

Attendance Policy

North London Grammar School

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| Drafted by: | Omar Salahuddin, Deputy Headteacher |
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1. AIMS

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [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. School procedures

3.1 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 second 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.

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 8.10 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.20am and will be kept open until 8.49. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.10pm and will be kept open until 1.30pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents 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 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents can report absences by:

- Leaving a message on the Student Absence Line on 0208 205 0052 option 1
- Online Absence Report Form - <https://northlondongrammar.com/contact-us/report-a-student-absence/>
- Conversation with the Reception on 0208 205 0052 extension 1001

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 will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Parents must provide a letter for appointment from designated authority to confirm attendance. Notice to the school should be at least 24 hours prior to the appointment.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Where lateness to AM or PM registers are made in excess of 3 occurrences, the teacher or form tutor reserves the right issue a detention of up to 1 hour in accordance of the Detention Policy.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parent can access the full student profile with attendance, behaviour and academic reports on KSM online. The online system is a live system so records are accurate and current to the date and time of access.

School reports on 5 occurrences of the reporting cycle also includes attendance figures.

4. AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

4.1 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'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs";
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

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.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents 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

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

Evidence would be required in each case.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- 1) The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils).
- 2) Transition day (for pupils in year 11).
- 3) GCSE exam session.

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.
- Whether it falls within any GCSE or A-Level exams;

Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.

4.2 Legal sanctions

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

If issued with a penalty notice, parents 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 ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 Headteacher can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

At North London Grammar School, we celebrate 100% attendance with a certificate at the end of each term. We also have the '99 Club' with the '100% club' where a special prize draw is celebrated as a form of a raffle. We also celebrate attendance by promoting attendance in our newsletters, school websites, welcome evenings, parents evenings, home visits etc.

We support parents to maintain attendance by monitoring attendance, make use Student Services to establish reasons of absences and the next steps to resolve them and initiate action plans where needed to support the pupil and parent.

6. ATTENDANCE MONITORING

The attendance officer (Key Stage Leaders) monitors pupil absence on a monthly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If parents are expected to call the school each day a child is ill, this should be via the school online student absence form, telephone recording system or direct to a member of staff at the reception via phone.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents 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.

Pupil-level absence data is 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.

We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

We use KSM online which is our school information system where staff, students and parents have access on an app and online with certain permissions. Our attendance officers may request meetings or may conduct home visits to establish reasons and support for consistent absences. A formal action plan will be agreed upon with the parents, pupil and NLGS. This action plan will be used as evidence to the LA where needed to share support provisions and also identify any further steps to be taken in accordance with the LA persistent absences parameters.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer (are our Key Stage Leaders):

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers from the LA to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class teachers and form tutors

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

Form tutors take the AM register between 8.20am and 8.50am. Reception staff will follow up attendance between these times till 9.30am.

PM Form Tutor registers are completed simultaneously in subject lessons between 1.10pm and 1.30pm. Reception staff will follow up attendance between these times till 2.00pm. Where students are in option choice classes, then subject teachers will complete tutor registers for Bonitas and Scientia by the Year Group with students only present in their subject class.

All teachers are expected to take the subject attendance within the 1st 15 minutes of the lesson.

7.5 Reception Staff

Reception staff is expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

8. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9 LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This document links to the following policies:

- Behaviour
- Curriculum
- Safeguarding

APPENDIX 1: ATTENDANCE CODES

The following codes are taken from KSM Online which is based on the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

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| / | Present |
| B | Off-site educational activity |
| C | Leave of absence authorised by the school |
| D | Dual Registered - at another educational establishment |
| E | Excluded but no alternative provision made |
| G | Holiday not authorised by the school |
| H | Holiday authorised by the school |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointments) |
| J | At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment |
| L | Late arrival before the register has closed |
| M | Medical or dental appointments |
| N | Reason for absence not yet provided |
| O | Absent from school without authorisation |
| P | Participating in a supervised sporting activity |
| R | Religious observance |
| S | Study leave |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence |
| U | Arrived in school after registration closed |
| V | Educational visit or trip |
| W | Work experience |
| X | Not required to be in school |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register |
| # | Planned whole or partial school closure |