



Snape Wood Primary and Nursery School

Excellence for All

‘We are a small school that makes a big difference’

‘To provide excellence for all within a happy, safe, and stimulating learning environment’

ATTENDANCE POLICY

SNAPE WOOD PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL	
Approved by: Full Governing Body	Date: Spring 2023
Review Date:	Spring 2024

Here at Snape Wood we want to provide a safe caring environment for our children, where they feel safe, nurtured and happy.

In order to achieve this we have in place a group of policies that complement each other to safeguard, protect and promote the welfare of our children.

These policies are:

Attendance Policy

Behaviour Policy

SEND Policy

Child Protection Policy

Volunteer Policy

Confidential Reporting Code (Whistle Blowing Procedure)

Procedure for handling concerns and complaints

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Snape Wood Primary and Nursery School has signed up to the Nottingham City Council common attendance protocol.

Snape Wood Primary and Nursery School is committed to raising the educational attainment of pupils who attend the school and giving them the best possible opportunities to access education to enable them to achieve their full potential throughout their lifetime.

In order for every child who attends this school to achieve their full potential, they need to attend school regularly, on time and be ready to learn.

Irregular school attendance is a contributory factor in social exclusion and underachievement. Children who do not attend school regularly are more likely to be the victim of crime themselves or to become exposed to offending behaviours by others.

Snape Wood Primary and Nursery School aims to improve school attendance and punctuality by:

- a) Promoting the value and importance of regular school attendance
- b) Giving/providing consistent information to schools and families
- c) Reducing all forms of unauthorised absence

In order for this policy to be effective, it is essential that 'Attendance and Punctuality' is a priority for everyone involved including parents, children and governors.

It is important that parents understand the importance of attendance and punctuality starting from Foundation through to Primary.

Parents choosing to have their children attend at Foundation Stage are under no legal obligation to do so and therefore the child is not of compulsory school age. However, the engagement in education at this stage in a child's development is crucial. Regular attendance is encouraged from the outset and will create good habits for the future. By the time your child is registered on roll at school (the term following their fifth birthday), they will already be used to coming to school regularly and on time.

Reporting absence from school

Parents/carers must phone school on the first day of absence and provide a reason why their child is not in school. Where possible parents are encouraged to provide a timeframe for their child's absence e.g 2 days. **If parents/carers are unable to provide a timeframe they must call each day.** If a reasonable timescale has been agreed this will be recorded on the register by Office staff.

It is important to be aware that only the Head Teacher can authorise an absence. If the reasons given for absence are deemed unsatisfactory or if the parent provides no reason the absence will remain unauthorised on the school register.

When a child has experienced sickness or diarrhoea they must not return to school until 48 hours until the symptoms have ended. **Children brought back to school before this time will be sent home.** This is to reduce the spread of illness to others.

Non-Attendance at Foundation/Early Years.

If we have concerns with non-attendance at Foundation/Early Years, the parents may be spoken to by a member of staff at school or by way of a home visit to ascertain the reasons for the absence and request an improvement in the attendance.

All contact with parents/carers will be logged, and staff will work with parents/carers to try to remove any barriers to their children attending Foundation/Early Years provision.

If attendance in reception declines and a child becomes 'persistently absent' parents/carers will receive a letter explaining our policy. This letter will state the term when school attendance becomes statutory. This begins the term after a child's fifth birthday, for example, if the child's birthday is in November, attendance will be statutory from January.

Authorisation of leave of absence/holidays in term time

Leave of absence will only be authorised for **exceptional circumstances only**.

If a parent/carer believes that their request is due to 'exceptional circumstances' they must put their request in writing using the leave of absence request form before the leave is booked and paid for- these are available from the school office (**see appendix 3**). The Attendance Team will then meet and discuss the leave of absence request and will contact parents/carers if more information is required.

A decision will be made after this meeting and the a member of the Attendance Team will contact parents in due course regarding the request; sometimes further evidence may be required in order to grant the request for leave of absence.

If the leave of absence is not considered 'exceptional circumstances' but is still taken the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and a referral will be made and a penalty notice may be issued by the local authority. More information about penalty notice can be found by following this link

<https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/information-for-residents/education-and-schools/problems-atschool/school-attendance/consequences-of-missing-school/>

Please note that penalty notices are issued per parent per child.

Leave of absence requests for taking holidays.

