Netherhall School

An Ambitious, Caring Community

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Adopted by Netherhall School Governing Body

On

Signed: **(Neil Watt, Chair of Governors)**

Date by which the procedure was last reviewed:

Anticipated review date: September 2022

Equality Act 2010

Our school is committed to equality both as an employer and a service provider. We welcome our general duty under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. In addition we recognise our specific duties to publish information every year about our school population; explain how we have due regard for equality; publish equality objectives which show how we plan to tackle particular inequalities and reduce or remove them.

We recognise our duty to ensure no-one experiences harassment, less favourable treatment or discrimination because of their age, any disability they may have, their ethnicity, colour or national origin, their gender identity or reassignment, their marital or civil partnership status, being pregnant or having recently had a baby, their religion or belief, their sexual identity and orientation.

We also welcome our duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote community cohesion and British values.

Introduction

Regular attendance is vital for all students if they are to achieve their potential. There are clearly documented links between regular attendance and attainment:

- For every 10% drop in attendance, a student is likely to achieve 1 less GCSE
- 80% attendance all the way through school is the equivalent of missing a whole year of education.
- 80% attendance means a student is missing 1 full day of education every week.

Regular attendance reduces the risk of underachievement, keeps students safe and creates good habits for a future working life.

Encouraging good attendance is the responsibility of all staff and is a legal duty for parents/carers.

This policy has been developed in conjunction with Cumbria Children's Services colleagues, and views sought from students, parents, staff and Governors.

Aims

The aims of this policy are:

- To support all students in achieving expected attendance.
- To safeguard all students.
- To advance equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and foster good relations.
- To increase attendance to achieve our target of 95% or above.
- To reduce persistent absence.
- To increase punctuality.

Understanding types of absence

Every absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. **Only the Head Teacher has the authority to classify an absence.**

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason e.g. illness or emergencies

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no permission has been given.
This includes:

- Truancy
- Absences for which no reason has been given
- Students who arrive after registers have closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays, concerts etc.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed. As of September 2013, Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence, such as family holidays, in term time, except in exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers must put their request for leave of absence in writing to the Head Teacher explaining why the leave of absence should be considered as an exceptional circumstance. Each request will be considered on its' own merits by the Head Teacher.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 38 or more sessions across the school year for **whatever reason.** Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to a child's educational prospects. The parents of any student who is in danger of moving into PA are notified and all PA cases are automatically made known to the Inclusion Officer.

Each half term, the Attendance Officer will electronically report on attendance and all types of absence to the Department for Education via the Local Authority using the 'Data Tool' provided. The data will be analysed to consider the relevant 9 protected characteristics (age, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief – or lack of-, sexual orientation, disability, marriage and civil

partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sex) as outlined in The Equality Act (2010) unless to do so would contravene the Data Protection Act.

Attendance figures will be tracked and reported weekly to the pastoral team for all students. Suitable actions will be decided for any students repeatedly flagged for absence in these weekly reports. This may include, tutor mentoring, Head of Year mentoring, contact with parents, home visits or further action.

BRAG system

Every individual student's attendance is tracked and monitored. A category is allocated according to the % achieved. The level of concern is graded by colour – see below. Every individual student is subject to an action plan.

Students with attendance of:

- **100%** — **blue category. Outstanding = No concerns**
- **95 to 99.99%** — **green category. Expected – No concerns**
- **92.60 to 94.99%** — **amber category A. Unacceptable - Concerns**
- **90 to 92.59%** — **amber category B. Inadequate - Serious concerns**
- **Less than 90%** — **red category. Chronic – Acute concerns**

For the purposes of information to students and parents the two amber categories are not sub divided and the blue category is included in the green band. The sub divisions are used by school staff and the Local Authority Inclusion Officer to fine tune their interventions, action plans and rewards. All interventions will consider genuine reasons for absence and will be actioned on a case by case basis. Absence will be monitored to ensure compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010) to ensure unlawful discrimination is eliminated, equality of opportunity is advanced and good relations are fostered.

