



Newtown C of E Primary School

Attendance Policy

Ratification Date:	February 2020	Mrs Emma Howlett (HEADTEACHER) Mrs Janet Cane (CHAIR OF GOVERNORS) Mrs Glynis Wright (CHAIR OF GOVERNORS)
Reviewed	January 2024	Signed Mrs E Howlett (Headteacher) Mrs Glynis Wright (Chair of Governors)
Next review	January 2025	

School Vision

At Newtown C of E Primary School, our motto is strengthened by our Christian ethos values of Love, Courage and Friendship through which we aim to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all our children, helping them to develop an understanding of positive relationships, have courage to stand up for what is right and embrace one another's differences.

We do this by:

- Being a caring, welcoming and supportive Christian school in which staff, pupils, parents and governors work together in a safe environment
- Promoting the welfare of all our pupils, protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying in line with the statutory guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (Department for Education)
- Creating a rich curriculum that provides our children with the knowledge and skills needed to become lifelong learners and responsible citizens, upholding the British Values
- Developing strong positive partnerships with parents, the church, and the local community and taking part in both national and global projects.
- Promoting our Learning Behaviours of Resilience, Focus, Independence, Self-Regulation, Respect and Boundaries

Safeguarding at Newtown C of E Primary School is carried out in line with the statutory guidance in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' published by the Department for Education.

In addition to the Department for Education guidance School attendance (2014) which states that schools should

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every child has access to full-time education.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents must perform their legal duty by ensuring children of compulsory school age who are registered to a school and attend regularly.

1. Rationale

For children to reach their full educational potential high levels of school attendance is essential.

Newtown C of E Primary School is committed to providing a high quality education for all of our pupils. We believe that all our pupils should feel that the community of our school environment is one where they feel welcomed and valued. Parents are viewed as learning partners within our community and are vital to ensuring that our school is successful. Every child has the right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all. It is our shared duty to strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. The reasons for striving for high attendance levels are important because:-

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.
- Children who attend school regularly make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Children who attend school regularly find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Children with high levels of attendance are more successful in transferring from primary to secondary school.

Days Absent By End of Year.	Equal to Absence Percentage	Overall Attendance Percentage by the End of Year	<u>Did You Know....?</u>
1	0.5%	99.50%	 For every day of school missed by a pupil it will reduce their attendance by 0.5%. Ten whole days of school has been missed if your child has 95% attendance. Twenty whole days of school has been missed if a pupils attendance is 90%. By the time a pupil is persistently absent (85% attendance) they have missed 6 weeks or half a term of schooling.
5	2.5%	97.50%	
10	5%	95%	
20	10%	90%	
30	15%	85%	

2. Promoting Good Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and child. The Home School Agreement contains details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents need to do to ensure that their child achieves good attendance. In order to achieve this Newtown will:-

- Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our Newsletter.
- Report to you on your child's performance in school. Share concerns around low attendance and punctuality and the impact that this has on your child's attainment with parents/ carers by the class teacher as soon as concerns arise.
- Attendance figures will be part of the regular parent's evening conversations.
- We will celebrate good attendance by displaying individual class achievements.
- We will reward good or improving attendance through class competitions and certificates.
- We will set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in school.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Home School Welfare Manager (HSWM) and Head Teacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will ensure that attendance is both accurately recorded and analysed, identify attendance issues at an early stage and put support in place to deal with any difficulties. Individual meetings will be offered to families with low attendance (below 90%) in order to provide individual targets to improve attendance.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean that the absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the Headteacher of the school.**

3.1 Responsibilities of Class Teachers

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately at 8:50 am and 1:00 pm daily.
- Children arriving after 8:50 am, but before 9:00 am will be recorded as being late.
- Children arriving after 9:00 am will be recorded as late after registers closed.
- Promote and reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- Raise with parents/ carers concerns regarding poor attendance as soon as they become an issue, and liaise with the attendance officer, HSWM and Head teacher
- Share concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

3.2 Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Ensuring that your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (1996 Education Act) and DFES school attendance guidance (2014) permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

In order to comply with this parent's will:

- Inform the school on the first day of absence giving a reason for the absence. This can be done by telephone or via adminoffice@newtown.hants.sch.uk . **Vague messages such as "illness" or "unwell" will not be accepted.** Please see flow chart (appendix 1).
 - Ensuring that if your child arrives after 9.30 you have provided them with a packed lunch.

