

Reviewed: July 2024

ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION

At Northumberland PRU, we wish for all children in our care to exceed expectations and make significant and continuous progress. In order to make this progress, good attendance is essential.

We work in partnership with pupils and parents/carers to ensure that children meet the attendance target, therefore enabling them to make the most of the learning opportunities offered.

AIMS:

- to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality, meeting and exceeding the DfE target of 95% and therefore giving children the best possible advantage to learning
- to keep levels of unauthorised absence to a minimum
- to provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils in partnership with the

Education Welfare Service

- to keep accurate registers of attendance for health and safety and data monitoring purposes
- to develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data
- to use the information to respond to any issues that may arise in a timely and appropriate manner

PROCEDURES

Registers

The register will be updated twice a day, by the school office, as near to 9:30am as possible and as near to 1:30pm as possible. Children who are not present when the register is updated will be marked absent unless they are out of the PRU with the permission of the Headteacher.

The Office will use the symbols identified for use with the register. (See appendix 1)

Registers will close half an hour after the start of registration, i.e. at 9:30am and 2:00pm, as per DfE guidelines.

Late arrivals

If a pupil arrives before the register closes, or if there is an acceptable notified reason for being late, they will be marked as late (L inside circle).

If a child arrives after the register closes, they will be marked as too late to achieve an attendance

mark for that session.

Authorising absence

The Office will normally mark an authorisation using the symbols at the front of the register.

A telephone call, letter or verbal notification of reason for absence from the parent or carer of the pupil concerned is acceptable but verbal reasons from the children or other parents are not.

If no reason for absence is provided, the register should be left blank until a reason is provided.

Children who have Social Care involvement or about whom the PRU has safeguarding concerns will be marked with the holding code 'N' until either the Support Services Manager confirm the reason for absence.

Final decisions on whether to authorise absences rest with the Headteacher.

First Day Response

The parents/carers of children who are recorded as absent without having any reason provided will be sent a text message (by the office staff) by 10am with a follow up telephone call by midday to ensure the child is safely in parental care.

Children with Social Care Involvement

In accordance with the PRU's Child Protection Policy, when children with current social work involvement are absent for two consecutive days, the PRU will contact the social worker on the second day of absence to inform them of the child's non-attendance.

Authorised/unauthorised absence

Northumberland PRU will decide how an absence is to be recorded according to:

'School Attendance: Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence' (DfEE May 2022)'.
Absence can be authorised if:

- the pupil was absent with leave
- the pupil was ill or prevented from attending by any other unavoidable cause
- the absence occurred on a day of religious observance
- The PRU at which the child is registered is not within walking distance of the child's home, and the LA has made no suitable arrangements for any of the following:

- i. The child's transport to and from the PRU;
- ii. Enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a PRU nearer to his/her home if there is one.
 - the pupil is a child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in paragraph 47 of the guidance are met
 - there is a family bereavement
 - the pupil is attending an interview for a place at another school
 - the pupil is receiving special off-site tuition
 - the pupil is participating in an approved public performance
 - the pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion
 - the pupil is away on a family holiday (of no more than 10 school days) which has been authorised by the Management Committee or Headteacher

Absence should be unauthorised if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the PRU is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil is shopping in school hours
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional circumstances (e.g. a birthday or social occasion)
- the pupil is away on a family holiday which has not been authorised by the Management Committee or Headteacher
- the pupil has been away on a family holiday which has been authorised by the Management Committee or Headteacher but the absence has exceeded the period authorised

Holiday applications

Parents/carers wishing to take pupils out of the PRU for family holidays need to apply in writing to the Headteacher in advance of the proposed holiday. A form for this purpose can be obtained from the main office and supplementary information should be supplied if necessary.

All requests will be taken to the next full Management Committee and will be considered individually and anonymously. Should the date of the proposed holiday fall before the next meeting, the decision will be taken by the Headteacher and communicated to the chair of the Management Committee. There is no legal requirement for the PRU to authorise any holidays during term time and all applications will be considered based on the information provided.

A letter will then be sent to the parent/carer giving the decision and explaining the reasons and the register marked using the appropriate code.

Unexplained absence

Parents of children who have unexplained absences will be contacted on the first day of the week following the absence by letter. They will be asked to return a slip explaining the reason for the absence by the end of that week. Failure to return the slip by the required date will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised.

Monitoring absence

Absence will be monitored on a half-termly basis and any pupil falling to below the 90% threshold will be flagged as 'amber' and referred to the mainstream school's EWO.

Attendance will be discussed with the pupil during Assertive Mentoring sessions and keyworkers will address attendance with parents/carers during weekly triangulation telephone calls.

Any persistent absences will be followed up with the EWO and Guidelines for Non School Attendance followed.

Figures for whole school attendance will be provided for Management Committee meetings.

Lateness

In the event of a pupil missing their taxi for some reason, the parent/carer will be asked to provide transport or arrange to bring pupils into the PRU. In exceptional circumstances, the PRU may authorise and arrange for a second taxi to be sent to collect the pupil. This would result in a 'late' mark on the register.

Should a pupil be late on more than 3 occasions in any 6 week period, a letter will be sent to the parent/carer, the pupil's mainstream school (the EWO where appropriate) and to school transport.

Persistent lateness/missing taxi may result in school transport being withdrawn; if this were the case and the pupil failed to attend, a meeting would be convened and if the issues failed to be resolved the PRU placement would be terminated.

Long term absence and reintegration

Should a pupil have a medical need which is likely to result in an absence of more than 15 days, the policy for supporting pupils with long term or recurrent medical conditions will be followed. This policy also makes provision for reintegration following a period of absence.

Policy will be reviewed annually.

Approved by the Headteacher, Mr R Carr	Date: 1st August 2024
Approved by the Management Committee Chair, Mr G Reiter	Date: 2nd September 2024
Last Reviewed On:	Date: August 2024
Next Review Due By:	Date: July 2025

Appendix 1

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity

L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendance