



NORTHAMPTON
HIGH SCHOOL

GDST
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

NORTHAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy applies to the whole school, including the EYFS.

Principles

At Northampton High School we see student attendance as critical to academic success and social integration. We ask parents to familiarise themselves with the GDST Statement on School Attendance and these policy guidelines, and to help us to promote the standards of attendance and punctuality which are essential for an orderly school environment where all pupils can get the maximum benefit from their education.

GDST Statement on School Attendance

Absence, whatever its cause, is detrimental to any student's academic, social and emotional development. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school, with a cumulative effect. Regular or persistent absence can also indicate a pupil welfare issue.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly. Parents can only allow their child to miss school if they are too ill to go in or they have advance permission from the school. The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Heads may only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. As is required by law, the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. The local safeguarding partners will also be informed if absence amounts to a safeguarding concern.

In order to maximize our students' potential, the GDST is committed to ensuring students do not miss out on their education through poor attendance rates. We expect all GDST schools to at least meet the national attendance average, and school attendance rates are monitored accordingly. A member of SLT is expected to review and analyse attendance across

the school as a whole on a regular basis, following up on trends or patterns of concern, and reporting to the School Governing Board/GDST as required.

Class teachers and tutors are expected to monitor and review the attendance record of the students for whom they are responsible. An individual attendance record of below 90% must be followed up by the school, as will noticeable patterns, or sudden or unexplained absence.

At Northampton High School we expect all students to aim to be in school every school day. Good school attendance is essential for students to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. However, we realise that this is not always possible and that students may fall below a 100% attendance rate. We have a duty to monitor attendance rates on an ongoing basis and teachers, tutors and heads of year will act if a student's absence becomes a cause for concern.

The policy will always be applied fairly and consistently but, in doing so, the school will always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. In development and implementation of this policy, the school understands its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Key contacts

The senior leader with overall responsibility for attendance at the school is Miss Rebecca Kneen, Deputy Head - Pastoral. For day-to-day attendance matters, please contact your child's form tutor. For more detailed support with attendance contact Miss Emily Hair in the Junior School or the relevant Head of Year in the Senior School.

Planned absence: Leave of absence

Leave of absence is the term used to describe all planned absences that are known about in advance. Permission to take students out of school can only be given by the Head and is only permitted in exceptional circumstances.

Requests for leave of absence must be submitted in writing to the Head at least 3 weeks in advance, in order for due consideration to be given. Requests should be sent to:

For Junior School:

junioradmin@nhs.gdst.net

For Senior School:

absence@nhs.gdst.net or nhsadmin@nhs.gdst.net

We are not able to authorise holidays in term time except in extraordinary circumstances. Travel arrangements should not be confirmed until permission has been received from the Head. If leave of absence is authorised, parents and guardians will be notified and an absence note will not be required on return.

Unplanned absence

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to telephone the school concerning the reason for a student's absence on the first day of absence and to provide such further information as may be required. If your daughter is too unwell to attend school, please telephone the Junior School reception on 01604 667979 or Senior School reception on 01604 765765 before 8.30am.

If the school is not notified of a student's absence, a call will be made to parents. The school will remain in contact with parents on a regular basis until the student returns.

When reporting an absence, parents and guardians are requested to give details of the pupil's illness or reason for absence. If this is not forthcoming, the absence will be investigated. If the nature of the absence is not disclosed to the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Parents and guardians are informed if absences are recorded as unauthorised. Work is not set for pupils who miss school due to illness or holidays.

If an absence occurs, it is the responsibility of the student to make up any lost work in the first instance; however if the absence is for a long period of time, catching up work will be facilitated and monitored by the student's head of year or class teacher in Junior School. If an absence is known in advance, the student must approach individual members of staff for guidance in their subject area.

Written confirmation will be required for each day of absence, preferably by email. Absence cannot be authorised without this procedure.

In the unlikely event that a student is absent without authorisation for 10 consecutive days the school will notify the local authority.

