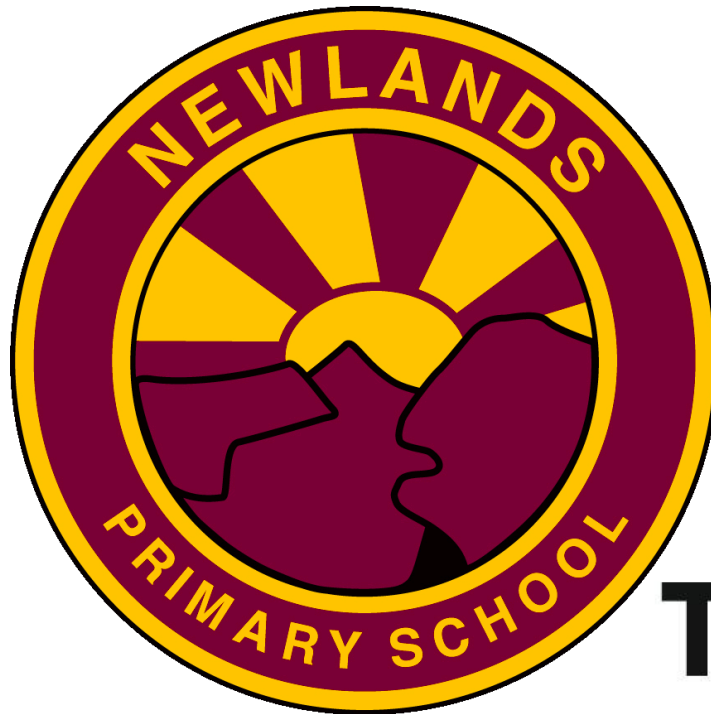


Newlands Primary School

Attendance Policy



Headteacher: Mr C Markham

Adopted: September 2017

Last review date: September 2017 (Amended December 2017)

To be reviewed: July 2018

SIGNED BY HEADTEACHER & CHAIR.....

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Markham', is written over a dotted line.

Date.....04/09/17.....

Attendance Policy

Statement of Intent

Newlands Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. At Newlands we expect pupils to attend regularly and punctually and achieve an attendance percentage of at least 96%.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Newlands.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance. If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

Principles

The school will:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures when necessary and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law
- complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session
- stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence
- display attendance rates in our newsletter and reward good or improved attendance for pupils
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence
- consult with all members of the school community and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy
- ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by senior managers who will report to school governors
- work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed
- monitor and investigate any patterns of lateness or absence

Procedures

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil by the first day of absence the Attendance Officer will:

- contact parent/carer by telephone or text, or if parent is unavailable, consider sending a standard letter requesting information and/or telephone other contacts held on SIMS
- discuss concerns with the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if no response is received after 2 days of absence. The EWO will contact the parent by telephone or by conducting a home visit in order to ascertain the reason for non-attendance
- when a pupil's attendance percentage reaches 96.1% and a pattern of unauthorised absence is emerging, the following procedures will be implemented:
 1. 96.1% attendance - send letter 1
 2. 95% attendance - send letter 2. EWO to contact parent either by telephone or by conducting a home visit
 3. 94% attendance - send Penalty Notice Warning Letter if there are four or more unauthorised sessions.
 4. Below 93% attendance - apply for Penalty Notice where there are 10 unauthorised sessions in 100 sessions consider School Attendance Meeting, send letter advising of PA threshold also offering support.
if further unauthorised absence is recorded, EWO to discuss possible prosecution with PIAS
- help the pupil's re-integration where a pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks
- notes, records of telephone calls, and medical evidence should be dated, named and initialled by the office staff/FLO, Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher. These notes should be placed in the pupil file.

In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will convey to the pupils that attendance is a crucial part of their education.

Performance

We will review our progress against National Attendance Targets. Newlands will look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

When evaluating success the school will consider whether or not:

- attendance has improved
- punctuality has improved
- parental response to absences has improved
- the school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school, Governing Body and the local community
- pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within school
- attendance issues have been included as topics in school assemblies, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons, or as a theme for any other lessons/assemblies

Practice

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- keeping and maintaining registers accurately (see Attendance Codes)
- maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- carefully and accurately inputting data into the SIMs Attendance module
- regularly analysing attendance data
- ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance
- liaising closely with the school's EWO
- rewarding excellent attendance

Keeping the Register

The Status of the Register

The register is a legal document and must be kept accurately, neatly and marked in ink. The register (from SIMS Attendance) may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance. It may also contribute data to pupils' end of term reports, to records of achievement, and to leavers' references. It is vital that pupils are aware that registration is a significant part of the school day. We will ensure that all staff involved with the registration process are aware that the law is very specific regarding the keeping of registers. Marking and keeping the register is of the utmost importance.