Snape Wood Primary & Nursery School do not consider leave of absence for taking a holiday to be an exceptional circumstance, and holidays requested for the following reasons **will not** be authorised:

- Availability of cheap holidays
- Availability of the desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- Overlap with the beginning or end of term
- Parents/carers not able to get time off during school holidays

Request for leave should be completed prior to taking the leave. These requests will only be considered on an individual basis. Requests will only be agreed if the Attendance Team considers there are exceptional circumstance for the request. Proof will be asked for if the Attendance Team are not satisfied with the reasons stated for the request.

If the absence is not agreed it will remain unauthorised on the school register and a penalty notice will be requested from the local authority. Note these are issued per parent per child

Note; this is in line with Nottingham City Council Code of Conduct in Relation to Penalty Notices (see Appendix 5)

Medical Appointments

Parents/carers are requested to make routine medical appointments in school holidays or after school. If this is not possible, appointments should be made at the start or near the end of the school day. If an appointment were made for the afternoon, then your child would be expected to attend school in the morning (unless due to the nature of the appointment this is not possible). If the appointment were made for the morning, then your child would be expected to be returned to school after the appointment.

It is not necessary to have a whole day off school for a routine medical appointment.

Medical appointments will only be authorised upon receipt of a written appointment card or letter, please show this when you come to collect your child. Failure to produce evidence of a medical appointment will result in the absence being marked down as unauthorised. If the absence is authorised an M code will be used in the register.

Missing Children

(Information taken from Missing Child Protocol December 2011)

After 10 days of non-school attendance, and after the school has been unable to contact parents, we will refer to the Education Welfare Service, who will work closely with school to try to identify where your child is.

After four weeks of non-attendance, and our efforts to find your child have been unsuccessful (ie no longer believed to be living at their address), the child will be classed as missing. The Education Welfare Officer, will then refer the child as missing to the CME (Child Missing Education), school will then be advised when, or whether, the child's name can be removed from the school roll. School will also create a 'lost pupil' record, on the national Lost Pupil School to School (s2s), to assist Children Missing in Education Officers to identify, and locate children.

If a child's name is removed from the school roll, parents would have to reapply for a school place.

Safeguarding Children

Any safeguarding issues regarding, a child being taken out of school, in circumstances that cause concern, will be discussed with the parent/carer if appropriate to do so, and may be referred to Children's Social Care. Low attendance, and poor punctuality are often indicators of wider safeguarding concerns.

Unauthorised absence

When a child is absent from school, parents/carers are expected to contact the school office before 8.55am, and advise why their child will not be attending school, and how long they expect their child to be absent.

If parents/carers do not inform school of their child's absence, a text will be sent out requesting they contact the school office, and advise why their child is not in school. If the parent/carer does not respond, a phone call will be made, and if the call is not answered, a home visit will be carried out to

check that your child is safe and well. If school cannot make contact, referrals to other agencies may be made to ensure that your child is safe.

Persistent Absentees

Any child that has an attendance of 90% or below, is considered persistently **absent**. If your child's attendance is on track to becoming persistently absent, you will be written to, and placed on a monitoring programme for 2 weeks. Following this a review will take place. If there has not been an improvement in the overall attendance of the child/ren then the parents/carers will be invited to school for an attendance meeting, where an attendance action plan will be set with actions and targets (**see appendix 4 for a copy of the action plan**). There will then be a further 2 week review period. Following this, a decision will be taken by the Attendance Team as to whether to refer to the EWO or to resume normal monitoring

If a child has ten unauthorised absences within a ten-week period, a referral will likely be made to the Education Welfare Service for consideration of legal action.

Snape Wood will work pro-actively with parents to enable all children to be at school every day to ensure that they reach their full potential.

All meetings and conversations will be minuted, and a copy placed on your child's attendance file, which may be used as evidence if legal action is to be taken if your child's attendance does not improve.

Anxiety about returning to school

School absence, and the lack of confidence that accompanies falling behind, and missing out on friendships, can often leave children feeling anxious about returning to school.

At Snape Wood we recognise that some children and families may need extra support in order to build confidence and increase school attendance. When a child presents with anxiety the Attendance Team will consider the following support strategies-

- Buddy system with a member of staff
- Meet and greet each morning
- Phone call home in the middle of the day to update parents
- CAMHS parent helpline number
- Where appropriate, a phased return
- Referral to other agencies e.g CAMHS or targeted family support

Punctuality

Registration will close at 8.55; any child arriving after this time will be recorded as late. If you have difficulty bringing your child to school on time due to personal circumstances, please contact school to discuss, there are a number of ways that school can assist you to get your child to school on time. If your child is persistently late, a member of the Attendance Team, will write to you to discuss why your child is not getting to school on time. If there is no improvement you will be invited to a meeting, to discuss how the school can support you. If necessary referrals can be made to other agencies, to offer support to ensure your child can get to school on time.

