



**NORTHFLEET SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
CO-OPERATIVE LEARNING TRUST**

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Member of staff responsible: Mrs L Grinyer

Reviewed on: April 2021

Next Review date: April 2023

ETHOS STATEMENT

Northfleet School for Girls' vision is that students will **dream big** with regard to their potential life opportunities and achieve this through the **excellent start** this school gives them. Whilst at NSfG students will experience:

- **High expectations** in every aspect of school life, including academic progress, personal development, relationships and appearance
- All those involved in the school will **work together** to achieve this vision. It is especially important that the school, students, parents and Governors all work together effectively as one team
- Should be an **enjoyable experience**. We will work to create a school that students want to come to, staff value working in and parents are proud to send their children

STATEMENT OF INTENT

Northfleet School for Girls is fully committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our students. We expect pupils to attend school every day when the school is open as such attendance is critical if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Research shows that all students who attend school every day and arrive punctually achieve much better results than those who experience attendance problems. The Government recommends that students' attendance does not drop below 96% or 7 days' absence, except in serious medical cases. The effect that poor attendance at school can have on a child's education can be permanent and damaging. Our research also shows that students who attend every day will obtain at least one GCSE grade or more. Students need to be in school to access key learning and information and to close gaps in knowledge, understanding and application.

Absence equates to lessons missed (based on NSfG's five lessons day):

% Attendance	Days of Absence	Lessons missed
96%	7	35
93.68%	12	60
92.63%	14	70
91.05%	17	185
90%	19	95
88.42%	22	110
85.79%	27	135
82.11%	34	170
80%	38	190
73.68%	50	250

Northfleet School for Girls is committed to raising attendance and to supporting parents and students with high attendance expectations. We actively promote good attendance for all our students using a variety of rewards, particularly through our "Achievement Points" system. We have a whole school approach which involves the team work of students, parents/carers, Staff, the Head Teacher and the School Governors and, where required, the Attendance Service.

PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school every day and arrives on time. Daily attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child who should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines a child's education and sometimes puts the child at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that the child is safe. Parents are asked to leave or send a message as early as possible via the school gateway or by telephone.

Students are expected to arrive no later than 8.40 a.m. in order to register in their Base Room at 8.45 a.m. All students that arrive late must report and sign in with Student Reception where the reason for lateness is recorded.

CHANGE TO CIRCUMSTANCE

It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that all changes to a student's circumstances are given immediately to the school. It is often necessary to contact parents/carers during the day and therefore vital that the school is informed of current telephone numbers, email and home addresses as well as emergency contact details.

Covid 19 adapted school times are on the school website and will be followed until Government guidelines change

NORMAL TIMINGS OF SCHOOL DAY: School opens at 7.45am for those students who wish to arrive early

Lesson	Monday - Thursday	Friday only	
Arrival at school	Latest 08.40	Latest 08.40	
Base Time & registration	08.45 – 09.10		
Lesson 1	09.10 – 10.10	08.45 – 09.45	AM registration mark recorded
Lesson 2	10.10 – 11.10	09.45 – 10.40	
Break	11.10 - 11.30	10.40 – 10.55	
Lesson 3	11.30 – 12.30	10.55 – 11.50	
Lesson 4	12.30 – 13.30	11.50 – 12.45	
Lunch	13.30 – 14.15	12.45 – 13.30	
Lesson 5	14.15 – 15.15	13.30– 14.25	PM registration mark recorded
Staff planning		14.30 – 15.15	

THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL STAFF

There is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with College Leader and Engagement Support Leaders taking individual responsibility. The Assistant Head Teacher Developing Learners has overall responsibility for attendance.