Reasons for planned absence

Medical and Dental Appointments

Routine visits to the dentist, optician etc., should be arranged during school holidays or out of school hours.

For medical and dental appointments that must occur during the school day, permission for absence should be requested in advance and approved by the Head.

Bereavement

It is helpful if we are informed of family bereavement so that we can offer students sympathetic support. Absence under such circumstances will, of course, be authorised.

Religious Observance

Absence can be authorised on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a student's parents/guardians belong; an email in advance to the Head is still required.

Special Occasions

Exceptional occasions may be sanctioned as leave of absence, such events might include a sibling's graduation or family wedding.

Attending sports events or concerts do not constitute a reason for leave of absence.

Study Leave

Study leave may be authorised during the official examination period for Years 11 and 13 only. Parents will be informed in advance of arrangements for study leave and there will be study facilities available in school for those who wish to work in school, rather than at home. Study leave is a privilege which may be withdrawn if a student seems unlikely to use the time profitably.

Work Experience

Students in Years 12 and 13 are encouraged to gain work experience during the school holiday periods. Requests for permission to undertake work experience during term time outside of the time allocated by the school, should be requested in advance and approved by the Head.

Some sixth form students may also be permitted to carry out work experience during times of the day when they have a study period. This must be agreed with the Director of Sixth Form.

Family/Domestic Problems

Looking after other children, minding the house, or shopping within school hours are not acceptable reasons for absence under law.

SIXTH FORM SPECIFIC REASONS

Flexible day

Sixth formers have a flexible day, recognising their growing maturity and bridging the gap between formal schooling and post 18 study or work. They must attend school every day, arriving in time for morning registration and form time. They must attend all timetabled lessons, but will be able to leave the school during their non-taught sessions, signing in and out. All regular appointments, driving lessons etc. must be scheduled for these times. Permission to miss taught lessons will not be given, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any student who does not attend lessons or whose progress is not good will have the privilege of a flexible day removed. Should a student be unable to attend school, parents should notify the school in the usual way.

Open Days

Sixth Form students are expected to visit universities and colleges during school holidays. However, a maximum of two Open Days may be attended during term time and permission should be requested in advance and approved by the Director of Sixth Form.

Interviews

Sixth formers must, of course, attend interviews at universities and colleges at the times and on the dates allocated by the institutions. We ask that parents and guardians make the Director of Sixth Form aware of the dates as soon as they receive them.

Returning to school

Sometimes a student who has been off school for some time finds it difficult to return. In such circumstances it is of paramount importance that parents contact the Assistant Head - Pastoral or Head of Junior School to discuss procedures for supported reintegration.

Punctuality

Students are expected to be punctual at all times and to be prompt for registration. In the Senior School, students should ideally arrive at their form room by 8.20am to organise their books for the morning's lessons and be ready for morning registration at 8.30am. If a pupil is late for registration, they must register with their form tutor if possible. Otherwise, they must sign in as soon as they arrive. If a pupil fails to do this, the school will assume they are absent.

Lateness without reasonable cause will be deemed to be unauthorised absence. Lateness after 9.30am will be deemed as an absence and will require a note of explanation from a parent.

Persistent or severe absence

Where absence or a pattern of absence appears to be at risk of becoming problematic, the school will meet with the parents to discuss how to support the pupil and remove barriers to attendance where possible. This may include referrals to external services and other organisations. These actions will be regularly reviewed, and stepped up if there is no improvement to the situation. Where a whole family response is appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment. Ultimately if voluntary support is not effective, the school will work with the local authority to put more formal measures in place. Persistent or severe absence is always treated as a safeguarding risk.

Students with individual needs

Whilst good attendance is an expectation for all pupils at the school, we recognise that this may be more of a challenge for some students, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, or those suffering from long term medical conditions or mental health issues. The school will allow for these circumstances when working with such pupils and their parents, and will develop individualized support approaches that meet their specific needs where appropriate.

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