



Nine Mile Ride Primary Document: Attendance Policy

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Approver:	Local Advisors
Owner:	Teaching, Learning and Curriculum
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Change History

Version	Date reviewed	Based on	Changes applied	Updated by
1.1	January 2013	Local authority policy	Change made to reflect the local authority threshold of penalty notices being issued when pupils are taken out of school for five or more days' unauthorised holiday per term.	Ali Brown Headteacher
1.2	January 2016	Local authority policy	Small edits made to ensure the policy reflects current regulation – and to remove unnecessary detail. Corrected registration times.	Ali Brown Headteacher
1.3	October 2017	Local authority policy	Edits made to ensure the policy reflects current regulation relating to penalty notices	Ali Brown Headteacher
1.4	October 2019	Current policy	Annual Review	Ali Brown Headteacher
1.5	January 2020	Current policy	Updated to reflect changes to penalty notice code of conduct	Ali Brown Headteacher

Introduction

The Education Act 1996 requires parents and/or carers to ensure their child receives an efficient full-time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The Supreme Court has determined that 'regular' attendance means that which is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school" (Isle of Wight Council v Platt) (6th April 2017).

It is a legal requirement for all schools to keep a daily attendance register which records every pupil's attendance at every session the school is open to pupils.

Commitment to Attendance

The staff of Nine Mile Ride Primary School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, pupils, Local Advisors, The Circle Trust and the Local Authority to creating a school which provides the best education possible for young people.

Regular attendance is key to achieving this. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. As a school, we want to work with our parents/carers to ensure that their/our children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. Regular school attendance at Nine Mile Ride primary School will set pupils up for positive attendance throughout their school life.

Expectations

Nine Mile Ride must take the attendance register at the start of each morning session and during each afternoon session that they are open. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school must also record whether the absence of a compulsory school-age pupil was authorised or not. There is no requirement to authorise/unauthorised absence of non-compulsory school-age pupils but Nine Mile Ride Primary still uses the national attendance and absence codes to help identify/monitor vulnerable children.

At Nine Mile Ride Primary, we expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly;
- Attend school punctually;
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day;
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher or an appropriate member of staff any problems that may affect their school attendance.

We hope that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy, their legal responsibilities with regards to their child's education and the requirement to ensure their child's regular attendance at school;
- Ensure their child attends school every day throughout the academic year unless school has approved the leave of absence;
- Ensure their child arrives punctually and prepared for the school day;
- Telephone the school each day if their child is unable to attend due to illness or any other unavoidable circumstance;
- Provide an explanation for the absence when their child returns to school, including providing medical evidence where requested;
- Avoid making medical, dental or other appointments during the school day;
- Notify school of any issues that may affect their child's attendance;
- Advise school immediately of any changes to contact details.

School staff will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere;
- Provide a safe learning environment;
- Ensure Registers are taken promptly at 8:40 a.m. for Ks2 and 8: 45a.m for FS and KS1 and again at the start of the afternoon session;
- Contact parents/carers when a pupil has failed to arrive at school and where no message explaining absence has been received by 9:15a.m;
- Send a request to parents/carers where a pupil's absence is unexplained;
- Provide parents/carers with their child's percentage attendance at regular intervals (parents' evenings, end of term/year reports etc);
- Work with parents/carers when there are concerns over a pupil's lack of regular attendance;

- Monitor any child who fails to attend school regularly or has missed 10 school sessions or more without permission: this being a legal requirement; and where absences persist then a formal referral should be made to the Education Welfare Service which may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence is when the school accepts the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or has given approval in advance.

Unauthorised absence is when school does not accept an explanation as being reasonable justification for the absence, or when no explanation has been provided despite a written request being sent to parents/carers, or when the headteacher has not approved a parent's/carer's request for leave of absence.

Parents/carers should be aware that it is the headteacher's decision whether to authorise an absence or not. In the case of long term or frequent absences due to illness or a medical condition, supporting medical evidence may be requested. This could be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip from a doctor's surgery or a copy of a prescription. (Please note that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for any cost.)

Pupils Leaving During the School Day

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school;
- Parents/carers (where possible) should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time; Parents/carers are requested to confirm the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time;
- Pupils must be signed out at reception on leaving the school and signed back in on their return;
- When a pupil is being collected from school, parents/carers are requested to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site;
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents/carers will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupil as a missing person or contact Social Services.

