



THE NORTON
KNATCHBULL
SCHOOL

Student Attendance Policy

Reviewed by:	Jo Gowen Deputy Head
Approved by Education Committee	19 th September 2023
Date for Review	September 2024

The Attendance Team

NKS Attendance Officer

Mrs Lunn studentabsence@nks.kent.sch.uk
Telephone 01233 620045

All enquiries regarding attendance and attendance reporting should initially go through Mrs Lunn

Senior Leader responsible for Attendance

Dr J Gowen jgowen@nks.kent.sch.uk

SSM for each year group

Year 7

Mrs Parsonage sparsonage@nks.kent.sch.uk

Year 8

Mr Adams radams@nks.kent.sch.uk

Year 9

Mr Lamb llamb@nks.kent.sch.uk

Year 10

Mrs Dance edance@nks.kent.sch.uk

Year 11

Mrs Somerville ssomerville@nks.kent.sch.uk

Sixth Form

Mrs Thompson Nthompson@nks.kent.sch.uk
Ms Carney Acarney@nks.kent.sch.uk

Headteacher

Mr B Greene bgreene@nks.kent.sch.uk

[The Department of education makes the following statements regarding student attendance.](#)

The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education

9. The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

10. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Principles of the NKS Attendance Policy:

- Students have the best chance of developing their full potential if they attend every class for which they are timetabled.
- Continuity of learning is seen as a major influence in the high achievement of students in this school.
- Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. The Norton Knatchbull School actively promotes 100% attendance for all our students, and we use a variety of termly and annual rewards to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- Where absence from school is unavoidable, it is important that the home and schoolwork together to ensure that this is as short as possible, and that work missed is caught up.
- The school is responsible for monitoring attendance and is publicly accountable for the attendance statistics
- We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role, and a legal responsibility, to ensure good attendance and we promise to identify, investigate and work in partnership with parents/carers, students and other agencies to resolve attendance problems.
- Only the school can authorise absence; the law does not permit parents to do so.
- **Parental responsibility** – The responsibility for ensuring children attend school regularly and punctually rests with parents. To this end, it is desirable that parents should be the first line of contact whenever the child is absent from school. It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school whenever and on the first day the child is absent.
- It is essential that parents/carers should be the first line of contact whenever the student is absent from school.

Detail:

The school day and registration procedures:

- It is expected that students will normally arrive at school from 8.30 a.m. and the school can take no responsibility for students before that time unless separate arrangements have been made in advance.
 - Unless staying for a supervised after school activity, all students are expected to be off site by 4.00 p.m.
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- Students are expected to attend all school sessions and timetabled lessons, registering normally at 8.45 a.m. in the assigned registration room at the start of the day. In addition, a register is taken in every lesson of the day, using our electronic system. For legal purposes there are 2 roll calls per day. The first is during registration and the second is during period 4.
- A student who, for whatever unforeseeable reason (e.g. problem with transport, or weather) is unable to arrive on time for a morning session should, nevertheless, make every effort to come in later.
- Once registered, students are expected to remain on site until the end of school unless they have obtained prior permission to leave from their SSM.
- Permission to leave the site is normally only granted as a result of a parental request. This could be by signed note or email
- Students leaving the site during the school day MUST sign out on leaving and sign back in on their return.

Lateness:

The register remains open until 9.20 a.m. in the morning. If a student arrives late but before 9.20 a.m. they must sign in with their SSM and will be marked as late. If they arrive after these times, it will be recorded as late after the register has closed and this requires a note signed by parents stating the reason.

Persistent lateness, not due to unavoidable reasons such as coach or train delays etc., will lead to parents being informed and a sanction being imposed on the student. If lateness becomes chronic extending over 10 occasions or more then the school may ask for a fine to be issued.

Leave of absence/holiday:

- If it is necessary for a student to miss school for a known reason, permission must be sought from the school at least two weeks before the event or as soon as is possible if this is not feasible. Such permission will only be granted in special circumstances. Permission will not be granted for attendance at sporting events, theme parks, day trips to France and other primarily recreational activities, except as part of an organised school party.
 - It is not possible for permission to be given on the day the absence begins or historically. Students taking time off school will be registered as an 'unauthorised' absence if leave of absence could have been sought in advance.
 - All requests for leave of absence should be made using the form provided online, and then sent to the attendance officer, Mrs Lunn - studentabsence@nks.kent.sch.uk
 - Family annual holidays should be arranged to be taken during school holiday periods. Where this is impossible, leave of absence must be obtained. The school will grant such requests only in very exceptional circumstances.
 - No permission will be given for more than ten days' holiday in any one academic year. Any additional days of holiday or caused by a holiday (e.g. jet lag) will be categorised as unauthorised: irrespective of the amount of notice given.
 - Holidays taken without the school's permission, or if the student fails to return on the agreed date, will mean absence is unauthorised.
 - The accumulation over an academic year of 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence may make parents liable to a fixed penalty notice.
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Absence through illness:

- If absence is due to illness or other unforeseen occurrence, parents should inform the school, as early as possible, to advise of the situation. This can be done in 2 ways:
 1. Phoning the school and using Option 2 of the automated phone system.
 2. Emailing studentabsence@nks.kent.sch.uk
- If the absence continues beyond the expected return date, further contacts should be made by the parents to the school.
- If no contact has been received school will contact home for all students either through SMS, email or by calling home.
- Where a student has been identified as being potentially vulnerable, a call will always be made on the first day of absence. Students for whom contact must be made by phone are identified on a school 'red list'. Students who should be on the red list will be identified by the attendance officer, the safeguarding team, SSL or the SENCo.
- If a student has missed school on three consecutive days and no explanation has been received from home, the SSM will call home for clarification of the situation.
- On return, if there has not been detailed contact/communication between parents/carers and the schools as to the reason for absence a student must bring a letter from his/her parent to their Form Tutor, giving exact dates missed and detailed reason for absence. If insufficient information is provided to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. SSMs will communicate that an absence may be unauthorised to parents and carers.