- Discuss with the class teacher any planned absences in advance, fill in the appropriate “Application for an Authorised Absence Form”, available from the school office.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Avoid (whenever possible) taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments. **All appointments will require medical evidence shown to school staff.**
- Only request for authorised absence if it is for **exceptional circumstances.**

3.3 Responsibilities of children

- Children must enter school through the school hall if they arrive at school after 8:50am and before 9:00 am; signing at the school office if arriving after 9:00 am; ensuring that they have ordered lunch. **Please note it will not be possible to order a school lunch if arriving at school after 9:30 am.**
- Take their “I have signed in” lanyard to class and hand it to their teacher so that they know the child has now arrived at school.

4. Recording attendance

Legally the register has to be marked twice daily. At Newtown this is **at 8:50 am and 1:00pm.**

4.1 Lateness and Punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. The start of the school day is used to give children an outline of their day, help children to organise their work and give out any special notices for that day. It is designed to be a relaxed and calm time to ensure that children are then ready to get the most out of their learning. If your child is late they can miss work, time with their class teacher getting vital information, disruption to the lesson for others, and can cause them embarrassment leading to a further reluctance to attend.

- The school day begins at **8:50 am** and **all pupils are expected to be in school at this time.** The school **gates are open at 8:35am, classroom doors close at 8.40am and the gates close at 8:50 am,** when morning registration takes place. The registers are officially closed at 9:00 am.
- All lateness is recorded daily on Arbor. This information will be required by the courts, should prosecution for lateness or non-attendance be necessary.

- Arrival after the close of registration (9.00) will be marked as unauthorised absence (“U” code) in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence code “M”. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during the 13 weeks of school holidays.
- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own learning but also that of the other children. On-going and repeated lateness is considered **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action, including issuing fixed term penalty notices fines for each parent for each child. (see section 6 for further details).**
- It is also very important that you collect your child promptly at the end of the school day, as children often get anxious and distressed if there is no- one to collect them at the end of the day. If you are unavoidably delayed please contact the school as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to ensure that your child is not upset.
- Where children are not collected within 15 minutes of the end of the school day, or parents are persistently late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected children to the After School Club as a place of safety, and share concerns; where necessary with other agencies. If your child is placed in the After School Club because of lateness then you will be charged for the care that your child has received due to your lateness. (£10.00 per session)

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has **10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness in any 10 week period the school are required by Hampshire County Council’s Code of conduct to issue parents with a penalty notice. (See section 6 for further details).**

4.2 What to do if my child is absent

A child not attending school is considered to be a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent you must:-

Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence. You can do this by:-

1. Telephoning and leaving a message on the absence line. Giving your child’s fullname, class and specific reason for their absence before 9am.
2. Emailing the adminoffice@newtown.hants.sch.uk email address, with specific reasons for your child’s absence.
3. Calling in to the school office and speaking to a member of the office staff.

4.3 If your child is absent we will

- Text you on the first day of absence using School Ping if we have not heard from you; *this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well their regular school attendance. If we do not hear from you by 11.30am we will carry out a home visit.*
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our HSWM or Headteacher if absences persists.

4.4 If a child has 3 days of unexplained absence

- If your child has not been seen and we have been unable to establish contact with you regarding your child's absence after 3 days, the school is required to start "child missing from education procedures" as set out in Hampshire County Council's Guidance . We will make reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquiries to known friends, wider family etc. A member of staff, such as the HSWM, Headteacher will attempt to make a home visit in order to establish contact.

