

NEWFIELD SCHOOL



Whole School Attendance Policy

Responsible: Mrs Furlong
Review Date: September 2021
Date of next review: September 2022

STATUTORY DUTY OF SCHOOLS

The Education Act 1996 Section 7 requires parents or guardians to ensure their child receives efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

CURRENT CONTEXT

Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption that pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Attendance at Years 9, 10 and 11 has dipped therefore there is a particular focus on these year groups

PHILOSOPHY

Newfield School is committed to providing all pupils with a full-time education experience that maximises each pupil's opportunities and allows each to realise their true potential. We believe that if a pupil is to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. Pupils should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open.

Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career; our school will actively promote and encourage 100% attendance for all our pupils.

The school will give high priority to communicating with parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communications systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive, in partnership with mums, dads, carers and pupils, to resolve those problems as quickly as possible.

Newfield School is committed to the continual improvement of pupil attendance and is highly proactive in encouraging regular and punctual student attendance in school and in all lessons. The school believes that pupils have the right to education and to benefit from the best education possible pupils require continuity and progression in their learning. Consistent attendance is an essential foundation in order to achieve success. Research evidence confirms that poor school attendance, under achievement and disaffection are inter-related. Newfield School has implemented a structured whole school approach to the issues involved, which encompasses prevention, early intervention and the effective use of support services. The School Attendance officer and LA Attendance team support and facilitate this process. We believe that the starting point for social inclusion is to ensure regular attendance from all pupils and therefore the progression of educational inclusion. This is valued as highly as educational achievement.

6 out of 10 students on average with over 95% attendance (missing no more than 10 days a year) gain 5 GCSE A* to C grades

Only 1 in 10 pupils who are poor attenders gain 5 GCSE A*-C grades

A Student will fall below 95% if they miss as little as half a day over a two week period.

It is the expectation of the school that all pupils **will** achieve at least 95% attendance.

AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

Pupil attendance is central to all school planning, development and innovation. The rigorous evaluation process undertaken by the Senior Leadership Team, teaching staff and the Attendance Officer identifies evidence of impact in all aspects of student attendance. This has ensured that high expectations of improving pupil attendance are embedded within the school culture, thus leading to improved achievement through a real partnership with pupils and their families. Continued improvement of pupil attendance has become integral to school improvement planning, where pupil attendance is clearly identified as a key agent in developing a more successful school and community.

- Mums, dads and carers are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.
- We will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued.
- We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent, he/she will be missed.
- We will consult with all members of the school community in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.
- We will encourage mums/dads/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance.
- We will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they receive training on Registration Regulations and the Law relating to attendance.
- Regular information will be sent to mums, dads, carers and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues.
- We will promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning following an absence.
- We will ensure regular evaluation of our attendance policy and procedures by Senior Leadership Team, School Governors and External Advisors
- Attendance will be an important feature of the School Improvement Plan.
- Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place.

RESPONSIBILITIES (See Appendix 7 for 'Procedures to promote good attendance')

The school will:-

- Record and monitor attendance in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Teachers mark the register at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions
- Newfield School registers open, deemed late after 8.55 a.m. deemed absent after register closes 9.30 a.m.
- Check the registers weekly to monitor lateness and absence
- School will phone home on first day of absence if school has not heard from mums/dads/carers.
- Contact parents / carers where attendance falls below an acceptable level or when patterns of absence are causing concerns
- Provide access to staff with whom attendance related issues can be discussed
- Work with external agencies to maintain good attendance to support and where necessary challenge the family

- Monitor the Exceptional Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances
- Set targets for reducing absence.
- Celebrate pupils' attendance at each end of term and end of year.
- Give mums/dads/carers feedback on attendance in newsletters, Headteacher' reports and on our website.
- Refer to the Attendance and Welfare Service children who have unauthorised absence for Penalty Notice Proceedings

Mums/dads/carers have a legal duty to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend on a regular and full-time basis.

