

## INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance at school is essential in promoting a full and efficient education for all children; it maintains continuity in their education and friendships, enables positive attitudes to learning and promotes good learning. The school's ethos demonstrates that children feel valued and that their presence in school is important. The 1996 Education Act makes it clear that parents must ensure that compulsory school-age children receive a regular full-time education and that if any child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence. For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. Nanpean School is committed to working towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to children and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

## AIMS

- To maximise attendance of all children.
- To provide an environment that encourages regular attendance and punctuality.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents/carers to resolve any difficulty.
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice.
- To work closely and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Student Welfare Officer and multi-agency teams.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

- **Governors**
  - To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
  - To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.
- **Headteacher**
  - To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil and group and whole school attendance patterns.
  - To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
  - To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and / or punctuality is an issue.
  - To provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
  - To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
  - To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- **Class Teacher**
  - To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
  - To record the reasons for absence on the SIMS.net computerised system.
  - To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.

- **Office Staff**
  - To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the SIMS.
  - To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
  - To contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish the reason.
    - To contact parents/ carers of children on our unaccompanied list by 9.15am
    - To make efforts to contact parents/ carers of children not on our unaccompanied list by 10.30am
  - To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established.
  - To make a judgement in conjunction with the Headteacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- **Student Welfare Officer**
  - To enforce the law regarding school attendance.
  - To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and monitoring individual children's attendance.

## ADMINISTRATION

- The School uses Attendance Manager provided by SIMS to store and monitor its legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance. This system consists of specialised software to produce an electronic register.
- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. These are printed out monthly and held centrally in a file in the school office.
- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents / carers and constitutes a risk in an emergency evacuation.

## ABSENCE

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. In law only the Governors can grant leave of absences for a child but Governors will delegate this responsibility to the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher in their absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded, in the first instance, as unauthorised.

## Lateness

- Pupils arriving after the register has been closed at **9.00am** will be considered as **late (L)**, and must report to the school office.
- Pupils arriving after **9.30am** will be marked as **absent (U)** for the morning session. This will be considered an unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory reason and evidence is given, for example a medical appointment.
- Action to address lateness will be taken in line with the school's strategy to improve punctuality.

## Illness

- Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence and where possible on each subsequent day of absence.
- If no contact is received, the school will phone parents/carers on the first day of absence.
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Headteacher should be informed.

## Medical Appointments

- Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.
- Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence if parents/carers provide written confirmation of these appointments.
- Where a child is absent from school for an unavoidable medical reason, we expect parents/carers to ensure the child attends school for the remainder of the day.

## Holidays in Term Time

Holidays during term time are discouraged and should be taken during the school holiday periods. The new regulations in force from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 state that **parents/carers do not have a legal right to take their children out of school for holidays in term time**. It is at the headteacher's discretion to authorise holidays in exceptional circumstances, taking into account the reason the holiday was booked in term time and the child's attendance. The general rule to be applied is that holiday requests during term time should be refused unless the circumstances leading to the holiday can be considered to be a one off that cannot occur again, e.g. a final holiday with a terminally ill family member, a funeral or wedding.

The school may consider approving a request for pupils provided the following conditions are met:

- The child's attendance is 95% or above for the past 6 months.
- No more than 5 days holiday has been requested in one academic year.
- The period of absence does not include any internal or external examinations.
- There are exceptional reasons as to why a holiday cannot be taken in normal holiday time.

Applications to take a holiday or an occasional special day during term time will be considered on an individual basis and should be applied for using the holiday application form obtained from the school office.

## Religious Observance

Nanpean School is inclusive of the various religious communities within the school and will take reasonable steps to ensure school events do not coincide with days of significant religious importance to pupils. According to the Department of Education, schools are required to treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. However, "the day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong". Nanpean School recognises that occasionally, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends, which makes it necessary to consider authorised absence for religious observance. The school will use their discretion where a parent does not belong to a religious body, and may want to celebrate an alternative festival of importance to them.

Schools' responsibilities:

- Nanpean School will be sensitive to requests from parents/pupils for absence due to religious reasons.
- Pupils are permitted to have an authorised absence if the religious observance or festival is a compulsory part of their faith. Nanpean School will use their discretion to grant absence

requests for days in addition to these. These requests will be treated as an ordinary absence request, and not as an absence for religious observance.