4.5 If a child has 10 days of unexplained absence

- We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who are absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child has not been seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then Hampshire County Council will be notified that the child is "at risk of missing". Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. **Help us to help you and your child by making sure that we always have an up to date contact number.**

4.6 Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks) or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are identified as **persistent absentees**. Where this absence is authorised the school will:-

Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. Research shows these gaps effect attainment when attendance falls below 90%. As such we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with Hampshire County Council and the Department for Education. If your child has an absence and their attendance is falling towards 90% we will contact you and depending on the reasons for absence we will:-

- Work with you and your family to put together a support plan to improve attendance.
- Where the child has a prolonged period of illness we will work with other agencies to minimise the amount of lost learning. This could be by working with local health authorities, sending work packs home for parents to return to school so that appropriate feedback and guidance can be offered. It may be necessary for members of the school staff to visit the child's home to help support their learning whilst they are too unwell to attend school.

- Ensure that relevant school information is passed on to the family during their child's absence, by liaising with the family to identify the most effective way of doing this.

Children at Newtown Primary School are dependent on their parents/carers, who are responsible for their level of attendance and punctuality. It is vital that children enjoy coming to school, and whilst being encouraged to attend well and on time, will not carry the blame or be made to feel unhappy if their parents are not supportive or effective in these areas.

4.7 Returning to school after a period of absence

It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all pupils are made to feel welcome in order to achieve this school will:-

- Work with the child and their family to try and help the child to catch up on missed work. The class teacher will be primarily responsible for working with the child and their family to organise the most effective way of achieving this.
- Make sure that any important school information such as school trips, projects, schemes of work etc. are updated on the child's return to school.

5. Requesting Leave of Absence

Amendments to the school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013. **Regulations state that Headteacher's may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absences as well as whether the absence is authorised at all. **The fundamental principles for defining "exceptional" are rare, significant, or unavoidable** which means that the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. For example this could be service families who have no other opportunity to take leave in the normal 13 weeks throughout the year because of deployments. At Newtown we consider these **might** be applicable to:-

- Observe specific religious events (in which case it will be recorded as "R" code, religious observation)
- To attend immediate family (parents or siblings) Weddings (this will be recorded as "H" code, holiday authorised)
- To attend a family funeral (this will be recorded as "C" code, authorised compassionate leave).
- To attend specific ceremonial events such as citizenship ceremonies, etc.

However, each of these circumstances must be applied for using a Leave of Absence Request form. It is the Headteacher's responsibility to assess each application and their decision is final in the decision of granting or refusing the request. **There is no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised, and will be recorded as "G" code "family holiday not agreed."**

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will **be unauthorised** and if the number of sessions absent goes over the threshold set down in

Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct, parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance with the code (see section 6 for detail). ***Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.***

6. Understanding Types of Absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an **exceptional reason** for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

6.1 Authorised Absence

This is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.

6.2 Unauthorised Absence

This is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from the school after a parent's request these include:

1. Parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping trips, birthdays, to look after siblings, or because the parent themselves is unwell.
2. Parents giving permission for their child to be absent from school because they have friendship issues, or have been in trouble at school. In these cases parents should contact the school to discuss these issues with either the class teacher, the HSWM, the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher (this can be arranged through the school office).
3. Any absence which has not been explained by the parent or carer.

School can, if needed change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states that their child has been unwell but on their return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

7. Penalty Notices for Non Attendance and other Legal Measures

Under education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

7.1 Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will **use** the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance (above 95%). Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to Hampshire County Council's Attendance Legal Panels where:

- **The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance.**
- **The child has 10 or more session (5 school days) of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.**

The following legal measures are for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Educational Planning Meetings.
- Parenting Orders.
- Penalty notices.
- Education Supervision Orders.
- Prosecution through the magistrate courts.

7.2 Legal Measures for absence taken when the Headteacher has declined parent/carers request for leave of absence

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

1. Non approval of a parent/carers request for leave of absence or
2. A holiday that has been taken without permission and the unauthorised absence is for more than 10 sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions a penalty notice for non-attendance will be issued.

Where a child has **unauthorised absence** the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-Attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and families within the authority.

The code states that:

Schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absences where the pupil has been:

- Marked as an unauthorised absence for 10 or more half-day sessions (5 school days) during any 100 possible school sessions – **these do not need to be consecutive.**
- Persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions after the registers have closed at 9.00 am.
- Persistently late before the close of the register (coded L), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code O), and where the threshold of 10 session has been met.
- Absent during public examinations of which dates have been published in advance.
- Absent for formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance.

- Unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions are already being processed.

If a child has unauthorised absence which meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:

- 1. 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in any 10 week school period.**
- 2. 1 or more sessions of absence during formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance.**

Parents and Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form or by the HSWM, or Headteacher, during meetings prior to application being made for fixed term penalty notices to be issued.

The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine is being issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parent/carers for each child. *N.B this could mean 4 penalty notices for a family with 2 siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday. i.e. one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.***

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the Penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid then Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves and are paid to Hampshire County Council. The Revenue from payment of Penalty Notices is used by Hampshire County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

For further information parents can request a leaflet from the school office and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.htm>

8. My Child is trying to avoid coming to school, what should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problem with regular attendance is best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never best to cover up their absence or give in to pressure from them to allow them to be absent. This gives the child the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Ways to get support with encouraging your child are:-

- Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries.
- Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons, check with them:-
 1. Are they having difficulty with their school work?
 2. Are they having friendship difficulties?

3. Are there big changes at home? (Such as moving house, family break-up, family member unwell, bereavement or loss).

It is really important to try and establish what the reason is for your child's reluctance to attend school and that we work together with you and your child to tackle the problem. In some cases you might find it helpful to discuss the circumstances with another professional other than the class teacher. Please make an appointment to see the HSWM, or the Headteacher. Appointments can be made through the school office.

8.1 Ways parents/carers can encourage good school attendance

- Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning.
- Make sure that your child leaves home in the correct uniform and with the correct equipment, i.e. book bag, P.E. kit etc.
- Show your child that you value and are interested in their education by talking to them about their learning. Chat to them about the things they have learnt, who they have played with etc.
- For many parents of Year R children this may be the first time that your child has been separated from you during the day, this can seem daunting for both of you at first. However, consistency, a caring and supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both.

9. My child is going to be leaving to attend another school, how do I arrange this?

If your child is leaving our school to go to another school parents are asked to

- Give the school office comprehensive information about your plans including, the date and time of your move, your new address and telephone numbers (if they are changing), your child's new school and the start date when known. **This should be done in writing as early as possible** so that the office can organise the transfer of your child's details to their new school in order to make the transition as smooth as possible for your child.

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a "Child Missing in Education". This requires the school and Hampshire County Council to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided. Children remain registered as being "on Roll" at Newtown until we have confirmation from their new school that they have started to attend.

10. Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or T.V work & modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the **work**, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as "C" and authorised absence.

11. Absence through competing at regional county or national level for sport

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national or international events and competitions. It is however, the Headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions are also at the discretion of the Head teacher and are not likely to be approved if it is regular event, unless the sports club or association are providing an education tutor as part of their coaching. If leave is authorised by the Head teacher it will be coded as "P" Approved Sporting Activity.

12 Absence through visiting a parent in prison.

Children who have a parent in prison will be authorised to visit them in line with the prison's visiting rules and regulations. Barnado's chief executive, Javed Khan, said children with a parent in prison were the innocent victims of someone else's crime, and often struggled with having a parent taken away. "Intensifying that loss by taking away precious visiting hours or making visits unnecessarily uncomfortable will only punish the children," Newtown C of E Primary School upholds this sentiment. We will require copies of visiting orders so that we can authorise the absence.

13. Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman Families

Please note pupils must have attended 200 sessions in a rolling 12 month period to be able to request leave for work services. Further support and guidance is available from Hampshire County Council's EMTAS Service.

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place and records the absence as authorised through the "T" code. ***Distance Learning Packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.***

14. Record Preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. At Newtown C of E Primary School we use a centrally hosted computer system to record all registers. These records are used to provide attendance data. This data is shared with parents/carers and is transferred to children's new schools if they move school. Hampshire County Council and the Local Education Authority are able to access attendance data and share the information with other agencies where appropriate. All records are subject to Data Protection Laws.

15. School attendance of children and young people open to social care

Schools are asked to provide details in the event that a child or young person with a social worker is absent for more than 5 consecutive days other than for illness or permitted absence, or whose emerging pattern of attendance is likely to lead to persistent absenteeism.

Flowchart

