-based meeting and the plan may include: allocation of additional support through the School Nurse, NCC compliance team, Parent Support Advisor and Social Care. We may also provide additional pastoral care for these pupils and set individual targets with individual incentive programmes, to support us in raising attendance.

We will write to parent(s)/carers listed on school admissions forms/ email/ text and set an attendance target of 100% and contact you to let you know whether or not the individual target is being met. We will do this until your child's attendance falls within acceptable limits.

Where ongoing medical issues prevent good attendance, a meeting will be held with health professionals, parents and the school to determine next steps.

Absence Procedures

If a child is absent from school, the parent must follow the following procedures:

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before 8:45am and each subsequent day of absence before 8:45am. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call. Alternatively, parents can drop into school personally and speak to the office staff. If we do not hear from you we will possibly make a home visit and, if necessary, contact the police or social care.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 8:45am.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day, and every subsequent day of absence if we have not heard from you, (we will consider a home visit after two days of no contact with parents) • Contact other agencies if we do not know your child's whereabouts and there are safeguarding concerns.

A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be "missing from education".

If absence continues:

The school aims for 100% attendance for every child.

It is important for pupils to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Head teacher and the Local committee to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. Parents should ensure their child attends school

regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents are always informed.

Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period the following process will take place

- A letter is sent to inform parents of when attendance falls below 96% attendance (see Appendix 3)
- If there is no improvement following the initial letter and attendance falls below 92% a further letter is issued (see Appendix 2)
- We will invite you into school to discuss the situation with our Parent Support Adviser or Headteacher if absences persist
- We will create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance
- We will offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate
- We will consider a referral to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions
- Following a review of the action plan if there has been no improvement legal interventions will be considered (Fixed Penalty Notice/Fine)

Concerns about attendance are raised with parents/carers via texts/letters and phone calls home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.

Fixed penalty notices will be issued for unauthorised absence, which will include unauthorised holiday requests, unauthorised lates and unauthorised absence.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance and if they fail to do so, may commit an offence under Sections 7 & 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Children missing in education

Where a child is not attending school, has moved without a forwarding address or school, or cannot be traced, or contact cannot be made with the parent, the school is required to inform the local authority that the child is missing. The school will carry out a home visit and refer the family to social care and the police to ensure any concerns for the child's welfare have been thoroughly investigated. Pupils will not be removed from the school roll until notified by the local authority that their enquiries are complete. A referral will be made to Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered to be "missing from education."

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. If a child misses the start of the day they miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage further absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

The registers will be closed at **8:45am**. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they may have an unauthorised absence (U code). This means that parents face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the parent support advisor or senior leader. You can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models for children. We celebrate and reward good class and punctuality.

Understanding barriers to attendance

We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individualised early help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

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, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving, other than at the end of year 6 parents are required to complete a 'Leavers' Form' which can be obtained from the school office. This provides school with the following information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. This information is essential to ensure that we know and safeguard the whereabouts of all of our pupils, even those who leave us. Pupils cannot be deleted from the school roll without this information and will be classed as absent until we have confirmation they are safe and attending another school.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2006, all schools are now legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five days of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point – when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school, on time, every day. All school staff, local advisory boards and trustees are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Agreed by school committee:

Review Date:

PW Bunn, Chair of Committee

Appendix 1



Northgate Primary School & Sunflowers Nursery

Northgate Street

Great Yarmouth

Norfolk

NR30 1BP

Head Teacher : Miss S Bacon

Deputy Head: Mrs C Andrews

Assistant Head: Mrs H Kettle-Maile

Parent/Carer of Child's name

Date

Class Class name

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am writing to inform you that Child's name's attendance has dropped **below 96%**.

Child's name's attendance is now percentage. % and there have been Enter sessions of absence of sessions of absence due to illness or medical appointments.