Mums/dads/carers will:

- Ensure that their child is ready for transport (where applicable), or reaches school on time each day
- Talk positively about going to school "What was good about school today?" etc.
- Encourage their child to come to school, including ensuring a realistic bedtime, equipment ready and uniform and medication (where applicable) are provided
- Encourage a child to come to school if feeling slightly unwell; many aches and pains are forgotten when they are with friends and school will contact you if it becomes necessary
- Contact school early on the first morning by 8.30 a.m. of absence by phone, email or in person.
- Arrange dental, doctor or hospital appointments outside the school day except in an emergency.
- Only ask for leave of absence for their child in exceptional circumstances,
- Not take their children out of school during term time, and realize that if they do they are at risk of damaging their child's education risk being given a penalty notice by Sefton Council.

If mums/dads/carers do not ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time the school will:

- Contact mums/dads/carers to discuss the reasons and plan for improvement.
- Monitor the attendance plan and celebrate the improvements. If mums/dads/carers persist in not ensuring their child attends school regularly and on time the school will unauthorised the absence :
- Refer their child if they have 10% or more unauthorised absence to the Attendance and Welfare Service. The Education Welfare Officer [EWO} will contact mums/dads/carers to find reasons and plan for improvement.
- Could refer to CAF to set up support for the child and family
- Could refer to the Attendance and Welfare Service to set up penalty notice proceedings

The Role of the Governing Body

- The governing body must ensure that school registers are kept; one for admissions and one for attendance.
- The governing body is required to agree the annual attendance target for the school.

SAFEGUARDING

The school reserves the right to invite parents into school to discuss any issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns i.e. sexual exploitation, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, forced marriage, radicalisation. In addition, if the school suspects that a student may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school, (including gang related issues or risk of underachievement), the safeguarding team reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies i.e. social care, police etc. The school will inform parents/carers if a referral is to be made. However, this may not be appropriate in every circumstance, depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern and a referral may be made without informing the parent/carer.

RELUCTANCE TO GO TO SCHOOL

Sometimes pupils seem anxious about leaving home to go to school. They may tell you that they feel unwell or give another reason not to attend. You may notice that they are worried from things they say e.g. they do not want to do particular subjects; they have trouble on transport, feel they have no friends or are being bullied. If this is the case, please contact the school as soon as possible to speak to the form tutor, or a member of the senior leadership team.

SLT Member Allocated to Attendance – Miss Furlong, Dept Head

Form Tutors

Ensure registers are marked accurately each session

Subject Teachers

Ensure all students in school attend lessons

Admin Staff – L Daly, L Stephens

Liaise with Form Tutors and A Ruddock, Attendance Officer, when messages are received

Attendance Officer - Mrs Alison Ruddock

- Monitor all registers daily.
- Ensure that registers are marked in accordance with DCSF guidelines and use registration codes approved by DCSF.
- Ensure that electronic registers via SIMS are up to date and are available if required by the Local Authority for inspection.
- On the first day of absence contact parents/carers to establish the reason for absence.
- Follow up unexplained absences.
- Liaise with alternative education providers for pupils' attendance at agreed provisions.
- Refer to the Attendance and Welfare Service, where appropriate

Understanding types of absence:

Every half day absence has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why the cause of absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which are unavoidable, sporting events, music exams and these are coded accordingly.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes: -

- Mums/dads/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily,
- Truancy,
- Absences which have never been properly explained,
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark,
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays,
- Leave of absence which has not been agreed.

Any child who is reluctant to attend school is supported by the school and mums/dads/carers to address the reasons and to aid a swift return to school.

Persistent Absentees (PA): a child goes onto this list if they have missed 15% or more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing harm to your child's educational prospects and therefore support from mums/dads/carers is needed to tackle this. All children on the PA list are contacted and a meeting is set up with the Head teacher to discuss the attendance plan and create a successful strategy.

All PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system.

How the School aims to maintain good attendance and improve poor attendance

Electronic system in place

Correct and appropriate attendance codes

Making use of data available (declining groups), effect of seasonal attendance

First day contact system in place

Monitor attendance on a 6 weekly cycle

Raise the profile of attendance - home-school agreements, parents' evenings, school newsletters, or other communications.