Base Leaders and Class Teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and again during the afternoon session. Marking the attendance register twice daily is a legal requirement. (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Teachers mark students present, absent or late. The teacher notifies the School's Attendance Officer/Engagement Support Leader of students whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence
- Where there has been no communication, written communication is made with parents requesting reasons for absence
- The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
- Parents are informed at each school reporting stage of their child's attendance figure

TIMELINE OF SCHOOL ACTION FOR POOR ATTENDANCE

The Attendance Officer advises The Engagement Support Leader (ESL) of students whose attendance is of concern and arranges an attendance meeting between ESL and parent. The ESL reports on the outcome of this meeting.

95%-100% attendance When students' attendance is between 95-100% the base leader or class teacher will notify the ESL of any concerns regarding attendance. A meeting may be arranged by the ESL with the parents to discuss these if attendance dips.

90% - 95% attendance- Students who have an attendance of 90-95% will be closely monitored and may be picked up for further support by the ESL on the attendance scheme. A meeting will be held with ESL and parents to discuss attendance. Penalty Notices or Early Help Notification will be considered.

ONCE A STUDENT'S ATTENDANCE IS 90% OR LOWER IT IS CLASSED AS PERSISTENT ABSENCE

Below 90% attendance- Students will be placed on the school's Attendance Improvement Scheme. Where absences have not been authorised there will be consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer and a referral to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service may be considered.

All meetings and actions will be reported and circulated to appropriate personnel.

CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

No child will be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head Teacher and the Attendance Service.

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by the completion of a Child Missing Education (CME) referral for the following circumstances: -

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have been unable to locate
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.
- If a family go abroad and does not return within 20 days (without Head Teacher approval) a CME will be submitted after 10 days and the student could be taken off roll after 20 days

LATENESS

The register is taken at 8.45 a.m. and 14.15 p.m. (13.30 p.m. on Friday). Students arriving after these times must report to student reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded and the student will be marked late.

Students who arrive late without good reason are expected to remain behind for 15 minutes at the end of the day, we are not legally required to inform you, however, the school gateway does highlight sanctions issued. Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents and may be referred. This can provide grounds for prosecution or Penalty Notice. Students who are persistently late will be detained for longer periods of time (as set out in the School's sanctions procedures) but parents will be notified in advance.

PENALTY NOTICE PROCEEDINGS FOR LATENESS – these are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions (50 days) for a Penalty Notice Warning Letter
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15-day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

AUTHORISING ABSENCE

Only the Head Teacher or Assistant Head Teacher responsibility for attendance can authorise absence using a consistent approach. The Head Teacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

Routine Dentist and Doctors' appointments must be made outside of school hours. Where emergency appointments are required the expectation is that the absence will only be for the duration of the appointment and travel, for the rest of the day the student must attend school. Please note that the Head Teacher is not obliged to authorise absence for a doctor's/dental appointment and such authorisation is at the Head Teacher's discretion.

Persistent absence may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings **MUST** be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ACTION may include: -

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home Visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

PENALTY NOTICES Proceedings for POOR ATTENDANCE- Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016

Where there are more than 10 sessions or 5 days unauthorised absence in a 50-day period, the school may request a Penalty Notice.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of persistent unauthorised absence or where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours
- Absences of 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions (50 school days) – these do not need to be consecutive
- The PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Good attendance at school is considered to be vital. It is recognised that some young people suffer longer term poor health issues and such absence would normally be authorised by the school as there will be clear medical evidence to support the absence. The school would also work with the Inclusion and Attendance Service and others, as appropriate, to assist such young people in continuing their education.

Parents are requested to complete medical information forms and to send these into the main school office. Where medical issues arise during the school year, parents are required to notify the main school office of such conditions, as well as providing any relevant doctors certificates/letters. The school maintains a confidential medical register which is shared with staff working within the school.

Exceptional Circumstances could include:

- Service personnel 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 person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining "exceptional" are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by "unavoidable" it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that the Head Teacher can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and that this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28-day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE/HOLIDAY

From September 2013 the Department for Education has amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are **guilty** of an offence of failing to secure regular (every day) attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Head Teacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Head Teacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school, where a child's absence is 10 sessions (5 days) or more in a 100 session (50 day) period.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.