



NESTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
Committee : Curriculum
Date Ratified : January 2015
Review Date : 2017

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. POLICY STATEMENT

In order to have full access to all aspects of the curriculum, it is important that all children attend school regularly. It is the parents'/carers' responsibility to encourage good attendance. Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

If children need to be absent for long periods because of ill health, it is important that parents/carers liaise with the school so that alternative arrangements can be set up as early as possible.

2. AIMS

At Neston School we are committed to promoting excellent attendance and punctuality. We aim to:

- Ensure that children make the best use of their educational opportunities by attending regularly, punctually and in a state of readiness for learning;
- Fulfil the statutory duties in relation to school attendance;
- Ensure that everyone within the school community understands the issues and procedures for attendance.

3. ATTENDANCE: THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.
- **Parents/carers** must ensure that their children are educated. For most parents/carers this means registering their child at a school and ensuring their regular attendance. Failure to do so can result in prosecution.
- By law **schools** are required:
 - to take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon.

- to report to the **LA** pupils who fail to attend regularly or who are absent for more than two weeks (i.e. ten consecutive school days).
- By law **the register** must show whether a pupil absence is authorised or unauthorised. **Authorised** absence is where the school has given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory justification for the absence. All other absences are **unauthorised**.

Government circular 10/99 Social Inclusion: Pupil Support emphasises the responsibility that **schools** have in supporting and promoting good attendance and taking seriously problems which may lead to non-attendance.

4. PARTNERSHIP WORKING – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

School Staff:

The headteacher will liaise with the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) when concerns arise over attendance. For frequent or prolonged periods of absence, the headteacher will contact the parents/carers and arrange an interview with them. This may include the presence of the EWO.

Class teachers are responsible for accurate registration, receipt of written notes to explain a child's absence and recording of information from telephone messages. They may also speak informally with parents about absences.

The administrative officer will record telephone/email messages relaying information about absences and lates and notify class teachers before the afternoon session.

Parents/carers should:

- Ensure their child arrives at school on time (morning registration begins at 8:50 am for a school start at 9.00 a.m) Pupils should be appropriately dressed and in a 'condition to learn' (i.e. not too tired or too hungry);
- Work in partnership with the school to help their child/children gain an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly;
- Work in partnership with the school to take an active interest in their child's education by:
 - giving support with homework
 - supporting the school's behaviour policy
 - attending parents' evenings and other meetings where necessary
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies (as appropriate) to resolve problems relating to non-attendance or which may have a negative impact on their child's attendance;
- Notify the school when their child is absent, preferably on the first day of absence, giving an explanation for the absence;
- Ensure they sign the Pupils' Log Book in reception if their child arrives after 9.00 a.m. Please note that children arriving after 9.05 a.m. will be recorded as late, which is an unauthorised absence for the morning session. They should also order a school lunch if needed at this time. If children are taken home from school early for any reason, the log book should be signed by the parent before collecting their child from the classroom.

5. PROCEDURES

In school we have:

- clear systems for accurate registration;
- scheduled and unscheduled checks of registers outside of statutory requirements;

- agreed criteria and consistent approach to lateness (a child is marked late if they arrive after the register has been marked);
- agreed use of registration codes which are known by all staff and which appear in the staff handbook;
- initial follow up of absence if we have received no notification from the parents/carers by the class teacher or the administrative officer;
- a system for sending out a standard letter to parents from the headteacher when the frequency of absences is causing concern;
- phased re-integration for pupils following long term absence;
- good relationships with parents/carers for providing work for children who are absent for an extended period of time (and sometimes for those on short term absences);
- procedures for involvement of the Education Welfare Service.

Home-School Procedures include:

- first day of absence contact from parent/carer to the school by phone, in person or in writing which gives the reason for and expected length of absence;
- parent/carer informing school of circumstances which may affect their child's attendance at school.
- it may be necessary for the school or Education Welfare Officer to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of reason for absence e.g. appointment cards / letters, medical certificate, letter from GP.

Parents/carers should make every possible effort to arrange medical or dental appointments outside the school day so as not to disrupt their child's education.

Links with other agencies include:

- Contact with Home Tuition team to arrange alternative teaching at home during prolonged illness;
- Truancy sweeps involving police and education welfare service.

6. LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN TERM TIME:

Parents **do not** have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time owing to leave of absence.

The Headteacher has the discretion to grant leave of absence but only in **exceptional circumstances**. This leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday. Parents can be fined for taking their child on leave during term time without consent from the school. The LA guidance for parents and Penalty Notice information can be found in Appendix I.

Leave of absence must be granted in advance by the school. Any application for leave of absence (in writing, using the form in Appendix II) will be considered against the pupil's attendance record, family circumstances and timing with regard to assessments and examinations.

7. MAINTAINING GOOD ATTENDANCE

In order to maintain good attendance we are aware of the importance of good pastoral care in the school. Parents/carers are often the first to be aware of any problems in school which may affect their child wanting to attend. We rely on parents/carers to keep us informed of any concerns, either by speaking to the class teacher or, if this is not possible, to the headteacher.

