



NEWBURY ACADEMY TRUST

Attendance Policy

DATE APPROVED: January 2017

DATE FOR REVIEW: January 2019

SIGNED:
On behalf of the Board of Directors

Attendance Policy

Newbury Academy Trust Schools

Introduction

Excellent pupil attendance at all schools within Newbury Academy Trust is one of the keys to our success. We expect all pupils to have 100% attendance. Our demands on attendance are high as excellent attendance relates to excellent grades.

Principles

A pupil should come to school every day that it is in session.

A pupil should only be absent if the reason is unavoidable. Allowing a pupil to be absent without good reason is against the law and each parent could be fined a substantial sum. Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not the parents) as either authorised or unauthorised. This why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason: e.g. illness or other unavoidable causes or exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no request for absence has been granted. This includes:

- keeping pupils off school for trivial reasons
- truancy
- absences which have never been properly explained
- late arrival at school which is too late to get a present mark in the register
- unauthorised holiday.

Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is not "unavoidable". Pupils should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping, minding the house for younger children, or as a 'treat'.

If there are attendance problems, the school may refer the pupil to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the Local Authority. The EWO will try to resolve the difficulties by agreement, but if other ways of trying to improve a pupil's attendance have failed, the EWO can use court proceedings to prosecute parents, or seek an education supervision order on the pupil. The EWO works closely with the schools in order to improve attendance and support families where there are attendance issues.

Parents may wish to contact the EWO themselves for advice. They are independent of the school, and the telephone number is available at the school office, or from the Local Authority

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

1. Illness and other legitimate reasons:

Pupils are registered at the start of every day and this is repeated at the beginning of every teaching lesson. Pupil attendance is reviewed daily and all absences must be explained. Parents must ensure that they call the absence line by 9.30am to tell the school about any problems with their son/daughter attending school that day.

If a pupil is unfit for school and is absent, parents should ring, email or text the reason for the absence by 9.30am. If no reason has been given on the day, an Absence Slip or letter will be sent home when the pupil returns. This should be completed and returned to the office. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Absence may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments arranged in school time, provided a written explanation is received. When a telephone or text message has been received the correct absence will be recorded in the register by office staff and relevant members of staff will be informed. When a letter has been received from parents, and the reason for absence has been noted by the teacher and the office, the letter will be kept on file for the remainder of the school year.

At Trinity School, absences which extend to three days or over will need to be supported by a medical note from the student's GP.

If we do not have any contact we will call the issue into Thame Valley Police to carry out a welfare check for the child. We will also follow the guidance from the *DfE 'Children Missing in Education' September 2016* document which outlines schools responsibilities regarding attendance.

2. Holidays:

The school actively discourages parents from taking holidays during term time. Such holidays mean that school work is missed and creates the possibility of pupils falling behind their peers.

Requests for leave of absence (other than holidays) will only be granted in exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis. The school need at least two weeks' notice of any requests for absence. This will enable the teacher to know in good time if a child will be unable to take part in any educational visit, class assembly, or major production etc.

One day leave of absence will be granted for religious festivals but a Leave of Absence Form must be completed in order for this to be authorised.

3. Punctuality/lateness:

Pupils must attend on time to be given a mark for a session, unless the lateness is unavoidable. Parents are expected to ensure that pupils are present at registration. Arriving more than 30 minutes after the start of the session without good reason is counted as unauthorised absence. Records will be kept in the school offices of all latecomers. The Headteacher will write to the parents of pupils who are persistently late, in order to ensure that they arrive at school on time.

4. Detailed information regarding the completion of computerised registers will be made available to school staff.

5. Re-integrating long term absentees:

The school will ensure all staff are aware of the situation. They will consider the possible need for a phased or gradual return to school and ensure that the child knows what is expected of him/her. Consideration to extra support in the classroom will be given and a key person will be nominated to monitor and review the pupil's return. The class teacher/tutor and the head teacher will ensure that the pupil is made to feel welcome, regardless of the reason for the absent and that their return is valued.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote good attendance. Information will be included in a pupil's report at the end of every school year.

The school has a duty to make pupil's time at school interesting and worthwhile. Parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. The school is committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.