- The head teacher is responsible for ensuring that requests are reasonable and genuine. The head teacher will not doubt a request on the following grounds:
  - That other pupils of the same faith have not requested absence on the same day or time.
  - That the pupil's family is more stringent in its religious observances than other families of the same faith.
  - That the religious group to which the family belongs requires observance of religious practices that are different for members of the community. (For example, a special day to worship a saint or religious rituals related to the death anniversary of a family member).
- Nanpean School will strive to take advice from parents' religious body on the number of days set apart for religious observances.
- Nanpean School will seek to build positive relationships with local places of worship/religious leaders to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.

#### Parents' responsibilities:

- Parents have a duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
- Parents should consider whether the absence for religious purposes is necessary, or whether the religious duty may be accommodated outside of school hours.
- Parents need to be aware that the school is required to know of particular needs with regard to the religious observance of pupils; e.g. pupils who are fasting or those involved in exceptional religious activity outside of working hours.
- Parents must inform the school in advance if absence is required for days of religious observance.
- Parents must be willing to discuss with the school how the pupil can catch up on missed work.

#### Traveller Absence

On days when a pupil from a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller family is known to be out of area due to the family travelling, and is not in educational provision, then Nanpean School will use the letter code T to record the absence where the following criteria have been met:

- 1) The family identifies as a Gypsy, Roma and Traveller family and the nature of their trade or business requires them to travel from place to place.
- 2) Families inform the school in advance when they are going to be travelling and when they expect to return.
- 3) The pupil has attended a minimum of 200 sessions' attendance at any school during the previous rolling 12 month period.

As with all pupils, Nanpean School expects children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families to attend a school for 380 sessions per academic year. Where a pupil is dual registered, or attending another school for part of the year, we will work with the other school to ensure that attendance is recorded accurately.

On any day when a pupil, including those from Gypsy, Roma or Travelling families, is absent from school and it is not appropriate to use the T code, the school will use the most appropriate of the codes detailed above. If the reason for the pupil's absence is not known, it must be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Where pupil's attendance falls below expectation, attendance letters will be issued in accordance with the school's normal procedures (see Regular Absence).

Nanpean School will liaise with the Traveller Education Service when appropriate to ensure that action taken with regards to the attendance of children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families is in accordance with legislation.

## Other Absence

Other absence from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made to authorise or not authorise the absence.

## REPORTING TO PARENTS AND CARERS

The class/es with the highest attendance is reported in the weekly newsletter. Individual pupils' attendance figures will be reported to parent/carers during termly parent consultations and at the end of the academic year within their child's report.

## ATTENDANCE AWARDS

- Children who achieve 100% attendance are presented with an attendance wristband/ certificate at the end of each term.
- Children who achieve 100% attendance at the end of the year are presented with an attendance wristband/ certificate and a gift.

## REGULAR ABSENCE

It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

We monitor attendance on a monthly basis. When a child's attendance falls lower than 95% or causes concern, their parents or carers will be contacted by the school (see Appendix A-C). We will look for patterns and reasons for absence, making parents or carers aware of the number of absences and the importance of attendance. Additional support may be available from outside agencies (e.g. school nurse, family support worker, etc). In other cases the school will seek advice from the Student Welfare Officer (SWO) (see Appendix D). Action may include the use of the Fast Track system and/or Fixed Penalty Notices. Monitoring will continue and a Common Assessment Framework meeting could be considered.

Any child who is absent, without an explanation, for 20 unauthorised session out of 100 will be notified to the Local Authority by submitting a referral to Education Welfare Services who may decide to prosecute. A conviction may result in a fine of up to £2,500, a prison sentence of up to three months or both. Alternatively a penalty notice may be issued under Section 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996. This carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice may result in court action.

