

# David Nieper Education Trust



## Attendance & Punctuality Policy

This policy was originated by Chris Endacott – Assistant Headteacher

### Version Control

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## Contents

1. Aims.....	2
2. Legislation and guidance.....	2
3. School procedures .....	3
4. Authorised and unauthorised absence.....	6
5. Strategies for promoting attendance .....	7
6. Attendance monitoring.....	7
7. Roles and responsibilities .....	8
8. Monitoring arrangements.....	9
9. Links with other policies .....	9
Appendix 1: attendance codes .....	9

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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 in time for am registration each school day.

#### **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).

##### **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 where contact cannot be made, and child will be reported as missing in education. 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 – Data and Outcomes. 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.

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.

Please contact the academy to inform us of any medical appointments 24 hours in advance.

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 after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Any student arriving to school after 8.40am without a valid reason will also receive a break time detention.

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.

### **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**

Parents and carers will receive an update of their child's attendance record on every assessment report, which is sent to parents and carers at least three times per year. As well as this, parents and carers will receive the following letters at the appropriate stages:

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

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

#### **Stage 2: 94% and Below**

Formal meeting in school and a 'stage 2' warning letter issued. David Nieper Academy will liaise with parents/carers and other professionals (where applicable) to consider supportive measures. The student's attendance will be monitored for 15 days. If no improvement is shown, then Stage 3 procedures will be initiated. Referral to David Nieper Family Support Manager could be made at this stage.

#### **Stage 3: 90% and Below**

Formal Attendance Panel meeting with parents/carers and a member of SLT. David Nieper Academy will liaise with parents/carers and other professionals (where applicable) to consider

supportive measures. Request to Local Authority to initiate legal proceedings if no improvement to child's attendance is made, unless medical evidence supports the child's reason for absence. Contact will be made by the David Nieper Academy Family Support Manager.

#### **Stage 4: Continued attendance concerns**

As a last resort and if all intervention has not had the desired effect, then the academy may seek further legal action, which could result in prosecution.

Our aim at David Nieper Academy is for all students to reach their full potential.

**We will always endeavour to support you and your child.**

## **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'.

All requests for leave of absence from school must be made in writing to the Headteacher at least two weeks' prior 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'.

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

### **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 not the school.

The decision on whether 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 local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

## **5. Strategies for 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.

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.

## **6. Attendance monitoring**

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.

### **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% or a sudden change in attendance pattern, 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.

On some occasions, the Attendance Officer may contact parent/ carer to organise an arranged home visit where they feel it is beneficial.

### **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.

## **7. Roles and responsibilities**

### **7.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a half termly basis via the pupil matters pastoral committee. 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:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers 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/form tutor**

Class teachers/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 also ensure students write weekly/annual attendance in planners every week.

#### **7.5 Office/reception staff**

Office/reception staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

#### **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Head Teacher – Pastoral and Inclusion. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

#### **9. Links with other policies**

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day