



# NESTON HIGH SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy

Policy owners/leads:	SNT
Notes:	
Statutory:	Yes
Website:	Yes
Review period:	2 Years

Date	Action	Comments / Follow Up
Nov 2023	Policy adopted	Next review: Nov 2025



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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Neston High School recognises the link between attendance, academic qualifications gained, career prospects and success in the future. We aim to ensure the highest levels of attendance and punctuality, in order that all students at Neston High School can take advantage of the education provided to achieve their full potential. Irregular attendance undermines these opportunities and may place students at risk.

# 2. Purpose

- 2.1 To provide procedures which will help to:
- ✦ Promote excellent attendance and punctuality through a clear framework of expectations in terms of attendance, which is accepted by parents/ carers, students, staff and Board Members
  - ✦ Engage the support of parents/ carers in ensuring that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time
  - ✦ Maintain the highest possible levels of attendance to ensure continuity of education
  - ✦ Keep good electronic records of attendance and take prompt action to follow up absences
  - ✦ Monitor inconsistent patterns which may indicate truancy or other difficulties
  - ✦ Ensure prompt and effective communication with home and outside agencies when attendance levels fall
  - ✦ Monitor closely students with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents/ carers and where appropriate other agencies to bring about improvement
  - ✦ Plan and implement structured and rigorous interventions to improve poor attendance.

# 3. First day contact

- 3.1 It is the parent/carer's responsibility to inform Neston High School of the reason for a student's absence as soon as possible on the first day of absence, and on every subsequent day.
- ✦ Parents/carers should either leave a message on the absence line: (0151) 336 3902, 'option 1', or email [attendance@nestonhigh.com](mailto:attendance@nestonhigh.com) It is vital that parents give their own name when leaving a voicemail as well as the name of their child.
- 3.2 On the first day of an absence, school will send a message either by text or email to the parent/carer, if they have not contacted the school to explain the reason for the absence.

# 4. The Law

- 4.1 Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education.
- 4.2 Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.
- 4.3 If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

## 5. Why regular attendance is important

### 5.1 Learning

- 5.1.1 Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.
- 5.1.2 Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is parents' or carers' legal responsibility. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

### 5.2 Safeguarding

- 5.2.1 A child may be at risk of harm if he or she does not attend school regularly. Failing to attend school on a regular basis, depending on the circumstances, may be considered a safeguarding matter and may be referred to the school's safeguarding team.

## 6. Guidelines

### 6.1 Whole school guidelines:

- 6.1.1 The school will acknowledge, celebrate and reward excellent and significantly improved attendance via communication with parents/ carers, student certificates and badges, and a range of prizes awarded to those with the best or most improved attendance.
- 6.1.2 Tutors will promote good attendance by celebrating success and improvement in attendance. Tutors will monitor the attendance of students in their tutor groups and communicate with the relevant Pastoral Team where there are concerns that a student's attendance is starting to fall below 96%.
- 6.1.3 Tutors will take accurate and prompt registers during daily tutor time at 8.40am.
- 6.1.4 In the case of a student's attendance falling below the school's minimum expected standard of 96%, the Tutor will discuss this with the student on their return to school to try and identify any causes for concern relating to the student's absence. Where agreed in advance with the Head of Year, the Tutor may make telephone contact with parents / carers to discuss the student's attendance and to offer support in ensuring attendance improves.
- 6.1.5 Where there is no improvement in attendance following the Tutor's intervention, the Head of Year, in consultation with the Attendance/Pastoral Learning Mentor Team, where appropriate, will trigger written communication with home to offer support in improving the student's attendance levels.
- 6.1.6 Should attendance continue to fall following this written communication, the Head of Year will be responsible for inviting the parent/ carer to a meeting in school to discuss the concerns and offer a structured plan of support. This meeting should be led in consultation with school's Attendance Team, who can offer support and advice, and support the formulation of a plan in the cases of persistent, unauthorised absence from school.
- 6.1.7 Heads of Year and where appropriate, Pastoral Learning Mentors, and the attendance officer, will meet fortnightly to monitor attendance levels and patterns of absence within the year group. This will enable effective interventions to be implemented to address poor attendance. The actions set at these meetings should ensure that these key staff members have structured plans in place to address deteriorating attendance. Actions for each student should be recorded clearly and regularly by the Head of Year on the school's attendance tracking document.



- 6.1.8 The Attendance Officer will maintain regular telephone and face-to-face contact with Parents/ carers of students whose unauthorised absence remains a cause for concern. As well as contributing to the recognition and reward of students maintaining high or improved levels of attendance, the Attendance Officer will be responsible for implementing a four-week action plan and review process, ensuring that support is targeted to meet the needs of the individual student concerned. The RSL will also collaborate with pastoral staff on Support Plans and Team Around the Family (TAF) processes where attendance is one of the key concerns. Where appropriate to support the family, home visits will also form a key part of the work of the Attendance Officer.
- 6.1.9 Where reasons for absence are not known, the Attendance Officer will make the initial contact with parents/ carers to investigate. Where this proves unsuccessful in establishing the cause of the absence, the Head of Year will initiate more formal communication with home, liaising with the Pastoral Learning Mentors as appropriate.
- 6.1.10 Truancy of a lesson will result in a departmental sanction being issued to the student, and persistent truancy will lead to parents/ carers being invited into school to meet with the relevant Curriculum Leader to discuss the school's concerns. If the truancy involves multiple subject areas, the Head of Year will take the lead on this parent/ carer meeting.
- 6.1.11 The school will ensure that parents are fully informed of the regulations referring to attendance. This can be done via newsletters, the website, and parent information evenings. An information booklet on attendance will be distributed to all parents / carers at the Induction Evening in July so that those who are new to the school are familiar with Neston's expectations regarding attendance and absence protocols.
- 6.1.12 The primary responsibility for ensuring that a student attends school lies with the parent/ carer. Persistent unauthorised absence from school will result in fixed penalty notices for irregular attendance being pursued in consultation with the Local Authority where the avenues above have been explored and have proved unsuccessful.
- 6.1.13 Students in Years 7-11 are not permitted to leave the premises during the school day unless parents / carers make a written request to the student's Head of Year. If permission is granted following such a request (e.g. medical appointment), students must sign out at reception and sign in again on their return. This is an essential safeguarding measure. Students must not call home on their own devices to ask to be picked up during the school day.
- 6.1.14 Where concerns regarding attendance persist despite all of the interventions outlined above, Heads of Year should liaise with the member of the Senior Leadership Team linked to that Year group, in the first instance and seek support, if required, from the member of SLT with responsibility for whole-school attendance.

## 6.2 **Additional points relating to Sixth Form attendance only:**

- 6.2.1 Sixth Form students are expected to attend all lessons, unless absence is authorised. Students are expected to arrive at tutor bases by 8:40 a.m. and must register for p.m. registration either with their class teacher if they have a lesson, or by swiping in at one of the electronic registration points if not.
- 6.2.2 If a member of staff is absent, students must swipe in at one of the electronic registration points and complete the work set, which should be completed within the designated lesson time.
- 6.2.3 Parents/ carers will be notified prior to examinations if study leave is to be granted.
- 6.2.4 Driving lessons should be organised out of school hours.
- 6.2.5 Whilst we will take each student's circumstances into consideration, any student whose attendance falls below 85% without a valid reason will be charged for examination entries and may forfeit their place to continue studies into Year 13.

## 7. Subject staff

- 7.1 Subject Staff should complete their lesson registers promptly (within the first 10 minutes of a lesson) and accurately, and alert the Attendance Officer of any lesson to lesson discrepancies. This is a vitally important mechanism in safeguarding our students. Subject staff will update previously saved registers if a student arrives late to a lesson for any reason to ensure all registers are accurate.
- 7.2 Subject staff will monitor patterns of attendance and absence within their lessons, rewarding good attendance and reporting to the respective Curriculum Leader where there is cause for concern.
- 7.3 Where students are withdrawn from their lesson for any form of intervention (pastoral or academic), the member of staff leading the withdrawal is responsible for ensuring that the student is accurately coded on the register.
- 7.4 Staff leading Educational Visits should ensure that lists are provided at least 48 hours in advance of the visit to the Attendance Officer, so that attendance can be credited accordingly. If a student due to take part is absent on the morning of the visit, a message must be communicated to the Attendance Officer to confirm this.

Curriculum Leaders will induct trainee staff in the registration procedures for the duration of their stay at Neston High School. The member of staff responsible for cover will induct all cover staff in the same procedures.

## 8. Persistent Absence

- 8.1 Parents/ carers should be advised that from September 2015 the Government categorise those students who have attendance of 90% and below as 'Persistent Absence' students (P.A.)

