

Newington Community Primary School



ATTENDANCE POLICY 2023-2024

Amended:	Term 1 2023
Updated by:	Hannah Tudor
Approved by the Governing Body:	
Signed:	(Chair of Governors)
Review:	Term 1 2024

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole school culture and ethos that values good attendance. We will:

- Promote good attendance for all
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Build strong relationships with families to ensure families have the support that they need

This policy meets the requirements of “Working together to improve school attendance” and refers to the DfEs statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. This policy also refers to the DfEs guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

School Roles and Responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for promoting the importance of school attendance through the school’s policies and ethos. They also ensure that leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

As Assistant Headteacher for safeguarding and welfare, Robyn Harrison (r.harrison@newington-ramsgate.kent.sch.uk) is responsible for the school’s strategic approach to attendance across the school. This role includes ensuring that attendance is adequately resourced, data is used effectively to inform the school’s evaluation of its provision for attendance and monitoring the actions taken by school to work in partnership with families and other agencies.

Day to day oversight of attendance forms part of the Family Liaison Officer’s responsibilities. Families should inform the school of a child’s absence, via email, by contacting attendance@newington-ramsgate.kent.sch.uk. This should be communicated to the school before 9am to avoid a phone call from the school on the first day of absence. If families require more detailed support or discussion about attendance, they should contact Julie Marks (FLO) directly either by phoning the school office on 01843 593412 or via email at j.marks@newington-ramsgate.kent.sch.uk

Class teachers are responsible for daily recording of attendance, using the correct codes, ensuring the registers open and close at the correct time and submitting this information to the school office. Registers must be completed by 9am each morning.

The school office receives calls from parents about absence on a daily basis and record this on the school system. They also transfer any calls to the FLO/Strategic lead to ensure that families receive the support that they need in a timely manner.

Parents and carers are expected to make sure their child attends school every day on time. They are to provide the school with at least one emergency contact number for their child and ensure that where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Procedures for Reporting Unplanned Absence

It is an expectation at Newington Community Primary School that all absence from school will be for good reason and it is vital that the school are kept informed of any reason behind why a child may be absent. Families should follow the steps outlined below, on the first day of any unplanned absence:

Contact should be made **before 9am**, on the first day of absence via email, stating the child’s name and reason for absence. (attendance@newington-ramsgate.kent.sch.uk) We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised, provided the parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This should be done by emailing attendance@newington-ramsgate.kent.sch.uk

However, we strongly 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.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil that we expect 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 pupils' emergency contacts, the school will consider carrying out a home visit. If there are welfare concerns, the school will consider phoning the Police and requesting a welfare check.
- 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 (not 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.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Approval for Term Time Absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there be "exceptional circumstances". A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time that an absence is authorised for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking in to account the specific facts, circumstances and context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted to the Headteacher via email, or written letter, as soon as it is anticipated. The headteacher may require additional evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

The school will **not** authorise a holiday, except in highly exceptional circumstances. See also "Legal Sanctions".

Valid Reasons for Authorised Absence

- Illness and non-routine medical and dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes. Absence may only be authorised 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.

Legal Sanctions

The school can request a Penalty Notice from the local authority which may result in a fine for 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. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within an 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.

Promoting Good Attendance at Newington Community Primary School

We expect all children to have good school attendance (96% or above). We recognise that it is fundamental to improving outcomes and life chances for children. However, we also recognise that ensuring good attendance can be complex for some families and some children require incentives in order to attend school regularly.

Dojos – all children gain a Dojo point for attending school and having a good day

Behaviour Strategy – the NCPS strategy for promoting good behaviour ensures that all staff build strong positive relationships with children, helping to make school a good place to be and belong

Attendance Ted – the class with the best attendance is awarded Attendance Ted as part of our Newington Winners assembly.

Certificates – recognising those children with good attendance and also those who have worked to improve their attendance term on term.

Specific Attendance Projects – e.g Project 96%

Strategic Use of Data

The school hold a wealth of attendance data and commit to ensuring that it is used effectively to identify children who attend very regularly as well as those who are at risk of persistent and severe absence. The strategic use of data will also enable the school to prioritise those families who require further support to ensure children attend school more regularly.

Support Levels

Level 1 (Universal Provision)	Children who have attendance between 96% and 100%. All absences are explained and families communicate well with the school
Level 2 (additional school support)	Children who have attendance between 90% and 96%
Level 3 (partnership working between school and family)	Children with an EHCP and complex medical needs who are persistently absent
Level 4 (working with the LA)	Children who are persistently absent (below 90%) Children with an EHCP (not medical) who are persistently absent
Level 5 (working with other agencies and LA)	Children who are severely absent (below 50%) Children with a social worker (CP, CHiN, LAC and PLAC) who are persistently absent

Support Levels

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Ambition, Achievement, Aspiration

Level 1 (Universal Provision)	Effective curriculum, attendance incentives, standard communication of attendance with parents (via parents evening etc)
Level 2 (additional school support)	Letters sent home to remind parents of school expectations Meetings to be set as appropriate to prevent further absence Attendance reward cards implemented
Level 3 (partnership working between school and family)	Remote learning as appropriate, risk assessments and care plans established, regular contact with Medical Officer, attendance communicated regularly
Level 4 (working with the LA)	Meetings held with families, action plan implemented, discussions held with SLO and Specialist teachers. Medical evidence can be requested to evidence future absence
Level 5 (working with other agencies and LA)	Action Plan implemented, school to ensure that attendance is targeted through LA planning, attendance to be reported at all child protection meetings. Welfare home visits carried out alongside first day calling.

School Actions Overview

Attendance is between 100% and 96%	Reinforcement of the school expectations. Recognition of success and attendance incentives
Attendance drops below 96%	Reinforcement of the school expectations.
Attendance drops below 90% (Persistent Absence)	Reinforcement of the school expectations. Support letter 1 sent to parents to outline that the child is now persistently absent. Letters will be sent out termly to address attendance below 90%. Improvements in attendance will be acknowledged and celebrated when the child is no longer persistently absent. Meeting arranged with family to implement an Attendance Support Plan. A request for medical evidence of any absence may be made.
Attendance drops below 90% (Persistent Absence) (Child has a social worker)	Reinforcement of the school expectations. Support letter 1 sent to parents to outline that the child is now persistently absent. Meeting arranged with family to implement an Attendance Support Plan. A request for medical evidence of any absence may be made. School inform the allocated social worker and track via safeguarding platform
Persistent Absence	Referral to Local Authority SLO (Michelle Slater) School to follow actions outlined by LA (Parenting Contract, Early Help Referral)
Prolonged Persistent Absence Severely Absent Children	Work with the LA to explore Education Supervision Order Attendance Prosecution

Monitoring Attendance

Ambition, Achievement, Aspiration

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Notify parents of concerns around attendance, via termly attendance letters and attendance meetings
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absence may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the full governing body via Headteacher's Report.

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.

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 parents of pupils who the school (and LA) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Provide bespoke support to families to improve attendance (minibus collection, Breakfast Club, Early Help Referral)

Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

<u>Code</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Scenario</u>
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present for afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before the 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 setting
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
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
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised Absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with the reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Ambition, Achievement, Aspiration