## ATTENDANCE CODES

The school uses the national codes on SIMS to record attendance information:

Code	School meaning	Statistical meaning	Code	School meaning	Statistical meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	N	No reason yet provided	Unauthorised absence
\	Present (PM)	Present	O	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence

<b>B</b>	Educated off site (not dual registered)	Approved educational activity	<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved ed. activity
<b>C</b>	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised absence	<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registered (attending other setting)	Approved educational activity	<b>S</b>	Study Leave	Authorised absence
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provisions)	Authorised absence	<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised absence	<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved ed. activity
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved ed. activity
<b>I</b>	Illness	Authorised absence	<b>X</b>	DfES – School closed	Attendance not required
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved ed. activity	<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Attendance not required
<b>L</b>	Late (before register closed)	Present	<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils/ staff	Attendance not required
<b>M</b>	Medical/ dental appointment	Authorised absence			

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Attendance data will be collected monthly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with: incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; lateness; periods of extended absence; periods of unauthorised; and all children with attendance below 95%. This data will be discussed with the SWO on a termly basis.
- The Headteacher and SWO will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote high attendance annually and the Headteacher will recommend an attendance target to the Governors.
- The Governors will set an annual target of attendance and unauthorised absence and review this annually at its first meeting.

Policy reviewed: June 2017

Approved by governors: 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017

To be reviewed: June 2019

**APPENDIX A – FIRST LETTER TO PARENTS**

«salutation»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**«chosen\_forename» «chosen\_surname»**

As part of our commitment to improving the attainment of our pupils we monitor attendance on a regular basis and identify any pupil whose attendance causes concern. At Nanpean School, any pupil's attendance which falls below 95% is a cause for concern.

We are therefore writing to you due to «chosen\_forename»'s current level of attendance.

Overall School Attendance	«percentage_attendance»%
Of Which Authorised Absences is	«percentage_authorised_absences»%
Of which Unauthorised Absence is	«percentage_unauthorised_absences»%

This means that «chosen\_forename» has missed «total\_unauthorised\_absences» sessions which are Unauthorised and «total\_authorised\_absences» which are authorised. To put this into perspective a 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 19 days of school per year.

It is important that this low attendance improves and we will continue to monitor the situation.

Any child who is absent, without explanation, for 20 unauthorised sessions out of 100 will be notified to the Local Authority by submitting a referral to our Student Welfare Service, who made decide to prosecute. A conviction may result in a fine of up to £2,500, a prison sentence of up to 3 months or both. Alternatively, a penalty notice may be issued under Section 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996. This carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the penalty notice may result in court action.

If you have any queries or would like to talk to someone about Attendance please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs C Wicks  
Head teacher

## APPENDIX B – FOLLOW UP LETTER TO PARENTS

«salutation»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**«chosen\_forename» «chosen\_surname»**

Since we last wrote to you, «chosen\_forename»'s attendance has failed to improve and is now «percentage\_attendance»%.

This continues to be below expected levels.

We would therefore like to discuss this matter with you and ask that you contact the school within 5 school days to arrange an appointment. Failure to contact us or to attend the meeting will result in this matter being referred to the Student Welfare Officer, who will investigate matters of ongoing poor school attendance on our behalf.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs C Wicks  
Head teacher

## APPENDIX C – REFERRAL TO THE STUDENT WELFARE OFFICER

«salutation»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**«chosen\_forename» «chosen\_surname»**

Since we last wrote to you, «chosen\_forename»'s attendance continues to decline and is now «percentage\_attendance»% which is of serious concern to us.

Consequently, we have requested that our Student Welfare Office: Caroline Hunt, becomes involved in ensuring that «chosen\_forename»'s attendance improves. Caroline will be in touch with you shortly to introduce herself and investigate the reasons for your child's poor attendance and what measures may be put in place to support your child in bring their attendance rate up to an acceptable level.

In the meantime, if you have any questions regarding your child's attendance or feel that you require more immediate support from the school, please make an appointment to meet with Mrs Wicks as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Wicks  
Head teacher

**APPENDIX D – REFERRAL TO THE STUDENT WELFARE OFFICER**

**Nanpean School**  
**Student Welfare Service – Referral**

Full name of parent/carer:.....

Address: .....

Home Tel No: ..... Work Tel. No: .....

Others with Parental Responsibility: .....

Other Agencies involved: .....

Any Special Educational Needs: .....

Reason for Referral and Any Other Relevant Information: .....

Prior Action Taken by School (include details of contact with parents): .....

**Action Required:**

Home Visit

Initial Warning Letter

Attendance over the last 100 (half day) sessions:

Authorised absence over the last 100 (half day) sessions:

Unauthorised absence over the last 100 (half day) sessions:

**Please attach computer print out**

Referred by: ..... Date: .....