Involve parents - Communicate frequently with parents about positive achievements and improvements and in ways which emphasise the responsibility and role of parents in partnership with the school. Clear messages regarding levels of absence and the likely impact that this will have on their children's attainment

Target support – The use of targeted intervention and support in areas of specific need

Use rewards and incentives to encourage attendance and punctuality

Positively reintegrate absentees

Use of pupil premium to support breakdown in transport

Displays

Assemblies

At the end of an assembly, on a regular basis, give pupils one of the following statistics or questions to think about.

- There are only 40 teaching weeks in the school year; there are 12 weeks of holiday.
- Missing six days every term of every year is the same as missing one whole school year
- 95% attendance sounds good, but means that you are taking one day off a month
- Would you think it was acceptable if one of your teachers did not come to school to teach you for a week because he/she had gone on holiday in term time?

No Holidays in Term Time

Sponsorship (Primark)

Attendance officers visit homes and provide face to face contact with families

The targeted use of statutory actions such as the use of penalty notices are used as a final measure for persistent non-attenders who 'won't' come to school

Provision of a range of vocational and academic qualifications, personalised to pupils.

Where a student's attendance falls below 85% (at any stage of the year) she/he will be allocated time with the form teaching assistant who will track attendance with the Attendance Officer on a weekly basis. The Attendance Officer will contact parents to discuss attendance concerns and formalise an Attendance Action Plan to secure improvement in attendance.

School Targets

- The school has targets to improve attendance, mums/dads/carers and your child have an important part to play in meeting these targets
- Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school
- The minimum target level of attendance for this school is 90% and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares.
- Our target is to achieve 85% across the whole school however because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

PERSISTENT ABSENTEESIM

The school has a responsibility to reduce the number of students whose attendance is below 85% over the school year. This adds up to missing almost half a term. Students with attendance below 85% fall into the 'Persistent Absentee' category, whatever their reason for absence (authorised or unauthorised). This means they will have been absent from school for the following number of days at the end of each half term:

- 5 days by the end of the first half term
- 11 days by the end of the Autumn term
- 15 days by the end of the first half of the Spring term
- 19 days by the end of the Spring term
- 23 days by the end of the first half of the Summer term
- 28 days by the end of the Summer term

Staff have access to weekly attendance statistics so that the whole school knows exactly how we are performing, where we are excelling and where we need to focus.

Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of attendance data by middle and senior leaders

The form with the best attendance or the fewest late arrivals (depending on your priority) each week, month or half term could receive a reward:

Pupil and parent input into attendance policy

Offer incentives for families, not just students. Often, families appreciate access to resources such as food baskets, transportation passes, etc.

Student designed posters and leaflets

Students involved in making Attendance levels displays in the foyer and in form rooms focusing upon the value of school attendance

Attendance performance targets for Attendance Officer

Subject action plans highlight attendance priority actions and strategies

PROCEDURES

Registration & lateness

Resisters are marked electronically in each class using SIMS. Students arriving after 8.55 a.m. deemed to be late; those arriving after 10.00 a.m. are deemed to be absent

First Day Contact

Mums/Dads/Carers whose child is absent are required to contact the school on the first day of absence, before 8.30 a.m. If no contact has been made by the mum/dad/carer on the first day of absence the Attendance Officer will contact home using a truancy call to establish the reason for absence.

ABSENCES

Illness

Absences due to illness should be reported before 8:30 am on each day of absence. If a mum/dad/carer knows their child will be absent for a certain period (i.e. due to a broken leg/tonsillitis) then we will authorise the absence for a slightly longer period of time but request regular updates from the mum/dad/carer. If the student is well enough to work at home whilst they are off work is collected by the school and sent home to be completed and returned to school.

If a student has low attendance and/or has had a lot of time off due to illness, we will request that medical notes are provided before authorising any further absences due to illness. If no medical proof is provided the absence will remain unauthorised and the Formal Monitoring process will be considered.

Medical Appointments

We will not authorise a full day's absence for a medical appointment such as dentist/orthodontist. All appointments are requested to be made outside of the school day wherever possible but if an appointment has to be made during the school day we expect the student to be in before and/or after the appointment, depending on the time. If a student is absent for the full day we will mark them as unauthorised for either the AM or PM roll call.

Phone Call

If a mum/dad/carer has not contacted the school then a phone call home is made. If no response is received over 3 days a home visit is made by the Attendance Officer and/or a member of the school

Holidays

Amendments to the [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Mums/dads/carers must complete a leave of absence exceptional circumstances form however the school does not have to grant leave of absence. Exceptional circumstances would be authorised at the discretion of the Head teacher however even then we would take into consideration what year the student is and whether any exams or assessments are taking place at the requested time of absence.

Religious Observance

The school will authorise an absence taken for religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the mums/dads/carers belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the mums/dads/carers' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

PA (Persistent Absentee) Students

The school aims to have 4% or less PA students.

Interventions include:

Phone calls home

Speaking to students without mums/dads/carers to discuss the issues

Attendance Panels

Home Visits

Placing students on report for attendance and/or punctuality

Formal Monitoring leading to Penalty Notices if necessary

Phone calls home praising improved attendance/punctuality

Well done cards for improved attendance/punctuality

Recognition from the Headteacher

CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

No child will be removed from roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Attendance & Welfare Service. Where a child is missing from education with prolonged absences that are unexplained or if a family move away from the area but do not register with another school, the school will alert the local authority who will then take action according to the Child Missing in

Education Policy and Procedures. Movement of children between local authorities and schools is tracked nationally.

Attendance is very high priority in school. Weekly updates are available to staff along with extra statistics at the end of each half term detailing lates / unauthorised absences / illness for each term and for each year. Patterns of absences are monitored so that interventions can be put in place.

Attendance Panel

LA Panel

If a referral is made to Attendance & Welfare service, mums, dads or carers will be required to attend a Panel meeting with the Local Authority Officers. Decisions will be made at this panel around possible legal proceedings

Mum/Dad/Carer Contracts

If the school is concerned about the attendance of your child you will be invited into the school to discuss the issues and you may be asked to draw up a contract between yourself and the school to address the issues. This contract is voluntary and there is no legal requirement for you to participate.

Penalty Notices/Prosecution for Non-Attendance

It is a legal requirement that your child attends school regularly. As the mum/dad/carers you have a legal responsibility to ensure their attendance. The Attendance and Welfare Service has the statutory duty to enforce this. The Attendance and Welfare Service can issue a penalty notice of £60, if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid within 28 days. The Attendance and Welfare Service can also prosecute a mum/dad/carers in the Magistrates Court for non-attendance at a registered school or non-attendance at an agreed Education Provision. It is also a legal requirement that a pupil attends on time. The mum/dad/carers is responsible for ensuring that their child attends on time. .

Appendix 1 The Legal Foundation of this policy is found in Education Act 1996

The legal framework governing attendance is set by the Education Acts and their associated regulations. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that: The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient, full time education suitable to his/her age, aptitude and ability and to any special educational needs he/she may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Section 444 further states that: The parent of a child of compulsory school age registered at school and failing to attend regularly is guilty of an offence punishable by law. An offence is not committed if it can be demonstrated that:

The pupil was absent with leave agreed by school staff; (authorised absence)

The pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause;

The absence was on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs;

The school is not within walking distance of the child's home and the LA has made no suitable arrangements for: $\frac{3}{4}$ the child's transport to and from school; ("walking distance" is defined in section 444(5) of the Education Act 1996).

The law relating to 'walking distance' effectively is defined as two miles for pupils under age eight and three miles for all other pupils. 5.21 Since March 2001 there has been a more serious offence where a parent who, knowing that his child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him to attend (Education Act 1996 Section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000). This amendment was introduced to provide another, more serious offence which requires proof that the parent knew of their child's non-attendance and failed to act. Under the higher offence a warrant can be issued compelling a parent to attend court. Prosecution under section 444(1A) can lead to a custodial sentence.

Appendix 2 - Parental responsibility

The term 'parent' refers to one parent, both parents or the child's carer.

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, the parent is responsible for making sure that their child of compulsory school age receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have. This can be by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise (the parent can elect to educate their child at home).

*The expression "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for him or her, or who has the day to day care of the child.

Compulsory school age is defined as beginning from age five when a child should attend school from the start of the term commencing on or after his fifth birthday. A child continues to be of compulsory school age until the last Friday of June in the school year that they reach sixteen.

Appendix 3 – First Day Contact Guidelines

First day contact is a widely used practice in schools and has been shown to improve attendance rates. The correct procedure at Newfield School is as follows:

1. As soon as the registers are completed on SIMS, staff checks absentees against messages received.
2. For other pupils for whom no message has been received, staff will attempt to make contact with the parent at the earliest opportunity.
3. When contact is made, the parent will be asked for the reason for absence. In the event that no proper reason is supplied, the parent will be informed that the absence will not be authorised.
4. In the case of minor ailments, the parent will be encouraged to send the child in with an assurance that school will keep a close eye on him/her. (NB – if there has been a spate of certain symptoms in the school or community, such minor illnesses may be treated as a valid reason for absence).
5. Where no contact is made, a message should be left asking the parent to contact the school. Where it is impossible to leave a message, a note should be sent, or a home visit undertaken
6. . Reasons for absence are then added to the register.

Appendix 4

The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Reduce absence including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty to by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend early; and
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons and attend school regularly.

Legal Enforcement by Sefton Council

As part of promoting good attendance and punctuality Sefton Council will use its legal powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including powers to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a school attendance order (Section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Education Supervision Orders The local authority must consider applying for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) before prosecuting parents. A local authority may apply for an ESO instead of or as well as prosecuting parents. The order is placed on the child and the local authority is appointed by the court to supervise that child's education either at a school or at home for a specified period of time.

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the local authority to issue Penalty Notices for failure to ensure regular school attendance. Parents or carers who take their children out of school without school's permission or are late returning from a leave of absence that has been granted during term time as there are exceptional circumstances, may receive a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child, which must be paid within 21 days. If payment is made after 21 days but within 28 days, the penalty is increased to £120. Where a fine remains unpaid after 28 days, the matter will be referred to the Attendance and Welfare Service, who will consider instigating criminal proceedings. Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued after 12 unauthorised absences in a term or 20 in two consecutive terms. Children who are late without good reason after registration closes also receive an unauthorised absence mark.

In addition, a penalty notice and may also be issued where parents allow their children to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

The **Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013** sets out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate. Sefton Council Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices will be made available for schools, parents/carers and other interested parties.

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** currently allow headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "special circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers

may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Sefton Council will also be conducting Pre Court Panel meetings in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984.

Appendix 7 - Procedures to promote good attendance

Daily Procedures	By who	Outcomes / Action
Parents / carers ensure pupils arrive at school on time (via LA transport or own transport)	Parents / carers	
Parents inform the school by 8.30 a.m. if their child is absent that day	Parent/ carers	Support staff update registration data
Form staff record attendance using SIMS	Form staff	
1 st day absence phone calls / text messaging are made to request information on child's unexplained absence	Attendance officer and Admin staff	Attendance officer / admin staff update attendance data
Parents speak to form teacher or provide written note, including dates and reasons for absence upon child's return to school	Parents/carers	Form staff provide to attendance officer / admin staff for filing
Weekly procedures	By who	Outcomes / Action
Attendance statistics produced by form, year group and school	Admin staff	Provided to Attendance Officer and HT for monitoring and analysis
Attendance statistics and graphs shared in assembly, displayed in form rooms and on school attendance notice boards	Attendance Officer / Admin staff	
Individual attendance achievements / concerns are produced by form	Admin staff	Reports shared with staff and pupils and discussed in form time
Attendance data analysed and information identifies causes for concern and appropriate interventions	Attendance officer	targeted interventions for individual concerns
Half termly and termly procedures	By who	Outcomes / Action
Analyse attendance data to monitor trends and progress	Attendance Officer	
Assemblies to promote attendance and celebrate progress	Head Teacher	
Assemblies as required in response to specific attendance concerns of a particular cohort of pupils	SLT	
Individual attendance certificates and letters / postcards shared with students and families via Post and parent events	Form teachers, Head Teacher	
Reward draws and attendance certificates presented in achievement assemblies	SLT	
Home visits by Attendance Officer to discuss attendance concerns and issues with individual families	Attendance Officer	
Review success and impact of attendance strategies for the term	Head Teacher	Amend and refine interventions as appropriate