



# Nexus Education Schools Trust

## Attendance Policy

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**Non-Statutory**

	Name	Date
Prepared by:	NEST Central	May 2018
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# Attendance Policy

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## 1. Aims

At Nexus Education Schools Trust we believe that good attendance and punctuality is essential for our children to gain the educational and social skills for their future. Schools in the Trust recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment. We have set a target for attendance of 96.4% or above, unless there are significant attendance challenges, when the school needs to show a sustained uplift in attendance towards that target.

Our schools aim to meet their obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Attendance and punctuality will not be considered in isolation, the Trust supports a whole school approach linked to the PSHE curriculum, the Behaviour Policy and the mental wellbeing approach of the school.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This Policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The Local Committee**

The Local Committee is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

#### **3.2 The Headteacher**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Local Committee Members
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Working with the Local Authority to Issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading on attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data and ensuring analysis to improve attendance and punctuality
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data analysis
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents and carers to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Working with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance can be contacted via a phone call or email to the school office.

#### **3.4 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance and punctuality data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Headteacher

#### **3.5 Class teachers**

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.
- Class teachers will be aware of the attendance and punctuality of pupils within their class and may have touch base initial conversations with parents and carers where necessary.
- Class teachers will raise concerns with the designated leader for attendance when these arise.

### **3.6 School admin staff**

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Arrange meetings for parents and carers as needed to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:00 am on the first day of an absence and each subsequent day of absence that is not planned, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## **4. School procedures**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the start of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not - for pupils of compulsory school age
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by the published start time on each school day. This times for the school day are published on the school website.

The register for the first session will be taken at the published start of the school day and will be kept open for 30 minutes. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at the start of the afternoon session.

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:00 am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

- Please telephone between 8:30 am and 9:00 am. Telephone numbers are available on the 'contact us' pages of the school's website.
- If the school has had no explanation for absence, then we will telephone on the first day of absence asking the parent/carer to provide a reason. If no reason is given for the absence, then it will be marked as unauthorised.
- We need to know why your child is not in school on the first day of absence to ensure that they are safe and to authorise the absence. Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.
- If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents or carers will be notified of this.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

- Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.
- Parents and carers should contact the school office in advance of the planned medical or dental appointment to request absence.
- However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.
- The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss learning and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, this can be embarrassing for the child and can also result in further absence.

Lateness is monitored by the Headteacher. If your child is late more than 5 times in any half term period, you will be contacted to arrange a meeting with the Headteacher or designated attendance leader to find ways to resolve the problem.

#### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil expected to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may:
  - Consider a home visit
  - Contact the police or social care where the welfare of the child is a concern
  - Contact the Local Authority as the child will be reported as missing in education
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will keep parents and carers updated as to their child's attendance and punctuality. Information regarding attendance may be included in newsletters so that parents and carers are aware of the school's target and the progress towards this.

Attendance is reviewed regularly with letters sent or meetings arranged with parents and carers where attendance is not on track.

### 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

#### 5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

All applications for leave must be made a minimum of 15 days in advance. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (that cannot be made out of school hours)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.
- Performing rights, eg theatre productions although you must complete the relevant "child performers" paperwork from the local authority and will receive a maximum number of 10 days in any academic year.
- Examinations for dance, music, etc. when they can't be arranged out of school hours.
- Family bereavement.

Examples of **unauthorised absence** include:

- Holidays (please ensure your families know term dates so they do not book a surprise holiday in term time).
- Day trips or long weekends.
- Visits to families living or working abroad.
- Illness of parent.
- Birthday celebration.
- Holidays booked due to difficulties with work shift patterns or rotas.
- Surprise visits or one booked without knowledge.

#### 5.2 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **6. Strategies for promoting attendance**

- Children and families are regularly informed about the value of good attendance and punctuality.
- Good attendance and punctuality is celebrated through newsletters and assemblies.
- Certificates may be awarded termly to children with high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Good attendance is promoted through meetings with families and letters as and when needed.
- Families joining the school are reminded of the schools focus on good attendance and punctuality.
- Families are encouraged to discuss barriers to good attendance and punctuality with the school.
- The school will work with families to break down barriers to good attendance and punctuality.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

The school will:

- Monitor punctuality, attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Look for patterns of poor attendance or punctuality
- The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Local Committee.
- If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days we will contact the parents/carers to discuss the reasons for this and may require a medical evidence relating to the absence. This can be in the form of a copy of the appointment, doctor's certificate or proof of medication.
- If after working with parents/carers a pupil's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an Education Welfare Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Attendance data is stored on the school's management information system with hard copies of data only being printed as a hard copy to support termly monitoring or a meeting with a parent or carer. Regular overall attendance reports are printed by the attendance officer to support monitoring.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Work with families to put in place actions plans and monitor these to break down barriers to good attendance
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Work closely with the local authority to reduce persistent and sever absence

### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed every three years by NEST. At every review, the policy will be shared with all NEST Headteachers.

### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to the NEST Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2: Absence Request Form

### Notes to parents/carers

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission must be sought in advance and must be for **exceptional circumstances**. If you do not have Parental Responsibility and/or normally live with the child you must seek the consent of the parent/carer who does and that person should complete this form. Schools will only consider request from that parent/carer and absence will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

When deciding whether to allow term time leave, for any reason, the school will only consider:

- The reason for the leave
- The time and duration of the leave
- Whether or not the leave could have been taken during the statutory school holiday periods
- Your child's record of attendance
- **Learning that will be missed. It is not possible to send work away with the child.**

**WARNING: IF THE SCHOOL REFUSES YOUR REQUEST AND THE CHILD IS STILL TAKEN OUT OF SCHOOL, THIS WILL BE RECORDED AS AN UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE AND MAY MAKE YOU LIABLE TO A £60/£120 FINE.**

To the Headteacher:

I wish to apply for:

Name(s) of Child(ren) ..... DOB.....  
Class.....

..... DOB.....  
Class.....

to be authorised as being absent from school from ..... to  
..... inclusive

**Reason for request for absence during term time, clearly explaining the exceptional circumstances:**

Signature of Parent/Carer ..... Date .....

### TO BE COMPLETED BY THE SCHOOL

Authorised .....School agrees to your child being absent from school on the specified dates.

Absence dates \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ to \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

Unauthorised .....School does not authorise your request for leave in term time for the following reason(s):

<b>Learning that will be missed</b>		<b>No exceptional circumstances</b>	
<b>The time and duration of the leave</b>		<b>Leave could have been taken during school holiday periods</b>	
<b>Current attendance %</b>			

Signed by Headteacher ..... Date .....

Please read overleaf

## Holidays in term time

**Important:** please read carefully the information below.

**Warning:** If you take your child on holiday in term time without the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a £60/£120 Penalty fine, per parent, per child.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by taking your holidays during school holidays.

The Facts	The Law
<p>We recognise that it is often expensive to take a holiday during school breaks and that is why some parents/carers may ask for term time leave for their child/ren. However, it is important that parents/carers carefully consider the implications of taking their child out of school during term time.</p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the work they have missed.</p> <p>Children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school refuses a request for term time leave and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b> and may lead to a <b>£60/£120 fine per parent, per child</b>.</p>	<p>The law does not say that parents/carers have an automatic right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time.</p> <p>However, in <b>exceptional circumstances</b> school may authorise, in advance, requests for periods of leave. The request for leave must come from a parent/carer with whom the child normally resides.</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of 4 weeks or more, the school may have to take the child off roll and inform the local authority unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness. In these circumstances it is up to the parent/carer to inform the school as once removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p> <p>The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force on the 1 September 2013. The amendments make it clear that <b>Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances</b>. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.</p> <p>Holiday prices, and the fact that the parents have booked a holiday before checking with the school, are not exceptional circumstances.</p>

<p><b>Other absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genuine illness</li> <li>• Unavoidable medical/dental appointments (but try to make these after school if possible)</li> <li>• Days of religious observance</li> <li>• Exceptional circumstance, such as bereavement</li> <li>• Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces</li> <li>• External examinations</li> <li>• When Traveller children go on the road with their parents where the school is informed beforehand</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other absence from school will not be authorised:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For any type of shopping</li> <li>• Looking after siblings or unwell parents</li> <li>• Minding the house</li> <li>• Birthdays</li> <li>• Resting after a late night</li> <li>• Relatives visiting or visiting relatives</li> <li>• Because holidays are cheaper in term time</li> <li>• More than one day for a family wedding</li> </ul>
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Please contact your child's Headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue.

**The law requires schools to be open for 190 days each year, and every day is important. Please help them not to miss this valuable time.**

We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to take holidays during term time.

September 2022

## Working together to improve attendance

13. Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

