



SECTION 1: ATTENDANCE

Aims of Policy:

To ensure that the school follows the regulations and guidance from the Department for Education, Schools and Families (DfE) for recording attendance and punctuality.

To outline the procedures to a) accurately record and monitor the attendance and punctuality of students, b) act early to address patterns of absence.

To outline the strategies and systems used to reinforce the school's expectation for all students to achieve a good attendance record of at least 95% and are punctual to their lessons.

Key Principles:

School

It is a legal responsibility for the school to:

- Record absences and late arrivals on a student's annual report,

The school will communicate to parents its expectation with regards to student attendance regularly.

Students will be encouraged to strive for high levels of attendance by using the Rewards Systems:

All students are expected to stay on the school premises during break and lunchtimes.

Parents

It is a legal responsibility on parents to ensure that their child attends school regularly (Section 7, Education Act 1996).

Parents are advised NOT to make non-emergency medical and dental appointments during school hours.

Parents are advised to make holiday arrangements within the school holiday periods.

Attendance Registers

- A register will be taken at the following times of the school day:
 - Students will register their attendance upon arrival to the building.
 - In Lesson 1 by subject teacher and after Lunch by Subject Teacher.
- Once an unexplained or unexpected absence is followed up (see section d) and the reason is established, the register will be amended by the office using the appropriate code.
- It is the responsibility of the Office to ensure that all registers are completed fully and accurately. They will be checked on a daily basis and the Office will act immediately upon any unexplained absence.
- Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for a period of **three years** after the date on which the entry was made.

School's Procedures for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

a) Definition of an Authorised Absence

An 'authorised absence' is where the school has either given approval in advance for a student to be absent, or the school has accepted an explanation offered afterwards by parents as satisfactory justification.

- Acceptable reasons for absence are usually limited to Verified **medical or dental appointments** (supporting evidence must be submitted)
- **Bereavement or family funerals**
- **Religious observance**
- **Transport difficulties** (where unavoidable and evidenced)
- **Auditions** for next-step destinations (Year 11 and Graduate years only)
- It is the decision of the school as to whether an explanation for an absence is satisfactory or not.

b) Reporting an Absence – First Day Contact

The purpose of the 'First Day Contact' is to:

- Enable parents to inform the school at the earliest opportunity that their child is unable to attend school, the reason for this and the expected date of return.
- Enable the school to contact parents to notify them that their child has not arrived to school
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Registers will be checked by the 'Office' **no later than 9.30am** and students who are 'first day absent' will be identified.

- If the parents of a student who is 'first day absent' have not already contacted the school, the
- The office will contact the parents via telephone on the **same day by 10.00am**. If contact has been unsuccessful, a text message and/or email will be sent to the parents requesting them to call the school immediately to explain their child's absence.
- **An absence will remain unauthorised until a valid explanation provided by the parents has been accepted by the school.**
- If a student arrives in school **after 9:00am**, he will be recorded as absent for the morning session. The only common exceptions are travel disruption due to an accident or severe weather conditions.

c) **Record of Communication with Parents In Relation to Absences**

For the complete duration of absence, parents are required to provide a valid explanation. This can be given in the following ways:

- Telephone the school office.
- Email the school office. office@ndsopa.org

An appointment letter for medical or dental treatment should be emailed to the office **in advance**.

A letter inviting a student to an interview or an assessment linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment should be emailed to the office **in advance**.

On the 3rd day of a student **returning** to school after an absence, the Office will inform the Head if an explanation for his absence has still not been provided to the school.

d) **Following Up Absences**

Day of Absence:	Follow Up:
1st day	If parents have not already contacted the school, a member of the office staff will contact the parents via telephone on the same day by 10.00am. If contact has been unsuccessful, a text message and/or email will be sent to the parents requesting them to call the school immediately to explain their child's absence.
3rd day	If the student is absent for 2 days and the office has failed to contact parents, then the Office will inform the Principal. The school will send a letter to parents (by recorded delivery) urging them to notify the school of the reason for their child's absence. If the parents have still not contacted the school within three school days on the date of the letter, the Office will inform the Principal.
11th day	If the school has NOT been able to trace the child after 10 days, the Office will notify the CME (Children Missing Education) department of the local authority. The Head Teacher will send a second letter to parents (by recorded delivery) urging them to notify the school of the reason for their child's absence. If the parents have still not contacted the school within two school days on the date of the letter, the student may be removed from the school's admissions register.
20th day	If the school has NOT been able to trace the child after 20 days, then the school will remove the child's name from its roll on the 21st day. The Office will report the student to the CME (Children Missing Education) department of the local authority as "missing."

e) **Safeguarding Concerns**

If school staff have any safeguarding concerns regarding a student's absence, particularly on repeated occasions, then the school's normal safeguarding procedures must be followed (See 'Safeguarding Policy'). They should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual student to decide as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

f) **Medical or Dental Appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment will be recorded as an 'authorised absence.' In cases where it is not possible for parents to make appointments out of school hours, students should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

To take the rest of the day off, before or after a dental appointment, will NOT be accepted as a valid explanation for an absence

g) **Prolonged Absences**

- If a student is absent for **ten or more consecutive days** due to a health related issue, the parent must provide the school with medical evidence. This can take the form of doctor's notes, prescriptions or appointment cards.
- For a prolonged absence of **ten or more consecutive days** due to a medical reason or bereavement, the Head will liaise with subject teachers to support the student and ensure that he is able to catch up with any missed work. S/He will also be provided with any other information, such as a trip letter, which was shared with students and/or parents during his absence.