Marking the Register

- no pupil will be marked present unless actually in the room when the register is called or unless he or she has been given permission to be absent by the registering teacher
- registers are finally closed at the agreed time each day 9.05am
- when a pupil misses registration but arrives before 9.30am with an adequate explanation s/he should be marked as late (**L**). Lateness must be explained by a parent/carer.
- where a pupil misses registration and arrives after 9.30am s/he should be marked as late after the register i.e. unauthorised absence (**U**).
- pupils must not mark the register under any circumstances
- spaces must not be left on the register
- the data from the registers will be input to SIMs Attendance at the end of each week and a percentage attendance report produced and monitored
- the decision to authorise an absence will be made within a maximum of two weeks from the date of the absence

Removal from Roll

Pupils will only be removed from the school roll and class registers under the following circumstances:

- the school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- the School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- completion of compulsory school age
- permanent exclusion
- death of the pupil

- transfer between schools
- pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- failure to return from an extended family holiday after both the school and Education Welfare Officer have tried to locate the pupil
- a medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age
- in custody for more than four months
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the school and Education Welfare Officer have tried to locate the pupil

It is not lawful to remove a pupil from a school roll simply because the pupil has a poor attendance record.

Analysis of Attendance Data

Analysis will help to draw attention to deterioration or improvement and target intervention more selectively and help to establish the cause of an absence. Whole school attendance figures should be produced weekly and analysed termly and yearly, this process will indicate factors such as the effect of seasonal attendance e.g. attendance may decline in the colder months and preceding school holidays.

Weekly figures may illustrate:

- the fall in attendance preceding staff development days, half terms, end of terms
- the effect of ending terms on a Monday or Tuesday
- the effect of activity days, day trips, or residential trips
- the effect of pupil holidays in term time

Reports from SIMs Attendance will indicate these and other patterns of absence.

Types of Absence

Authorised Absences

Only a school can authorise an absence. Parents and the LA do not have the power to authorise absences.

THE KEY POINTS THAT WE CONSIDER WHEN DECIDING TO AUTHORISE ABSENCE ARE:

- it is a legal requirement that registered pupils of compulsory school age attend regularly and punctually
- schools are not obliged to accept a parental explanation for pupil absence
- Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers in consultation with the EWO should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.
- schools should always expect regular and punctual attendance, even when the school is aware of family difficulties. Looking after siblings or a sick parent, shopping or going on a trip will not be acceptable reasons for absence
- medical evidence is required when attendance reaches 95% if this is not provided by the parent/carer, the absence should be treated as unauthorised
- where absence is authorised, schools should remain vigilant to emerging patterns of non-attendance

- lateness should be actively discouraged and persistent lateness treated in the same way as irregular attendance
- schools should develop a close working relationship with the Education Welfare Officer in order to promote regular school attendance

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absence is absence without approval from an authorised representative of the school and includes all unexplained absences.

If a child is absent with the approval of the school, for whatever reason, no offence is deemed to have been committed.

We will need to exercise caution in the authorisation of absence. If no medical evidence is provided by parents/carers once attendance has reached 95%, the absence may be further investigated and left unauthorised.

The decision taken by the school to authorise absence or not, is of critical importance in determining the level of involvement of the Education Welfare Officer. If the school has authorised a pupil's absence we have, in effect, given leave and there is no case in law for the parents to answer.

Parentally Condoned Absence

This form of absence is equally as damaging to the pupil's educational experience as any other form of absence. It is essential that, when school staff feel that a worrying pattern of non-attendance is emerging they inform the Headteacher who will work closely with other staff and the educational, social and health support services to ensure that the most appropriate and effective intervention is available to the pupil and parents. There is a range of specialist support services, which will assist and advise schools and parents on ways forward when these difficulties arise.

Lateness

A pupil's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parents/carers of a pupil who is persistently late are guilty of an offence. The law treats persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if late arrival is not resolved. Pupils who arrive late disrupt not only their own education but that of others and being persistently late may also lead to truancy. Poor punctuality may indicate problems within the pupil's home which the pupil may need help to deal with. For some pupils, arriving punctually may be beyond their control. Often lateness is a result of a lack of firm parenting; the child is confused and often left to cope alone at a very young age. There needs to be a careful balance struck between being too punitive and too accepting of a pupil's lateness. Once the reasons for lateness have been established, the parents, pupil and school need to work in partnership to resolve the difficulties.

The register closes at 9.05am, if a child arrives between 9.05am and 9.30am they are marked in as 'late'. If they arrive after 9.30am they are marked in as having an 'unauthorised absence'. For Health and Safety purposes, they will be recorded as being on the premises through the sign-in system.

Following up Absence

All pupil absence will be followed up as soon as possible. The action taken, and the responses received, will always be recorded. Parents are informed through the school prospectus, and in newsletters that a text will be sent, whenever possible, on the morning of the child's first day of absence. This will immediately be recorded in the office. Where a child returns and a reason for absence has not been provided by the parent either by telephone or written note the school may send a standard letter.

The Role of the Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for following up absences but may delegate this responsibility to the Attendance Officer and/or the EWO.

The Headteacher:

- delegates the maintenance of weekly running totals to the school secretaries/attendance officer and Deputy Headteacher
- checks attendance reports regularly
- reports issues regarding absence, including trends of attendance to Governing Body through Headteacher reports/Governor meetings
- reports to other stakeholders and outside agencies when necessary

Family Holidays in Term Time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

Term-time holiday

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** currently allow headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in "exceptional circumstances" of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher in consultation with the EWO should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

DfE guidelines clearly state that the reference to exceptional circumstances means that the parent must make a strong case for leave of absence during term time.

The Headteacher will consider each request for leave of absence individually and this must be put in writing addressed to the Headteacher stating the reason for the request.

Newlands School does not operate a 'blanket approval' policy for requests. The following factors should be considered when assessing requests - no one factor should be regarded as conclusive:

- the time of year of proposed leave of absence

- the length and purpose of the leave of absence
- the impact on continuity of learning
- the circumstances of the family
- the overall attendance pattern of the child. A 10-day leave of absence in term time reduces overall attendance to 94.7%. This is without taking into account any absence through illness

Leave of absence for more than two weeks is also seen as exceptional. We will carefully explore with parents why such leave of absence is necessary. Where such absences are sanctioned, they will be counted as an authorised absence.

Where parents fail to abide by the agreement reached with the school and keep a child away from school in excess of the period agreed or, where parents fail to apply for permission, this will be treated as an unauthorised absence.

In order to ensure that the negative impact of leave of absence is minimised, applications for leave of absence will not be considered in the following periods or circumstances:

- During the first term of a new academic year
- In SAT's week/s for all KS2 pupils and during SAT's week/s for Year 2 pupils (dates will be published in advance)
- Where attendance is below 96% unless there are exceptional circumstances

We will submit a request to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence from school for any families taking holidays in unauthorised periods, or for ten or more school sessions (equivalent to 5 school days).

Referral to the Education Welfare Officer

The vast majority of referrals to the EWO are made on the basis of non-attendance and are made when:

- a) a pattern of irregular attendance has developed
- b) a period of non-attendance has been established
- c) letters sent by the school have met with little or no response
- d) there is a lack of co-operation in ensuring the child's regular attendance
- e) a parent/carer withdraws a pupil without securing the means of alternative provision
- f) a pattern of persistent lateness develops
- g) there are child protection concerns
- h) there are specific welfare issues which are preventing a pupil from accessing education
- i) a pupil is withdrawn from school by parents/carers who are moving to a new area and the school does not receive a request for the pupil's records from a school in that area

Referrals will be made to the Kent LA Pru, Inclusion and Attendance Service by the EWO where necessary.

Children Missing from Suitable Education

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a new duty on schools in England and Wales to make arrangements to identify children of compulsory school age who are deemed to be missing education. Pupils who are deemed to be missing education will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer within five school days. This process does not replace any of the Child Protection Procedures. Existing safeguarding procedures and mechanisms for reporting and recording child protection concerns are to be observed at all times.

Timing of the School Day

Start of school day	TIME 8.55am
Morning Break	
FS/KS 1	TIME 10.30am
KS 2	TIME 10.30am
Lunchtime	
FS/KS 1	TIME 12.00pm
KS 2	TIME 12.15pm
Afternoon Break	
FS	TIME N/A
KS 1	TIME N/A
End of school day	TIME 3.15pm

If the school wishes to change the timing of the school day the Headteacher will seek and follow guidance given by the LA.

Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence

Penalty notices for absence from school have been issued since April 2005. Following consultation on a Code of Conduct, it was agreed that Penalty Notices would be issued by the Pru, Inclusion and Attendance Service based on requests from the school or police.

The following circumstances will be considered as appropriate reasons for the issuing of penalty notices:

- where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours during the first five days of exclusion
- overt truancy (including truancy sweeps)
- parentally-condoned absence
- holidays in term time
- delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement

- persistent lateness after the register has closed

A pupil has to be absent from school in one, or a combination of these circumstances for at least ten sessions in any 100 sessions before the issuing of a penalty notice can be considered. (10 sessions is equivalent to 5 days).

Following a request for the issuing of a penalty notice a check is made that the request meets the conditions of the Code of Conduct. A warning letter from the Attendance Service will then be sent to the parents/carers explaining that unless their child attends full time for the 15 day monitoring period, a penalty notice will be issued.

For cases of unauthorised holiday during term time, we will write to the parent advising them that the holiday will not be authorised. A warning letter is not issued by the Pru, Inclusion and Attendance Service for term time holidays.

As a school we will inform individual parents, where attendance is a concern that they are at risk of a referral for a penalty notice.

Els Truman
July 2017
(Amended December 2017)