- **Red category**- Any student at/below 90% without an ongoing, proven medical condition will be referred directly to the Local Authority Inclusion Officer. Other students in the red category will receive a warning letter that they may be prosecuted.

The Flow Chart below shows all the possible actions that may be taken to improve attendance:

What do we do to improve attendance at Netherhall School?

ALL STUDENTS

- Assemblies to promote good attendance (ongoing throughout the year)
- Rewards - achievement points awarded for good attendance and celebrated in assembly and on social media (weekly)
- Attendance information/reminders printed in the Newsletter and on website (half-termly)
- Unauthorised absence Edulink notification/texts (daily, as and when required to alert parents when no contact made)
- Letters for unauthorised holidays (as and when required)
- Letters for unexplained absence (as and when required)
- Attendance data available at any time via 'Attendance' section on Edulink
- Attendance to date printed on to Academic Reports (annually) and data sheets (half-termly)

STUDENTS WITH OUTSTANDING ATTENDANCE (BLUE BAND: 100%)

- Rewards – achievement points for 100% for Y7-13 and certificates Y7-11 (half termly)
- Name displayed in assembly (weekly)
- Name displayed on TV screens around school (weekly)

STUDENTS WITH EXPECTED ATTENDANCE (GREEN BAND: 95 – 99.99%)

- Rewards – achievement points for 95+% for Y7-13 and certificates Y7-11 (half termly)
- Name displayed in assembly (weekly)
- Name displayed on TV screens around school (weekly)
- Edulink messages for 95+% attendance (weekly)
- Displays within tutor classrooms and year areas (ongoing - updated monthly)

STUDENTS WITH INADEQUATE ATTENDANCE (AMBER BAND: 90.01 - 94.99%)

- Tutor intervention (ongoing, as and when required)
- Edulink communication to parents warning of poor attendance and possible consequences (as and when required)
- Pupil interviews conducted by the Attendance Officer and HOY/SLT lead
- Attendance mentoring
- Parental meetings with HOY and Attendance Officer
- Attendance Panels attended by Attendance Officer and SLT Lead including a 6-week review plan (half termly)
- Liaison with the Local Authority Inclusion Officer – Julie Topping (as and when required - ongoing)
- Liaison with HoP regarding attending TAF, Core Group or involvement of external services

STUDENTS WITH CHRONIC ATTENDANCE (RED BAND: 90% OR LESS)

- HOY intervention (ongoing, as and when required)
- Communication via Edulink warning of poor attendance and possible consequences (as and when required)
- Headteacher's warning letter of legal consequences of ongoing poor attendance (as and when required)
- Involvement from the Local Authority Inclusion Officer – Julie Topping (as and when required - ongoing)
- Involvement with other external agencies e.g. Social Care, CAMHs where appropriate (as and when required)
- Early Help intervention (as and when required, reviewed in TAF (every 6-8 weeks)
- Attendance Review Conferences attended by Julie Topping, Attendance Officer and Assistant Headteacher (attendance) (3 weekly)
- Issuing of fixed penalty notices (as and when required)
- Legal procedures activated by the Local Authority, including interviews under caution and legal prosecution (as and when required)

In law, every parent of a child of compulsory school age has a duty to ensure their child is registered at a school or has other arrangements which provide an effective education and attends full-time education regularly and punctually (Section 7 of The Education Act 1996).

They must:

- Ensure their child arrives at school on time, in the correct uniform, with the correct equipment and in a condition to learn.
- Contact school via Edulink/telephone on the first day of any absence by 9.00 am at the latest and maintain contact throughout the length of the absence.
- Make all appointments e.g. doctors, dentists etc. out of school hours where possible. Appointment cards **must** be provided for appointments made within school hours.
- Contact the school if they are having a problem getting their child into school for any reason e.g. bullying, difficulty with work, family issues etc so that the relevant staff can support the student and the family.
- Attend any necessary meetings and respond as quickly as possible to any communication and information about their child.

STUDENTS WITH INADEQUATE ATTENDANCE (AMBER BAND: 90 - 94.9%)

- HoY intervention (ongoing, as and when required)
- Letters home warning of poor attendance and possible consequences (as and when required)

- Regularly use Edulink to stay up-to-date with their child's attendance, including by subject., in order to review the impact this may have on learning and attainment.

Term time leave of absence may only be granted by the Head Teacher in exceptional circumstances. A written request must be submitted outlining the reasons for the request and why it is an exceptional circumstance.

Students

Students must:

- Aim for 100% attendance.
- Attend and be on time for morning and afternoon registration.
- Attend and be punctual for every lesson.
- Remain in school during the school day.
- See individual teachers and catch up any work missed during the period of absence.
- Use Edulink, tutor discussions etc to keep an accurate view of their attendance.
- Let parents and/or staff know if they are experiencing any problems e.g. bullying, difficulties with classwork or homework so that support can be offered.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body of the school is actively engaged in promoting good attendance by supporting and encouraging students and staff in their work. They hold the school to account through the School Improvement Committee which has attendance as a standing item on the termly meeting agenda.

The Head Teacher

The Head Teacher motivates and leads the whole staff by demonstrating a commitment to promoting excellent attendance.

Assistant Headteacher (attendance)

The school has a designated member of the Senior Leadership Team with specific responsibility for attendance.

They:

- Ensure the formation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of agreed policy, procedures and action plans
- Provides regular reports to the Governing Body (Management Committee) about attendance.
- Support staff in the promotion of excellent attendance.
- Works with Local Authority Children's Services colleagues to identify and implement good practice.
- Line manage the Attendance Officer.
- Liaise with Pastoral staff in regards to emotional or social issues of specific students.
- Work in cooperation with the Assistant Headteacher (CPD) to allow staff CPD opportunities and Inset training relating to attendance procedures and strategies.
- Make decisions to escalate actions and procedures for those students with falling or persistently low attendance.

The Senior Leadership Team monitors school attendance through the Senior Leadership Team meetings immediately prior to the Governor's Management Committee.

Pastoral Team

The school recognises that reasons for absence are many and varied. They are frequently a result of emotional and social issues. The Pastoral Team have a wide-ranging remit, working with school staff and Children's Services colleagues, to support students and their families ensuring students feel safe, attend and achieve.

They:

- Should be aware of and communicate to staff and students the links between attendance and attainment.

- Analyse attendance regularly to identify patterns and reasons for non-attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure the Attendance Reward system is being carried out effectively for their Year group(s)
- Work with individuals to improve attendance and punctuality to school and to lessons
- Liaise with the Assistant Headteacher (attendance) and Attendance Officer to address individual student issues which are barriers to expected attendance and punctuality.
- Attend meetings regarding attendance as required.
- Co-ordinate in-school Restorative Practice sessions.
- Meet with students and their parents/carers to investigate poor attendance and devise strategies to improve attendance.
- Ensures effective liaison between members of staff with regard to vulnerable students.

Tutors

Within each year group there is a team of tutors who are responsible for all students in their individual tutor group.

They:

- Should be aware of and communicate to students the links between attendance and attainment.
- Ensure all morning registers are taken accurately and promptly.
- Report any ICT or SIMs issues preventing the usual register procedures to the ICT technicians.
- Keep an attractive and regularly updated attendance notice board in their tutor room.
- Communicate patterns of absence to Attendance Officer/Head of Year promptly.
- Promote attendance through the BRAG system and rewards.
- Work with individuals to improve attendance and punctuality to school and to lessons.

Attendance Officer

Our Attendance Officer is key to promoting expected attendance and punctuality and is our main link with students, parents/carers, staff and Children's Services Inclusion Officer where attendance issues are concerned.

They:

- Implement the school Attendance Policy and practices.
- Regularly input and produce attendance data to identify students at risk of poor attendance and celebrate those with good and excellent attendance.
- Produce data at given times during the year according to the Attendance Calendar for a variety of audiences.
- Meet with students and their parents/carers to investigate poor attendance and devise strategies to improve attendance.
- Make routine phone calls and send out standard communication to parents/carers about their child's attendance.
- Provide data to the Assistant Headteacher (attendance) and support reports to Senior and Middle Leaders and Governors about the effectiveness of school attendance policy and practice.
- Persistently contact parents where an explanation of their child's absence has not been received.
- Monitor the completion of registers and ensure statutory requirements are met.
- Ensure attendance data is accurate and sent on time to the Local Authority, DFE and Clerk to the Governors.
- Ensure students are safeguarded through vigilance in monitoring absence from school and from lessons.
- Ensure the Attendance Reward system is operating effectively.
- Maintain an accurate record of attendance on SIMS.

