



# **Saint Nathaniel's Academy**

## **Attendance Policy**

**September 2020**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Rationale**

To ensure that all pupils at Saint Nathaniel's Academy reach their full potential and get the best from their education, every pupil needs to attend school regularly.

Regular school attendance is a legal requirement. At Saint Nathaniel's Academy, we work closely with parents/carers to achieve good or excellent attendance for their child or children.

### **Policy and Procedures**

The school and the Local Authority work together closely to ensure that parent/carers meet their responsibility. Attendance issues are dealt with initially by the school. If this does not lead to an improvement in attendance, it is followed by a referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), who can provide an important link between school and families, but who can also invoke statutory action to ensure regular attendance if necessary.

To further support the Attendance Policy, we:-

- Have clear registration procedures to encourage positive attitudes toward attendance and punctuality and to identify pupils at risk of not meeting attendance targets.
- Work with parents/carers to support any of our families with any difficulties that may impact upon their child's attendance by enlisting partner agency support where appropriate, for example EWO, School Nurse, Inclusion Team.
- Support learning and positive attitudes to behaviour by investigating the barriers to good attendance through attendance clinics with Attendance Officer.
- Have developed rewards systems for attendance.
- Undertake analysis of patterns of absence via regular register checks and termly attendance reports, which are reported to our board of Governors.
- Ask the parent/carer to ensure that up-to-date contact telephone numbers and any change of address is forwarded to the school office.

### **School Attendance**

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age attend school regularly, which is vital for children to make good progress and to benefit from the opportunities that the school offers.

If your child/children are ill, then please contact the school office as soon as possible to inform the school (this may not automatically authorise your child's absence, if their attendance has already dropped below 96% - please see below). Please note that members of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and/or the Inclusion Team may conduct a home visit if pupils have been absent from school and we have not received a message or been able to make contact with a parent/carer.

In line with government targets, we aim for our whole school attendance and for the attendance of individual children to be above 96%. If a child's attendance drops below 96%, the following steps will be taken:

- 1) A school attendance letter will be sent to the parent/carer(s).
- 2) From this point onwards, medical evidence (appointment letters etc.) will be required for any absences.
- 3) If the child's attendance continues to fall, parent/carer(s) will be invited to an 'attendance clinic' in school to meet with the Attendance Officer and the EWO, to further discuss how we can work together to ensure good attendance is now achieved from this point onwards.
- 4) Following the attendance clinic if any further unauthorised absences occur, this could result in a penalty notice warning letter being issued by the school in conjunction with the Local Authority.
- 5) If attendance still fails to improve once the penalty notice warning letter has been sent, a statutory referral will be made by the school for a fixed penalty notice (fine) to be issued by the EWO (the Local Authority).

### Leave of absence during term-time

As a school we aim to raise attainment and attendance to meet National requirements, therefore any absence during term-time is strongly discouraged.

Saint Nathaniel's Academy have made the decision to not issue penalties (fines) for up to **three days consecutive leave** of absence in term time per academic year, if taken **either side of and added onto a school holiday**. This will remain unauthorised but no fixed penalty notice will be issued. This is solely at the discretion of the Principal and the Governing Body and the decision will be made based on a number of individual factors, including the child's current attendance.

Therefore, under exceptional circumstances parents/carers are invited to apply for a leave of absence during term time and must follow these steps:

- 1) An 'Application for leave of absence form during term time' must be completed at least four weeks before the potential absence, which is available from the school office.
- 2) A meeting will be arranged to see the Attendance Officer, the EWO or a member of SLT to discuss the potential leave of absence.

During the meeting, a number of factors will be discussed, including:

- The impact on achievement the absence could have.
- Pupils will be taken off roll after 20 school days of absence and would then need to re-apply for a place at this school, should a place still be available.
- That the EWO (in accordance with the Local Authority) can issue a Penalty Notice if enough sessions of absence are taken.

3) The decision to authorise or not authorise a potential absence will then be made by the Principal on the 'Application for leave of absence form'.

4) If the planned absence is not authorised and/or exceeds the 3 days at the Principal's discretion, then a referral form will be completed for a fixed penalty notice (fine) to be issued at **£60 per pupil per parent**.

Please note: If your child or children's attendance is currently below 90% when you wish to make an application for a leave of absence during term time, then no term time absence will be authorised. However, you are still welcome to arrange a meeting with the Attendance Officer to discuss your child/children's attendance.

