Northcote Primary School - Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Introduction and Background

Northcote Community Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and children's attainment.
This policy is written with the above statement in mind and it underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding

- Ensure every child has access to the full-time education and broad and balanced curriculum to which they are entitled

- Ensure that children succeed whilst at school

- Ensure that children have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school

- Ensure that children are given opportunities to form relationships based upon mutual respect

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any child's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Full time education means attendance on 190 days (equivalent to 380 sessions) during the school year from 1st September to 31st August).
This policy has been developed using the Department of Education guidelines on attendance, with support from the Education Welfare service and in consultation with parents, staff and the Governors of Northcote Community Primary School.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everyone's responsibility – parents, children and all members of the school staff.

To help us all focus on this we will:
- Give our parents/carers details on attendance termly at parent's evening. We will do this by reporting each child's individual attendance, broken down into possible number of attended sessions, actual number off attended sessions and number of unauthorised absences. Any late marks are also shared. Parent's can request the details of their children's absence at any other time throughout the year.
- Intermittent raffles throughout the year for children Year 1-6. Children must attend every day and on time for a week to be in the raffle. Pupil voice has told us that this is the initiative that has the most impact.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance show signs of beginning to fall below 90% to offer guidance and support to improve attendance.
- Use 'First Day Response' and keep records of this to inform teachers why children in their classes are absent.
- Work in close partnership with the Education Welfare Officer to monitor patterns of attendance and non-attendance.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements on school displays and within each classroom.
- Celebrate good attendance on Newsletters and reward children who attend 100% of the time in a term with termly treats.
- Celebrate attendance achievements in weekly assemblies where

parents can attend.
- Introduce new attendance incentives throughout the school year.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments, religious observances which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which 'no leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the school and/or the Local authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes:
- Parents/carers keeping their children off school unnecessarily e.g. not returning to school after a medical/dental appointment
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time
- Not providing medical evidence of illness (required for children whose attendance is below 90%)

NO holidays requested during school time will be authorised by the school. If children are absent from school due to holidays their absence will be recorded as 'unagreed holiday' (G code) therefore unauthorised and referred to Education Welfare Services who will issue fines where appropriate. Holiday penalty notices will be issued where 10 sessions (5 days) are missed due to holiday.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a parent/carer thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we work

with the family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help us with this such as the School Nurse or Family Support Services.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. This also applies to children who are absent for 10% of their school time during the first half term of any school year.

Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absences and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately. PA children are tracked and monitored carefully and we also combine this with academic tracking.

Any child who reaches the PA mark i.e. have missed 10% of their schooling or who is at risk of moving towards that level is given priority for intervention and support by the school and the Education Welfare Officer. This may also involve other agencies e.g. School Nurse and Children's Services.

Absence Procedures and Punctuality

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.
Parents/Carers should:

- Follow our Home/School agreement and ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. The school gates close at 8:55am and any arrivals after this time will be recorded as Late (L code) on the child's register.
- Contact the school (by telephone or in person) by 9.30am on the first day of their child's absence and every day thereafter. This includes COVID related absences.
- Send a medical note if a child has been absent due to an appointment when said child returns to school.

School will:
- Keep a register of attendance at the beginning of every morning and afternoon session, recording absence using the Department of Education's Attendance Codes.
- Give a 'late code' (L) to children who arrive after registration – 8.55am – and ask the adult bringing the child to school to give the reason for the lateness. If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with a member of the safeguarding team to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.
- Give an unauthorised code (U) to children who arrive after 10:00am when no valid reason for lateness/absence has been provided. This results in an absence for the session.
- Contact families (First day Response) when no reason for absence has been received by the school. If no contact can be made, then an unauthorised code (0) will be given. School will contact parents on each day of absence if no contact with school has been made.
- Monitor absence/attendance closely and inform parents/carers when there is a concern.
- Make a formal referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) when a child's attendance falls below 90%.
- Work in partnership with the Education Welfare Officer to offer support to families in overcoming barriers to good attendance and punctuality.

The Education Welfare Officer will:
- Visit school twice a week to monitor attendance (two half days a week).
- Work in partnership with school staff to support families by making home visits when there is a serious cause for concern over attendance.
- Implement sanctions such as Penalty Notices (after 10 unauthorised sessions) or prosecutions in Court when unauthorised absences persist as under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act of 1996.

The classroom teacher will:
- Ensure all children are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence to the attendance team.
- Support children with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

Children who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other children in their class. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action.

Attendance Targets

Our aim is for all children to achieve at least 97% attendance i.e. no more than 7 days of absence over the school year. It is recognised that not all children will be able to achieve this for valid reasons.
However, we will strive for as many children as possible to achieve or exceed this target because we know that good attendance is a key to successful schooling.
We aim to improve attendance for all children and have as few children as possible listed as Persistent Absentees.

Monitoring, evaluation and responsibility

The Head teacher and Governing Body are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented.

This policy will be reviewed annually.