The school register closes at 9.10am and any child arriving after this time is marked as late after the close of register, a U mark. If a child continues to arrive after the register closes and accrues 10 or

more U marks in a 10 week a penalty notice request may be requested from the local authority.

Note Penalty Notices are issued per parent per child

Penalty Notice

A penalty notice will incur a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, increased to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If a penalty notice remains unpaid the matter may be referred to the Magistrates Court. The Attendance Team will be responsible for referrals to the local authority Education Welfare Service.

School finishes at 3.15pm, if your child is attending an after school activity they will finish at 4.00pm, please be prompt when collecting your child, children that are being collected persistently late, are a safeguarding concern, and as such will be referred through to social care. Any issues with collecting your child on time should be discussed with a member of the Senior Leadership or Safeguarding Team.

Incentives

At Snape Wood Primary & Nursery School, attendance is a priority and we are constantly monitoring pupil attendance. We want to work together with parents/carers to help ensure excellent attendance, and punctuality for all pupils from an early age.

We are working towards a whole school target of 96% attendance for the year.

Every Monday in assembly, the attendance percentage of each class is read out. The class with the highest attendance will be awarded the attendance bear, which will be kept in that class for the following week. The class that has the highest attendance over a week will also receive a treat.

Unauthorised Absence Guidelines

Appendix 1

Throughout any unauthorised absences, staff may take appropriate measures to establish the whereabouts of a child. The following steps are to act as a checklist of the minimum level of actions taken.

First Day of Unauthorised Absence

- Phone call made and text message sent to parents/carers.
- In addition to this a home visit by the Attendance Team, if there is Family Support Worker involvement, school will share the information for:
 - Any children for who there are safeguarding concerns.
 - Any children on the low attendance list.
 - Any instance where the absence seems suspect – i.e. it seems possible/likely that the absence is not illness (e.g. birthdays, possible holidays etc.).
 - Any instance where the absence may have an additional impact on the child, (e.g. child has an exam/is on a trip in the afternoon etc.).
 - Any child where there is a history of unauthorised absences.
- If the Attendance Team is unavailable, it should be considered whether a visit from other school staff may be necessary.

Second Day of Unauthorised Absence (for pupils classed as persistently absent or have an allocated social worker)

- Phone call made to parents. If no contact made then a home visit **will** be carried out by a member of the schools Attendance Team

Third Day of Unauthorised Absence

- Ensure that all contact numbers have been tried.
- Ensure that somebody has visited the property if child has low attendance/safeguarding concern
- Email sent to all appropriate staff and Head Teacher reporting that child remains absent.

Seventh Day of Unauthorised Absence

- Re-check that all contact numbers have been tried.
- A second visit to the property to be made
- Email sent to all appropriate staff and Head Teacher reporting that child remains absent.
- A letter to be sent (copy to be retained), requesting contact from the parents/carers and informing them of imminent referral to Education Welfare, and possibility of removing the child(ren) from roll.

Tenth Day of Unauthorised Absence

- Senior Management Team to be informed.
- If the child is of compulsory school age then 'Missing Pupil' referral to be submitted to Education Welfare and EOTAS Service (copy retained). Twentieth Day of Unauthorised Absence
- Education Welfare Officer to determine whether to remove child from roll.

Appendix 2

Unauthorised Absence Traffic Light System.

The following information shows how school attendance can affect your child's future progress.

<p>100% Excellent</p>	<p><i>At 100% you give your child the best chance to succeed and achieve the best grades that they can.</i></p>
<p>96%-99.9% Good</p>	<p><i>96%. Less than 8 days absence in a year. Pupils with this attendance are likely to achieve their target grades and will be well prepared for starting secondary education.</i></p>
<p>90%-95.9% Cause for concern</p>	<p><i>90%. 19 days absence over the year. Pupils with this attendance are missing a month of school per year and may fall behind in Maths and Literacy; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best. = 4 Weeks lost in a school academic year</i></p>
<p>89.9%- 80% Serious cause for concern</p>	<p><i>85% equates to 29 days absence in a year. These pupils are missing 6 weeks of school a year. It will be very difficult for them to keep up and achieve their best. = 6 Weeks (½ Term) lost in a school academic year</i> Any % below 90% and your child is classed as persistently absent.</p>
<p><80% Critical</p>	<p><i>80%. Pupils with this attendance are missing a day for every week of school. It will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of pupils with this level of attendance could be issued with a Penalty Notice. = 8 Weeks lost in a school academic year</i></p>

Appendix 3

Dear Parents/ Carers

IMPORTANT NOTICE- Leave of Absence

Following the Isle of Wight court case on the 6th April 2017, the procedure within Nottingham city regarding leave of absence penalty notices has changed.