8. REVIEW

It is recommended that this policy be reviewed every three years.

**PENALTY NOTICES
FOR UNAUTHORISED LEAVE OF
ABSENCE DURING
TERM TIME

(PREVIOUSLY CALLED HOLIDAY
ABSENCE)**

**s444A and s444B Education Act 1996
&**

**The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations
2006**

Information for Parents and Carers

June 2014

What are s444A and s444B of the Education Act 1996?

Section 444A and section 444B of the Education Act 1996 give powers to the Local Authority (LA) to issue Penalty Notices where the parent/carer is considered capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance.

Why are these powers available?

Reducing absence from school is a key priority at both national and local level. Missing school reduces a pupil's educational attainment and life chances.

What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and is used to try and secure an improvement in a pupil's school attendance without the need to appear in Court. As long as the penalty is paid the Penalty Notice enables parents or carers to discharge their potential liability for prosecution for the period covered by the Penalty Notice.

What are the costs?

Payment of £120 is required within 28 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice; this sum is reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within 28 days the LA is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates' Court for the original offence of your child's poor school attendance. If you plead guilty or are found guilty the Courts have a wider range of options which could include a maximum fine of £1000. In addition a Parenting Order could be imposed.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent for each child and payment is required for each Penalty Notice issued.

Who issues them?

The Local Authority through the Education Welfare Service.

How are they issued?

By post to your home.

Can I be prosecuted if I pay the penalty but my child is still missing school?

Yes. You will not be prosecuted for the period included in the Penalty Notice – payment discharges your liability in this respect. However, legal proceedings might be considered for further periods of poor attendance not covered by the Penalty Notice, depending upon the circumstances.

When are they issued for unauthorised Leave of Absence

Penalty Notices are issued for absence taken during term time where the leave of absence has not been authorised by the school or an absence has not been requested in advance and pupil will have had a minimum of 10 sessions (5 school days) lost to unauthorised leave of absence during the previous six months up to and including the day the Education Welfare Service is notified.

What is unauthorised Leave of Absence?

- A parent has made a request for leave of absence in term time and this has not been agreed by the school;
- A parent has not applied leave of absence in advance of the absence (the regulations do not allow retrospective approval); or
- If the parents keep the child away from school for longer than was agreed, the extra time is recorded as unauthorised

When can Leave of Absence be authorised?

Amendments made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional** circumstances.

Why have I received this leaflet?

This leaflet is sent to parents in Wiltshire to inform them of the extended use of Penalty Notices for unauthorised leave of absence or for parents who have requested leave of absence during term time.

If the leave of absence you have requested is not agreed by the school and your child's total unauthorised leave of absence amounts to 10 or more sessions (5 school days), continuous or aggregated within the previous six months within the current academic year the Education Welfare Service will be notified. The six months includes all unauthorised leave of absence up to the day the Education Welfare Service is notified.

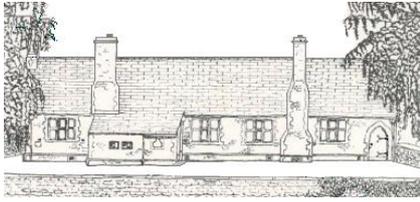
Following this notification from a school that a parental request for a leave of absence in term time has not been authorised and the leave of absence is taken the Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child.

What can I do now?

If the leave of absence that you have requested is not authorised you are advised not to take your child out of school.

Who can I discuss this with?

In the first instance talk to your child's school; otherwise the Penalty Notice Officer can be contacted on: **Tel: 01722 438123** **Email: PNLO@wiltshire.gov.uk**



Neston Primary School
 Church Rise
 Neston
 Corsham
 Wiltshire
 SN13 9SX

Appendix II

Head Teacher: Mrs Pam Evans B.A. (Hons) PGCE

Fax/☎ 01225 810478
 email: admin@neston.wilts.sch.uk

Where learning adventures begin...
Leave of Absence Request Form

Taking your child out of school during term time may harm your child's academic progress.

Absences may only be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher in EXCEPTIONAL circumstances.

Circumstances which are notified to the school or Local Authority **after** a decision has been made by the Headteacher will not be considered. Therefore please be certain to provide details of the exceptional circumstances relating to your application below and attach any supporting evidence.

Please read the attached Local Authority leaflet which explains Penalty Notices issued for unauthorised Leave of Absence during term time.

Name of Child(ren)	
Date of Birth	
Class	
Date of First Day of Absence	
Date of Return	
Number of Days requested	
Known siblings and school(s) attending	

Exceptional Circumstances (reason) for Leave of Absence during term time:

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Signed: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Carer: _____

For school use:

Attendance%:
 Total sessions pupil absent this academic year:
 Total unauthorised absence this year:
 Request authorised: Yes/No