



## **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

**This policy was originated by Emma Merchant – Assistant  
Headteacher – Pastoral and Inclusion**

**It was approved by the Governing body  
February 2018 and reapproved August 2018**

**It is next due for re-approval summer 2020**

## **Introduction**

For a student to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to regulations, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively. Any requests should be on an official school absence request form and handed into the school reception for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made. Parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

Each year, David Nieper Academy will examine its attendance figures and set attendance targets that reflect both the national and our past attendance performance.

This policy contains within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

## **Expectations**

We expect that students will:

- attend school every day
- attend punctually every day (8.40am)
- attend fully prepared every day (equipment, planner, uniform etc.)

We expect that parents/carers will:

- ensure their child attends school every day
- ensure their child attends punctually and fully prepared every day
- make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours (as far as possible)
- notify the school daily of any absences (before 9.00am)
- notify the school immediately of any changes to emergency contact details

We expect that David Nieper Academy will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere
- provide a safe learning environment
- keep accurate records of attendance and punctuality
- contact parents/carers when a child fails to attend and no reason has been given
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through the Rewards system
- report each child's attendance via the school reporting system
- inform parents/carers when there are concerns regarding attendance and/or punctuality

## **Attendance and Registration Procedures**

Any student who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence from registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised. This will be marked with an "N" code whilst investigation into the absence takes place. After two weeks if no legitimate reason for absence is found then the "N" code will be changed to an "O" unauthorised absence code by a member of the Student Support Team.

## **Lateness**

Morning registration takes place at the start of day at 8.35am and students should be on the school site by 8.35am. The registers will remain open for fifteen minutes. Any student arriving after 9.00am but before 11.05am will be marked as Late and given an "L" code on the register. Students arriving late to school (after 9am) should report directly to main reception on entry.

Any student arriving to school after 8.40am without a valid reason will also receive a 10-minute break time detention. Students arriving after 11.05am without an acceptable explanation (i.e. school transport was delayed) will receive an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

In cases where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered when supported with evidence (letter or appointment card) from home. Afternoon registration is taken at 1.10pm and the registers will close at 1.30pm.

## **Student Procedures during the School Day**

If a student arrives late after registration closes, they must sign in at main reception. A reason must be given, supported by a letter from home whenever possible. The time the student signs in must be recorded.

If any student needs to leave whilst school is in session, they must sign out at main reception. Students will not be allowed to sign out without their parents/carers written (ideally) or telephone permission. No student will be allowed to sign out without this permission.

***All these procedures are very important as in the event of a fire drill it is vital there is an accurate record of who is on the school site at that time.***

## **First Day of Absence**

Parents and carers are expected to contact the school on the first day of their child's absence and provide a reason for their non-attendance to school.

This should be done by using the Student Absence Line or parent/ carer notes handed in either the main reception or via the form tutor. If no contact has been made by 9.00am, the Attendance Officer will contact parents/carers by 10.00am at the latest. The information obtained from the student's parents or carers will be recorded and transferred to the Student Absence Record Management system. In the comment box, the administrator will record a brief reason for the absence and will add their initials to verify the information added to the student's attendance record. Any concerns regarding absence on a day should be passed immediately to the Pastoral Team for investigation.

### **Subsequent Absences**

Each subsequent day of absence (unless otherwise formally advised of long term absence by parent or carer) will be treated as the first day of absence and the Attendance Officer will attempt to contact the student's parents or carers, by telephone, by 10.00am. If there is no contact from the parent or carer after three days of absence, an unannounced home visit will take place by the Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer may visit the home of a student where there are concerns over attendance, and they have not been able to make contact with parents/carers.

### **Continuing Absence**

If there is still no contact from the parents or carers after 6 days, a further visit is made and a letter issued referring to the Ten Day absence criteria.

### **Ten Days Absence**

The Local Authority will be notified of any student who is absent without an explanation for ten consecutive days. This is done by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team and is a legal requirement. The school will include details of the action that they have taken to date.

### **Persistent Absenteeism (students whose attendance is 90% or below)**

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns to the Assistant Headteacher – Pastoral and Inclusion. In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parents or carers. It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to communicate actions taken and how the matter has been resolved, or any actions and decisions to be made.

From September 2015, the Department for Education has changed the threshold for persistent absence from 85% to 90%. Please see table below for estimated cumulative persistence absence figures for the academic year.

## **Medical Concerns**

If any student is absent from school due to illness, a letter must be provided by parents or carers. Prolonged absence due to medical reasons (over five days) will require medical evidence (i.e. a doctor's note, hospital appointment card, prescription etc).