Leave of absence- including all holiday requests- shall not be granted in term time unless there are exceptional reasons, irrespective of the child's overall attendance.

If the reasons for a leave of absence are exceptional, only the Head Teacher or his/her designate (not the Local Authority) may authorise the request. Please note that all applications for a leave of absence **must be made** on a leave of absence form provided by the school in advance of the leave taken. These forms can be collected from the school reception desk. Applications by letter will not be accepted.

Where a parent takes a leave of absence that has been refused or takes a leave of absence where no application was made, school will request a penalty notice to be issued by the Local Authority. The penalty notice will be issued to each parent of the individual child.

More information can be found on the school's website and within the school's attendance policy.

We would also like to remind you of the following -

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Kind regards,

Mrs Shewley Choudhury

Head Teacher

Application for Approved Leave of Absence

(Including family holidays during term time)

To: The Head Teacher

Child's name _____ Class _____

To be completed by parents

I wish to apply for my child to be granted leave of absence:

From _____ (first day of absence) to _____ (last day of absence)

Total number of school days _____

The reason for this request is _____

Has your child previously been granted leave of absence during the current school year?

Yes/No

If 'Yes' how many days leave were granted and why? _____

The exceptional reason why leave should be granted for a holiday during term time is as follows: Parent in Services (recent return from tour or exercise) **Yes/No**

Other reason _____

Parent's signature _____ Date _____

What could help you get to school more often?

Teachers Comments

Action Plan

Action	Action to Achieve	Who's Responsible	Review Date
To improve attendance	Continue to monitor attendance. Contact parents if child not in school. Bring your child to school everyday Contact school if having difficulty getting child to school. Take legal action if no improvement. Refer to social care if no improvement.	Attendance Team Attendance Team Parents Parents Attendance Team Safeguarding team	
Reduce Lateness	Continue to monitor punctuality. Contact parents if child arrives late. Bring your child to school on time everyday Contact school if having difficulty getting child to school. Take legal action if no improvement.	Attendance Team Attendance Team Parents Parents Attendance Team	
What you could do to help yourself get your child to school			
Recognise and Reward improvement in attendance			

Appendix 5

NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT IN RELATION TO PENALTY NOTICES

1. Rationale

- 1.1 Regular and punctual attendance of pupils at school is a legal requirement. Under section 7 of the Education Act 1996 parents are responsible for ensuring the efficient fulltime education according to the child's age, ability and aptitude and to any special needs the child may have for all compulsory school age children. The Education Welfare Service will investigate cases of irregular school attendance by undertaking casework and, where appropriate, instigate legal action under the Education Act 1996 for unauthorised absence.
- 1.2 This Code of Conduct will govern all Penalty Notices issued in respect of children of compulsory school age who are registered at a maintained school, a Pupil Referral Unit, an Academy, A City Technology College, a City College for the Technology of the Arts, Free Schools and those attending alternative provision within the jurisdiction of Nottingham City Council, hence referred to as the LA (Local Authority).
- 1.3 The term 'school' will apply to those establishments listed above.
- 1.4 The purpose of the code is to ensure that Penalty Notices are issued consistently and fairly across the LA. The issuing of Penalty Notices will be administered by the Education Welfare Service to ensure independence, proportionality and fairness regarding compliance with the law and regulations and that the provisions of this code do not conflict with other forms of statutory intervention pursued by the Education Welfare Service.