Persistent Absence

- A student whose attendance is below 90%, whatever the reason, is classed by the Department of Education as being a persistent absentee. Even if the school understands the reason for the absence and is authorising the absence, then we may request evidence for any future absences. Please see the information below regarding the evidence that is acceptable.
- In some situations, the school will not authorise absence as the student could have and should have been present in school. If the unauthorised absence becomes significant, school will first do everything we can to establish the reason for this and support both parent and student to make sure that there are no barriers to a student attending school.
- If there has been no improvement in attendance the school will seek advice and further support from the Kent Attendance Service (PIAS). Kent Attendance will first seek to support, but also have the power to issue fines and support the issuing of court orders should the situation justify these more extreme measures.

Authorising Absence

- Students should always aim for 100% attendance. The official government expectation is that all students will have a minimum attendance of greater than 90%.
 - We recognise some absences are unavoidable e.g. medical/dental appointments but request that parents make these appointments outside of school hours whenever possible.
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- When Parents report an absence, they should provide as much detail as possible so the absence can be coded correctly.
- Parents can monitor their child's attendance percentage via Parent Portal.

Medical evidence can be brought in at reception or forwarded to by email (we accept pictures or scans) at studentabsence@nks.kent.sch.uk.

The following counts as medical evidence:

- a doctor's note OR
- a note from the GP's receptionist on headed paper with name and the time of the appointment OR
- a prescription box that clearly shows name on it and the date OR
- an appointment card with name and date on it OR
- an appointment text (which can be screenshotted and sent to us as a picture) OR
- an admission/discharge letter from a hospital with name and date on it OR
- a dated receipt from a shop where self-medication was bought from on the day of the illness.

Catching up with work:

- If absence is known about in advance, a student should discover what work will be missed and seek to minimise the effect of his absence by completing work set in good time.
- When a student returns from absence they should discover what work has been missed and draw up a programme in conjunction with the subject teachers for its completion.
- Staff should support students in ensuring that gaps in learning are filled as soon as is practicable.
- If absence is long term, parents should liaise with the SSM who will co-ordinate the work to be set during the absence period.

Absence for exams:

- As far as is reasonable, students who miss internal examinations due to absence will sit them on their return or in advance if this is possible.
- **No such provision can be made for external (public) examinations.**

Fixed penalty notices:

- Section 23 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers designated LEA Officers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.
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School can make a referral suggesting that an FPN should be issued but the decision to issue the fine will always be made by KCC and monies paid will go to KCC.

Reasons that an FPN may be issued by the LEA would include:

- a) overt truancy (including students caught on truancy sweeps),
- b) parentally-condoned absences,
- c) holidays in term-time,
- d) excessive delayed return school holidays without prior school agreement,
- e) persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed).

Availability of records:

- NKS uses our Arbor MIS to record all attendance. Should parents wish an attendance certificate to be produced by the school, this can be arranged.
 - Where support from the LEA is requested, attendance records will be shared with the SLO and / or IAA for the purpose of clarifying the reason for support.
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Stakeholder Responsibilities

Attendance is fundamental to success. The LA, the governing body, schools, parents and students need to work effectively to ensure that all students access a full-time education.

	<p><i>For all pupils</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. • Have a School Attendance Support Team (PIAS) that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. • Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School. For NKS the SLO is Tracy McDowell Austin and the IAA is Debbie Sales. • Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. • Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.
	<p><i>For pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a termly conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. • Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. • If the issue persists, facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. • Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. • Provide the lead practitioner where all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners.
	<p><i>For persistently absent pupils (attendance below 90%)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: • Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including parenting contracts and education supervision orders. • Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children’s social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. • Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).
	<p><i>For severely absent pupils</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: • All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision. • Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children’s social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children’s social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.
	<p><i>For cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.
	<p><i>Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families.
	<p><i>Support for pupils with a social worker (VSK - Virtual School Kent)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area. • Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children. • Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.

<p>NKS Governing Body</p>	<p><i>Support all pupils</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take an active role in attendance improvement, support the school to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. • Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. • Ensure school staff receive training on attendance. • Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
<p>The Norton Knatchbull School</p>	<p><i>Support all pupils</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand. • Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. • Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. • Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. This is led by the attendance officer Mrs Lunn who can be contacted on studentabsence@nks.kent.sch.uk • Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. This is Dr Gowen – jgowen@nks.kent.sch.uk
	<p><i>Support pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance. • Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. • Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance. • If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.
	<p><i>Support persistently absent pupils (attendance is lower than 90%)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: • Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. • Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future. • Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. • Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory children’s social care. • Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.
	<p><i>Severely absent pupils (attendance is lower than 50%)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued support as for persistently absent pupils and: • Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers o</i> Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. • Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance. <hr/> <p><i>Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. • Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. • Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. • Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities. <hr/> <p><i>Support for pupils with a social worker</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.
<p>NKS parents and carers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. • Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). • Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so at least 2 weeks in in advance. • Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible. • Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. • Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

Attendance and Absence Codes

Attendance Codes

Code	Definition
/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
D	Dual registered at another school
B	Off-site educational Activity
J	At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience

Absence Codes (authorised and unauthorised)

Code	Definition
<i>Authorised absence</i>	
C	Leave of absence granted by the school
H	Leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday granted by the school
E	Excluded but no alternative made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
M	Medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
<i>Unauthorised absence</i>	
G	Holiday not granted by the school or in excess of the period determined by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent without authorisation
U	Arrived in school after registration closed

Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Code	Definition
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole or partial school closure