If diagnosed medical reasons significantly affect a student's attendance, the school may initiate a 'Medical Attendance Support Panel' meeting. Please refer the school's 'Supporting Students with Medical Conditions' policy which can be found on the school website.

## **Medical Attendance Support Panel**

Students with diagnosed medical conditions whose attendance level is around 90% may be invited, with their parents, to attend a Medical Attendance Support Panel meeting. The Attendance Officer, a member of the Student Support Team will be in attendance to discuss ways in which the student may be supported by the school in order to improve attendance levels. The aim of the meeting is to ensure that the school is doing everything it can to support the student.

All Medical Attendance Support Panel meetings will take place with the student's parent or carers present. If the parent or carer declines to attend, they will be given the option to give their consent for the meeting to take place without them. In this exceptional case, the student's form tutor will also attend the meeting in order to further support the student concerned.

## **Attendance Officer**

Any student who has an attendance level below 94% will be under the remit of the Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer makes decisions in relation to home visits, fixed penalty warning letters, fixed penalties, referral to the Attendance Panel, fast track referral and/or any other appropriate action in conjunction with the person with designated responsibility for attendance on the Senior Leadership Team.

## **Attendance Panel/Fast Track**

Any student with a level of attendance at or below 90% can, in liaison with the Attendance Officer, be subject to an Attendance Panel referral. The panel will examine the reasons for the absence and develop strategies for improving the student's attendance. The student's attendance will be reviewed every six weeks until a 90% (or above) attendance is achieved. If any student who has been referred to the Attendance Panel continues to record a decline in attendance, they will be subject to the fast track process which will be initiated by the Attendance Officer. This process will fast track the parents or carers of persistent absentees to court to consider legal proceedings.

## **A Welcome Back**

It is important that on return from an absence that all students are made to feel welcome. This is the responsibility of the form tutor. The student should be brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other students by the form tutor. If required, the form tutor will involve a member of the Student Support Team who will provide support to help the student catch up on missed work.

## **Absence Notes**

If a written note explaining the student's absence has been received by the form tutor, it must be passed to the Attendance Officer so that the information is recorded and the evidence is kept secure. This is the responsibility of the form tutor. If the note has been written into the student planner the form tutor must send the student to a member of the Attendance Officer so that the entry can be copied and put on file. Notes from parents and carers will be kept on file and may be used for further investigation if required.

## **Promoting Attendance**

David Nieper Academy will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents and carers of the importance of good attendance. They will also remind them that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. Parents will receive regular reports that include the current attendance percentage for their child.

## **Leave of Absence from School**

Leave of Absence from school will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. All requests for leave of absence from school must be made in writing to the Headteacher at least two weeks' prior to the requested leave of absence. A decision will then be made as to whether the request meets the criteria for 'exceptional circumstances' and parents/carers will be notified by letter. If the request is rejected and the leave of absence still is taken, then the information will be passed to Derbyshire County Council for a decision as to whether a fixed penalty notice will be given or not.

Although some parents may find themselves in difficult circumstances which require them to organise holidays in term time, David Nieper Academy believes students should not miss school for this reason. Whilst we understand the difficulties parents/carers may have in organising holidays during the school holidays and the benefits to be had from cheaper term-time holidays, this type of absence is detrimental to a child's education. There is a common misconception that any child is allowed to take 10 days' holiday per year; this is not true. From September 2013, government guidelines advise that no absence should be authorised in advance except when due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Bereavement and life threatening illness are considered to be exceptional circumstances. Please note that the cost or availability of holidays does not constitute 'exceptional circumstances'.

## **Rewards**

Good attendance and punctuality will be rewarded at David Nieper Academy. Exceptional 100% attendance and punctuality of individual students will be rewarded during termly Praise Assemblies. Individuals and form groups will also receive weekly rewards for excellent attendance.

## **Identifying issues and improving attendance**

Where attendance is a concern pro-active action will follow, informing parents of the emerging issues and engaging in dialogue to ensure improvement. The academy uses trigger points to help prioritise cases which are reviewed every half term, although each individual case will be managed according to circumstances.

### **Stage 1: 96% and Below**

Formal discussion and a written concern letter to parents. Students will be placed on a 'hot list' with an immediate follow up phone-call. Attendance will be reviewed on a weekly basis by the Attendance Officer.

### **Stage 2: 90% and Below**

Formal meeting in school and a 'stage 2' warning letter issued. David Nieper Academy will liaise with the Educational Welfare Officer to consider supportive measures and the possibility of a fixed penalty notice given. Parents/Carers at this stage are invited to an attendance panel meeting.

### **Stage 3: 85% and Below**

Request to Education Welfare Officer to initiate legal proceedings. Appropriate multi-agency discussion, including referral to the David Nieper Academy Multi-Agency Team.