2. Guidance and Legislation

- 2.1 The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003, Section 23, Sub-Section (1) adds two new Sections (444A and 444B) to Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Act empowers designated LA Officers, Head Teachers (and Deputy/Assistant Head Teachers authorised by them) and the Police, Community Support Officers and accredited persons to issue Penalty Notices. Under these sections, penalties are set at £60 if paid within 21 days of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the Notice. These Sections enable Penalty Notices to be issued as an alternative to prosecution under Section 444 Education Act 1996 and enable parents to discharge liability for conviction for that offence by paying the penalty.
- 2.2 The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amended the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 to the effect that leave of absence should only be granted where the application for leave has been made in advance and there are exceptional circumstances for the leave.
- 2.3 In relation to exclusions, The Education and Inspections Act 2006 section 103 places a duty on parents in relation to an excluded pupil to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during the first five days and school hours without reasonable justification. This criterion applies to each and every fixed term or permanent exclusion. These days are known as the 'specified days of exclusion.' Under section, 104 schools must notify parents in writing that they are responsible for the child during these days. Section 105 allows for a Penalty Notice to be issued to a parent guilty of an offence under section 103(3)
- School hours are defined 'as school session or the break between sessions on the same day'
 - Public place means any highway or other public place to which the public have access

- Reasonable justification is provided by the parent prior to the issuing of a Penalty Notice. A justification which is reasonable will depend on points of fact and proof and is a matter for the Court.

2.4 The parent is liable for a Penalty Notice if they fail to ensure the attendance of a child at the alternative provision following permanent exclusion.

2.5 Within this Code of Conduct a parent is as defined in Section 576 Education Act 1996.

3. Procedures for Issuing Penalty Notices

3.1 The Education Welfare Service will consider requests for service and determine the appropriate response based on the evidence provided, the level of unauthorised absence and previous involvement. The decision to issue a Penalty Notice will be made on a case by case basis.

3.2 Parents will have been warned in writing before a Penalty Notice is issued.

3.3 In relation to Penalty Notices for exclusions or Truancy Patrols, the parent will be given the opportunity to provide a reason for the child being seen in a public place.

3.4 Penalty Notices will only be issued subject to the approval of the Service Manager or Legal Intervention Officers.

3.5 Penalty Notices will always be issued by first class post unless it is deemed appropriate to hand deliver the Penalty Notice.

3.6 No parent will receive more than three Penalty Notices resulting from the unauthorised absence of an individual child in any twelve month period. Unless the child is encountered for a second or subsequent time on a truancy patrol or the child is seen in a public place while excluded.

3.7 The collection of payments and issuing of receipts will be administered by the Local Authority.

4. Circumstances for Issuing a Penalty Notice

4.1 Penalty Notices can be issued for

- Irregular attendance (unauthorised absence)
- Unagreed leave for holiday or absence
- Excluded pupil failing to attend provision after the fifth day of exclusion
- Excluded pupil seen in a public place within the first five days of the exclusion
- Pupil stopped on more than one occasion during a three month period
- On behalf of neighbouring Local Authorities

4.2 Penalty Notices will be issued to a parent(s) if:

- the pupil has at least 38 unauthorised absences over the equivalent of a school year (380 sessions) or;
- a Deferred Prosecution Notice has been breached
- an Advisory Notice has been breached

In the case of unagreed leave, Penalty Notices will be issued if

- There has been at least 10 consecutive school sessions of unauthorised absence or
- If the unagreed leave of absence immediately precedes, or is attached to, a school closure (e.g. school holidays/INSET/school closure etc.) or any form of absence.

Unauthorised absence is where the school has either not received a reason for absence or the reason given is unacceptable. It is the

Head Teacher who determines whether or not the absence is authorised.

5. Withdrawing a Penalty Notice

5.1 A Penalty Notice may be withdrawn by the Local Authority in any case the authority determines that:

- when it has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct
- It has been issued to the wrong person.
- It contains material errors
- Where the LA decide not to prosecute the offence

6. Payment of Penalty Notices

6.1 Non-payment of the Penalty Notice must result in the consideration of prosecution under section 444(1) Education Act 1996. The fact that a Notice was issued and unpaid can be used as evidence in the prosecution case.

6.2 There is no mechanism to pay by instalments or to appeal the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

6.3 Revenue generated from the Penalty Notices will be used to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices or the cost of prosecuting parents who do not pay. Any surplus will be surrendered to the Secretary of State.

7. Administration of the Penalty Notice Scheme

- 7.1 The Penalty Notice Scheme will be administered by the Education Welfare Service with support from the Finance Department.
- 7.2 The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure that the powers are applied consistently and fairly across the Local Authority and to state the administration arrangements of the scheme.
- 7.3 Any person authorised to issue a Penalty Notice shall only do so in accordance with this Code of Conduct.

This Code of Conduct will be regularly reviewed and developed in accordance with DfE guidance, legislation, case law and local circumstances.