Head of Department

- Should be aware of and communicate to staff and students the links between attendance and attainment.
- Should ensure all lesson registers within their department are taken accurately and promptly.
- Report any ICT or SIMs issues to the ICT manager promptly.

- Analyse attendance and punctuality to the subject for which they have responsibility regularly to identify patterns of non-attendance and any subject based issues.
- Put actions in place to address any subject based attendance or punctuality issues.
- Report any individual student issues which are not subject based to Head of Year or Attendance Officer.

Teachers

- Should be aware of and communicate to students the links between attendance and attainment.
- Should ensure all lesson registers are taken accurately and promptly.
- Report any ICT or SIMs issues preventing the usual attendance procedures to the ICT manager promptly.
- Communicate patterns of absence to Attendance Officer/Head of Year promptly.
- Communicate with Heads of Year, Assistant Headteacher (attendance) and parents in cases where poor attendance is affecting attainment and progress.

Administrative Staff

The school is required by law to keep and publish records of attendance and absence. Students should be registered under their birth names unless they have been legally changed.
They must:

- Forward information regarding attendance to the Attendance Officer promptly.
- Liaise with the Attendance Officer or Head of Year about students who wish to leave the school premises. Only the Pastoral Team can authorise a student leaving the premises.

Local Authority - Children's Services Inclusion Officer

Children's Services support parents and schools in achieving outstanding attendance and punctuality through an Inclusion Officer.
School will obtain the advice of the Inclusion Officer for any student in the red bands or who have had persistently low attendance for a prolonged period of time.
The Inclusion Officer has the power to seek:

- Fixed Penalty Notices to the amount of £120, this amount will reduce to £60 if paid within 28 days.
- An Education Supervision Order issued by the family court.
- Interview under caution.
- Prosecution in a Magistrates' court.

Attendance Rewards

Rewards for attendance are designed to:

- Keep attendance high on **everyone's** agenda
- Be easy to administer
- Have a regular input by tutors
- Be motivational
- Show appreciation of those students who 'get it right' through regular attendance and punctuality.

Rewards for attendance include:

- Green and Blue band students are displayed each week in year group assemblies
- Achievement points – any students in the green attendance band = 1 point, any students in the blue attendance band = 2 points
- End of Year Awards during Awards Day for those students with 100% attendance across the academic year
- Notifications via Edulink to parents/carers – any students with 95%+ attendance
- Attendance certificates – certificates presented in assembly to Y7-11 students with 95%+ in a half term
- Individual reward systems – as deemed appropriate by the Attendance Officer for students dramatically improving their attendance

Students with Long Term Medical Reasons for Absence

- "Pupils who are absent from school for medical reasons are entitled to full-time education unless their medical condition means that this would not be in their best interests" Ofsted Subsidiary Guidance April 2013
- "The Local Authority are responsible for arranging suitable full-time education for children who- because of illness or other reasons – would not receive suitable education without such provision. This means that where a child cannot attend school because of health problems, and would not otherwise receive a suitable full- time education, the LA is responsible for arranging provision." DFE 'ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs. Statutory guidance for local authorities January 2013

School will liaise with the student, parents, relevant medical staff and the Hospital and Home Tuition Service to ensure that any student who is absent for an extended period of time (4 weeks or more) due to medical reasons has access to suitable full-time education. This may be done through the completion of an "Early Help Assessment" (EHA) and a subsequent "Team Around the Family" (TAF) process. School will ensure that regular reviews are held and that the student has access to resources. School will also aim to ensure the student does not become isolated from their peer group.