Term Time Leave of Absence

Nine Mile Ride Primary School believes that term time absences should be actively discouraged. Our purpose is to ensure pupils achieve their full potential and there is a clear link between poor attendance and underachievement; however, the school also recognises that there may be occasions when a parent/carer considers there are extenuating or compassionate reasons for such absence. The law has removed the right for schools to grant up to 10 days' leave of absence in special circumstances for the purposes of a family holiday and there is no automatic right to take any leave or holiday in term time. As outlined in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, the Headteacher can only grant leave of absence if the circumstances are considered 'exceptional' in which case the pupil's absence will be authorised.

The school holiday dates, INSET days and other important dates are published on the school's website and parents/carers are asked to note these when planning holidays and family events. If there are exceptional reasons for requesting leave of absence during term time, the following procedures will apply:

- The parent/s or carer/s with whom the pupil normally resides must complete and submit a Leave of Absence (holiday) form at least one month in advance of the requested absence. Forms are available from the School Office or can be downloaded from the website. The headteacher (or person authorised to do so on the headteacher's behalf) will consider the application and will decide whether or not the application can be granted on the basis of 'exceptional' circumstances. Each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis depending upon the specific circumstances of the particular application. School will endeavour to respond within 5 working days to the parent/s or carer/s who submitted the application.
- Where leave of absence is granted, the pupil's absence will be authorised.
- A one-off period of irregular attendance, such as an unauthorised period of leave in term time, can result in a referral being made to the Education Welfare Service and this may result in the issuing of a Penalty Notice in accordance with Wokingham Borough Council's Code of Conduct.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent/carer, per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice, rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days (Figures correct as of 22.01.20).

- If a Penalty Notice remains unpaid after 28 days the matter may result in each parent/carer being liable for prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure their child's regular attendance at school contrary to Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Punctuality/Lateness

It is crucial that children arrive at school on time for registration at the beginning of the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. For school pupils and parents/carers the grounds are open at 8.30am.

Registration takes place at 8.40am for Key Stage 2 children and at 8:45am for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 children. The morning attendance register is taken at the start of the morning session with the register closing 30 minutes after the start of the session. Any pupil who arrives after that will be recorded as late to school or unauthorised depending on the time. Persistent lateness by a pupil will initially be followed up by school staff and if not resolved will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Nine Mile Ride Primary will adhere to the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct which states that if a child is absent for ten sessions or more in a ten week period (spanning two terms); ten unauthorised lates in a ten week period; or is found in a public place whilst excluded, the parent/carer may be issued with a penalty notice.

Changing Schools

If a family decides to send their child to a different school, they must inform the school in writing as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- A new home address, if appropriate, is supplied

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school. If the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to Education Welfare and after four weeks the pupil will be registered on the Department for Education website as a pupil missing education.

Elective Home Education

Parents/carers have a duty to ensure that their child/ren receive a suitable full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. The law does allow parents/carers to choose to educate children at home instead of sending them to school and this is known as Elective Home Education.

Should parents/carers wish to follow this route then this needs to be put in writing to the headteacher with a request that their child is removed from the school roll. School will then inform the Education Welfare Service and arrangements will be made to inspect the education put in place at home.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

If concerns regarding attendance arise, the school will (in the first instance) discuss this with the parent via letter or phone call. Should no improvement be seen, and the concerns remain, a more formal letter will be issued to the parent/carer. Any parent/carer whose child is identified as a cause for concern may be invited to attend an attendance meeting at school. Following this, if there is no improvement in school attendance, the school will refer the family to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who will work in partnership with school and parents/carers in support of pupils who are failing to attend school on a regular basis.

Education Welfare may also issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents are likely to be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

If unauthorised absence continues, the school will engage with parents and carers and identify what improvements and actions need to be achieved over a fixed time frame (usually 8 or 12 weeks). This intervention may also be offered as an early intervention measure designed to ensure that appropriate action is taken to address school attendance concerns. If there is no improvement, the school will engage Education Welfare who may take parents/carers to court for failing to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Parents have a legal responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings are initiated in the Magistrates' Court.