If there is an ongoing medical issue that we are not aware of or if there is anything that you would like to discuss with me, or another member of staff regarding the absences, please do not hesitate to contact the school so we can support you. Thank you to parents/carers who have already been in touch to discuss their child's attendance.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell - and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We also know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At Northgate Primary School we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that Child's name comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible education. We want to work with you to achieve this – please call, email or come in if there is anything we can do to support you or your child. We appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

We will be in touch again to request a meeting with you if we have ongoing concerns about your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

attendance@northgateprimary.norfolk.sch.uk

Appendix 2



Northgate Primary School & Sunflowers Nursery

Northgate Street

Great Yarmouth

Norfolk

NR30 1BP

Head Teacher : Miss S Bacon

Deputy Head: Mrs C Andrews

Assistant Head: Mrs H Kettle-Maile

Parent/Carer of Child's name

Date

Class

Dear Parent/Guardian

I am writing to inform you that **Name** attendance has dropped **below 92%**.

Name attendance is now % and there have been Enter sessions of absence Authorised and Enter sessions of absence unauthorised absence due to holiday illness or medical appointments.

If there is an ongoing medical issue that we are not aware of or if there is anything that you would like to discuss with me, or another member of staff regarding the absences, please do not hesitate to contact the school so we can support you.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell - and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We also know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At Northgate Primary School we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that **Child's name** comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible education. We want to work with you to achieve this. Any further absences will not be authorised without appropriate evidence.

We will be in touch again to request a meeting with you to discuss any ongoing concerns about your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

Senders name.

Attendance Officer

attendance@northgateprimary.norfolk.sch.uk

Appendix 3



Northgate Primary School & Sunflowers Nursery

Northgate Street

Great Yarmouth

Norfolk

NR30 1BP

Head Teacher : Miss S Bacon

Deputy Head: Mrs C Andrews

Assistant Head: Mrs H Kettle-Maile

Date

Parent/Carer of:

Class:

Dear Parent/Carer,

I have reviewed (Name) attendance and I am very pleased to see that there has been an improvement.

I will keep their attendance under review and hope that this positive picture continues.

If you have any questions or concerns about attendance, please get in touch with Miss Plant, our Attendance Officer.

Yours faithfully,

Miss S Bacon

Headteacher

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM NORTHGATE PRIMARY SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

Important Information for Parents

- Head teachers comply with the 2013 amendment to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (2006) Regulations 2013** which means that they cannot authorise a leave of absence from school unless it is exceptional; every case should be treated on an individual basis and with due consideration of the circumstances. Ultimately, it is the Head teacher of the school who decides if a period of leave during term time should be authorised or not
- **Head teachers may grant leave of absence if they consider exceptional circumstances apply**
- **If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised**
- Requests for leave of absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements are confirmed or money committed
- **If leave of absence is granted please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress**
- This form **MUST** be completed by the parent who intends to remove the pupil from school during term time
- **Failure to make a request for a leave of absence in advance will result in the absence taken being recorded as unauthorised**

Please note: Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.

Any leave of absence over 4 days (8 sessions) could be eligible for a Fixed Penalty Notice which is currently £60 per parent per child

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Full name of child/ren.....

Address.....
.....

From (1st day of absence) To (last day of absence)

Total number of school days.....Expected date of return to school.....

Reason for proposed absence - please provide reasons to support the application including evidence:

.....
.....

Please read the following and sign to indicate you agree:

I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time, and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress. I undertake to make sure my child/ren catch up with any work that is required of them.

Signature of parent(s)/carer (s).....

Date:

Your request for leave of absence from school during term time has been considered and has been:

Agreed ☐

Days agreed

Not agreed ☐

FPN to be issued ☐

Signature of Headteacher.....

Attendance % to date

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance at school and legal intervention

[Research](#) commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances. At **Northgate Primary School** our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential.

This letter is to remind all parents/carers regarding the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

In the DfE policy document entitled, 'School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' it states, '*Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. **The application must be made in advance** and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. **A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion***'.

If the school does not receive a request for leave, the head teacher will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. There will be no obligation on the head teacher to reconsider authorising the leave if an application has not been made in advance.

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention where they have:

- **Taken leave of over 4 days (8 sessions). This could mean they could be eligible for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) which is currently £60 per parent per child**

The intervention could be in the form of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Any pupil at **Northgate Primary School** who meets the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued the arrangement for the payment will be detailed on the Penalty Notice. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the receipt of the Notice. The Fixed Penalty Notice is per parent per child. You should be aware that failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