Attendance During the Year	Equals Days Absent	Equals Weeks Absent	Equals Lessons Absent
95%	9.5 days	1.9	47.5
90%	19 days	3.8	95
85%	28.5 days	5.7	142.5
80%	38 days	7.6	190
75%	47.5 days	9.5	237.5
70%	57 days	11.4	285
65%	66.5 days	13.3	332.5

## 9. Leave of absence

- 9.1 In line with the amendments made in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, Headteachers may not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 9.2 Any parent/ carer wishing to request Leave of Absence for their son/daughter should complete a Request for Leave of Absence Form (Appendix A), which is available on the school website, under 'parents'. Completed forms should be sent for consideration to Headteacher, as soon as possible, ahead of any request and four weeks in advance for any planned absence.
- 9.3 It should be noted that if any application is declined and a consecutive five or more unauthorised days' absence occurs, then Neston High School may apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/ carer. The Penalty is £60 per parent /carer per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may

result in prosecution in the Magistrates' court. If proved guilty, the parent/ carer will receive a criminal record.

## 10. Absence due to illness

- 10.1 Absences for medical appointments should be supported by medical evidence. Medical evidence can take the form of either a dated GP / Nurse / Hospital / Dentist / Orthodontist / Opticians appointment card, a dated note from the medical professional, a compliment slip signed and dated, a prescription or proof of prescribed medication relating to the current illness.
- 10.2 Any medical absences in excess of 7 days (14 sessions where a session is a morning or afternoon) per academic year, will need to be supported by medical evidence. If no medical evidence is received, then future absence will be coded as unauthorised.
- 10.3 Parents/ carers should be aware that ten or more unauthorised absences over a term may result in them receiving a Fixed Penalty Notice.

## 11. Long term absence

- 11.1 The Head of Year is responsible for coordinating the support of students with long-term absence (including those on a reduced timetable). The SENDCo and Raising Standards Leader, in collaboration with the Medical and well-being coordinator, will complete a Medical Needs Form to access appropriate Local Authority support where available.
- 11.2 Heads of Year will liaise on a regular basis with the Pastoral Learning Mentor to support the reintegration and achievement of students with long-term absence. Our aim in each case is to support a return to school.
- 11.3 What can parents/carers do to help
  - ✦ Let Neston High School know as soon as your child is absent and each day thereafter
  - ✦ Try to avoid making appointments during term time or normal school hours
  - ✦ Do not allow your child to stay off school if they are well enough to attend
  - ✦ Provide medical evidence for appointments attended.
  - ✦ Consult the NHS 'Is my child too ill for school' website to make an assessment: [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/health/when-is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/)
- 11.4 What can you do if you are worried about your child's attendance
  - ✦ Talk to your child, it may be a simple reason
  - ✦ Talk to your child's Form Tutor
  - ✦ Talk to your child's Head of Year or the Pastoral Learning Mentor (PLM) about the barriers to attendance and work closely with this team to overcome them.

## 12. Legal action to enforce school attendance

12.1 Local Authorities and schools can use various legal powers if your child is missing school without a good reason. They can give you:

### 12.2 A Parenting Order

- ✦ This means parents/ carers must go to parenting classes. Parents also must do what the court says to improve their child's school attendance.

### 12.3 An Education Supervision Order

- ✦ If the Local Authority thinks parents/ carers need support getting their child to go to school, they can apply to a court for an Education Supervision Order. A supervisor will be appointed to help parents get their child into education.

### 12.4 A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or prosecution in the Magistrate's Court.

- ✦ Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 provides that a parent commits an offence if his or her compulsory school age child who is a registered student fails to attend school regularly. This can result in the Local Authority issuing a fixed penalty notice under section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.
- ✦ Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

## 13. Legislative powers at the time of approval

- ✦ The Children Act 1989
- ✦ Education Act 1996
- ✦ Education and Inspections Act 2006
- ✦ School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- ✦ Education Act 2002
- ✦ School Information (England) Regulations 2008
- ✦ Equality Act 2010
- ✦ Schools (Specification and Disposal of Articles) Regulations 2012
- ✦ The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

## 14. Relevant government guidance at the time of approval

[School Admissions Code Statutory guidance for admission authorities, governing bodies, local authorities, schools adjudicators and admission appeals panels](#) (December 2014)

[School Admission Appeals Code Statutory guidance for school leaders, governing bodies and local authorities](#) (February 2012)

[School attendance parental responsibility measures - Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police](#) (January 2015)

[School attendance – Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities](#) (September 2018)

Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2018)





## 15. Appendices

- 15.1 Request for Leave of Absence Form
- 15.2 CWaC Code of Conduct Education Fixed Penalty Notices Irregular Attendance August 2017
- 15.3 CWaC Code of Conduct Education Fixed Penalty Notices Unauthorised Leave of Absence August 2017
- 15.4 CWaC School Attendance Guidance and Pathways to statutory Legal Intervention January 2018