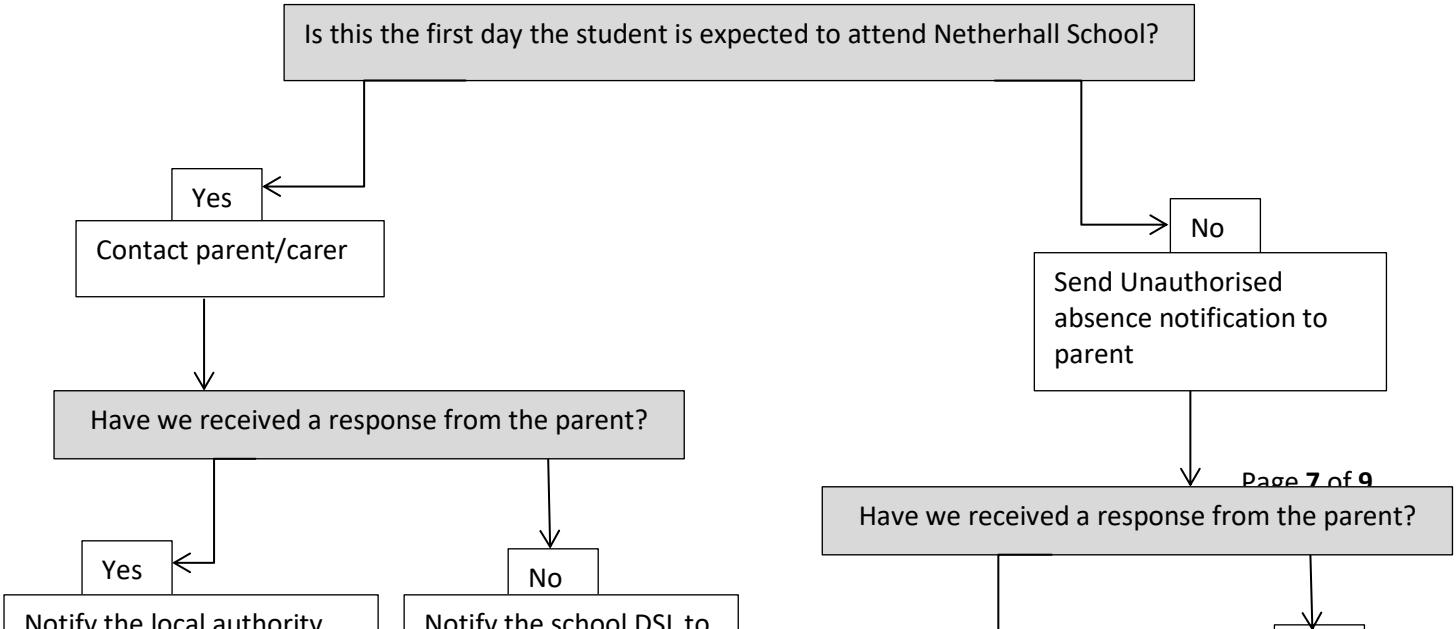
Children Missing Education (CME)

First day absence – students will be added to the admission register for the beginning of their first day of attendance at Netherhall School. If a student fails to attend this date then the attendance officer and/or pastoral team will attempt to contact parents/carers to establish why and come to a resolution. If this is not possible, or the school has any further concerns, the local authority and any other services involved will be notified.

Short term absence with no reason given – the parents of any students absent after registration closes will receive notification of this and are required to contact school immediately. The attendance officer and/or pastoral team will make every effort to contact parents. If school have not received contact, advice will be sought from the DSL regarding further action which may include home visits or involvement of external services.

Long term (including home schooling or moving to another local authority) – any students who we feel is likely to be missing education for a longer period e.g. have moved from the area, will be reported to the Local Authority after further details have been sought by the Attendance Officer and Pastoral Team. These students would also be reported in the weekly 'gains and losses' document which is sent to the Local Authority. A child will only be removed from roll when we have notification they have commenced education at another establishment or have received notification from a parent to home-school or educate alternatively.

The flow chart below shows our responses to unexplained absences in more detail:



Related policies

This Policy complements the following school policies and documents:

- Child protection policy and procedures
- Behaviour policy and procedures
- Special Educational Needs