### Class Registers

1. Class teachers are responsible for maintaining an accurate class attendance register (other adults such as Teaching Assistants may complete the register under the teacher's direction).
2. Registers must be completed using the electronic 'Arbor' system and any amendments (i.e. a 'late' mark) will be completed by the school office.
3. The attendance register is marked twice a day at the start of the morning and the beginning of the afternoon. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present or absent. Absences will only be authorised by the school when an explanation has been given by parent/carer(s) (e.g. illness). Explanation must be in person or by telephone message on the first day of absence.
4. Correct codes for recording attendance/absence are set out in each register.
5. Pupil attendance at school is 2 sessions per day. Morning (am) is counted as one session and afternoon (pm) is counted as another session. Registers are taken for all pupils at 8.45am and then at 1.00pm.

Our Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has the responsibility for monitoring attendance and highlighting concerns through regular review meetings with the Attendance Officer and EWO (Education Welfare Officer).

### Punctuality

The Breakfast Club is open from 7:30am for FS, KS1 & KS2, and the classroom doors are then opened at 8.35am. Registration is at 8.45am for all pupils.

The school doors are locked at 8:45am; any child arriving after this time must come into school via the school office. Any child arriving after 8.45am will be marked as 'late'. Any child arriving late must be signed in by the parent/carer/adult bringing the child to school at the school office.

The late arrivals register information is entered into the 'Arbor' system (used for registrations, data and record keeping). Late arrivals are monitored weekly.

If a child is consistently late, parents are invited to attend a meeting to discuss punctuality with a member of SLT. If punctuality continues to be a concern, further meetings will then be organised with the Principal and then the EWO.

### **Recording Absence and Punctuality**

Saint Nathaniel's Academy clearly differentiates between authorised and non-authorised attendance. An absence is only authorised when the reason (illness, bereavement, and religious observation) can be seen as a genuine explanation of the absence.

Every half term the school is required to submit details of Persistent Absence to the EWO. We are required to inform how many half days were missed due to authorised and unauthorised absence. Children are classed as Persistent Absentees if their attendance is below 90%. This is recorded as a percentage attendance and is used as an overall guide to the school's success in promoting good attendance and punctuality.

### **Appointments**

All medical, dental and other appointments must be made out of school time. We strongly advise that you do not take your child or children out of school for appointments if this can be avoided. Please note that if this happens it may affect your child's attendance figure and in some cases may be noted as unauthorised if evidence is not provided (i.e. hospital letter).

### **Rewards**

Children who have 100% attendance for a term will receive a certificate.

Children who have 100% attendance for the whole academic year will receive an end of year treat and a certificate during a Prize Giving Assembly.

During the Friday Celebration Assembly, the attendance is shared for the previous week for each class and the results are then displayed during the assembly and on the school newsletter.

We have ongoing rewards and initiatives throughout the academic year for good and excellent attendance.

The following forms part of this agreement:

- Parents/carers will ensure that their child will attend every session unless of course there is a genuine illness.
- Parents/carers also agree to contact school with a reason for their child's absence on the day of absence (and each day thereafter). If no reason provided, the absence will be noted on the register as unauthorised. Home visits will be carried out if we have not received a message and we are unable to make contact with parents.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below an acceptable level, parents/carers will be contacted by the Attendance Officer to discuss the reasons for absence and any support that is required and deemed necessary. Where a child's attendance falls below 90%, parents/carers will be asked to provide medical evidence in order for these absences to be authorised.

Saint Nathaniel's Academy will support parents/carers and pupils wherever possible to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Parents/carers are welcome to make an appointment to speak with a member of SLT or our Attendance Officer, if they have any attendance concerns.

Date: September 2020    Review Date: September 2021

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Attendance During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic**

From September 2020, all pupils are required to attend school. As such, the arrangements set out in the main body of this policy (above) will be adhered to. This appendix has been developed in line with the latest government guidance to set out the additional measures that have been put in place to support pupils' attendance at school.

The school will have due regard for the DfE's 'Recording attendance during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak' guidance when recording attendance during the pandemic.

#### **1. Attendance expectations from September 2020**

- As of September 2020, attendance is mandatory for all pupils.
- Since September, the usual rules on school attendance (as set out in the main body of this policy) apply, including:
  - Parents' duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.
  - The school's responsibility to record attendance and follow up absence, in line with the procedures in the main body of this policy.
  - The availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with the Local Authorities' code of conduct.

#### **2. Shielding or self-isolating pupils**

- The school understands that there will be occasions where some pupils may not be able to attend school due to coronavirus, including for the following reasons:
  - They are self-isolating and have symptoms of coronavirus or a positive test result themselves, or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus.
  - Rates of coronavirus in the local area have risen and certain individuals are asked to temporarily shield.
  - Absences relating to pupils following clinical and/or public health advice will not be penalised.