h) **Attendance which is a Cause for Concern**

A student's attendance record may be identified as a **cause for concern** if:

- Absence on a particular day of the week is **repeated** on a regular basis.
- Several days of absence due to medical appointments.
- Student fails to return to school at the end of an 'authorised' leave of absence.
- Student goes on holiday **without** gaining school permission.
- Student regularly arrives late to school.
- Student's attendance falls below 90%.
- For any of the above circumstances, the parents may be invited to a meeting with the Head teacher to discuss the matter. Following the meeting, significant improvements in the child's attendance record will be expected to be made and this will be monitored by the head. If the student's attendance remains a cause for concern, then the parents may be asked to withdraw their child from the school. This is at the Head Teachers discretion.
- The school will work in partnership with external support agencies by providing relevant information, in accordance with current data protection regulations, to support families where there are serious concerns regarding attendance.

i) **Unauthorised Absence**

An 'unauthorised absence' is where the school is **not** satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

An absence is classified as 'unauthorised' in the following cases:

- The school has **not** given prior approval for the absence,
- The school has **not** been provided with an explanation for the absence,
- The school has **not** been satisfied with the explanation given for the absence,
- A student takes leave of absence **without** obtaining prior approval from the school. This may be due to the request being declined or due to failure to follow the school's procedures for submitting a request for leave of absence,
- A student **fails** to return to school on the date agreed by the Head teacher and so is kept away longer than was authorised. This includes an extension/excess of an authorised holiday period.

j) **Truancy**

Truancy from school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and will also warrant a sanction of a serious nature (see 'Behaviour & Discipline Policy').

Truancy includes a student failing to attend a lesson without the **prior** permission of the teacher or if a student leaves the school site at any point of the school day without prior authorisation from the school.

l) **Infectious Illnesses**

All cases of infectious illness in the home should be reported to the school immediately by telephone to allow school to make a decision on whether to inform other parents of the risk, should there be more than three cases in school.

If a student has been absent with an infectious illness, parents should state the nature of the illness and it should certify that the student is free from the infection.

Application for Leave of Absence Due To Exceptional Circumstances

The school does **not** authorise a leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Each application will be

considered on an individual basis. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head teacher's discretion.

- When requesting a leave of absence, parents must complete an 'Application for Leave of Absence' form (which can be obtained from the school office) and submit it to the
 - o Office.
- Parents must also adhere to the following:
 - o All sections of the form must be **completed before** it is submitted.
 - o The form must be received at **least ten school days before** the date of leave stated on the form.
 - o The form must be received by the Office **before any bookings are made.**
- Parents should be aware that leave of absence may not be authorised:
 - o If a student's attendance record is a cause for concern,
 - o If the date of leave is close to or during the school's internal assessment periods or external examination period,
 - o If the date of leave is during the period of Work Experience,
 - o If the school is not satisfied that the individual facts and circumstances, provided by the parent on the application form, warrant the leave.
- Where a leave of absence has been granted, the Head teacher will determine the number of days a student can be away from school. A **date of return to school** will be agreed upon and stipulated on the 'Application for Leave of Absence' form.
- If the student fails to return to school on the agreed date, it will result in the following:
 - o Any days of absence in excess of those which were authorised by the school, will be recorded as **unauthorised**. The stages outlined in section d) Following Up Absences, will be taken.
 - o Parents will be contacted on the first day of the **unauthorised** absence as explained in section b) Reporting an Absence - First Day Contact.
- In case of a flight delay or cancellation, parents must provide valid evidence of this on the first day of their child returning to school.

The school cannot give retrospective approval for a leave of absence. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised

The school reserves the right to remove a student's name from the attendance register if s/he has an unauthorised absence of **ten or more days** beyond the agreed date for her/his return to school. In such circumstances, parents are expected to pay a term's fee from the 1st day of the unauthorised absence. This is at the Head teacher's discretion.

SECTION 2: PUNCTUALITY

Key Principles:

a) School

The school strongly discourages late arrival to school and will seek an explanation from the parent. All students are expected to attend school on time as it teaches them self-discipline and time management. It also ensures a calm and orderly start to the school day.

The school will communicate to parents its expectation with regards to the punctuality of students regularly.

b) Parents

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child attends school **on time**.

Morning Registration

The first registration takes place at **8.30am**. If a student arrives after 8.30am, s/he will be marked 'late' in the attendance register.

If a student arrives **after** morning registration has ended:

- S/He will be registered by the Office at the main reception.

Sanctions

Students who are regularly late to school will be addressed using the Behaviour Management System:

1st late – 1st warning
2nd late – 2nd warning
3rd late – 1 Order

A record of lateness will be kept by Office who will notify the Head when a student needs to be issued with a behaviour point.

Office will provide a regular report of punctuality to the Heads of Year who will be alert to patterns of late arrival and take the appropriate action to address it. For example, parents of students who are persistently late will be invited to school to discuss the reasons for their child's persistent lateness and to set appropriate targets.

Admissions Register

The school keeps an Admissions Register which contains details of all the pupils at the school. This includes

- The pupil's name in full
- The birth sex of the pupil
- The name and address of every person known to be a parent/carer of the pupil (and an indication of which parent that pupil normally lives with and which parents hold parental responsibility as defined by Section 3 Children Act 1989), including any additional/change of addresses
- At least one telephone number of the main carer plus additional emergency contacts (although the additional numbers need not be kept on the admissions register).
- The day, month and year of birth
- The day, month and year of admission or readmission
- The name and address of the last school attended, if any

The name of the destination school notified by a parent, and the first date of attendance (where practicable to ascertain)

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