



NORTHAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL

GDST
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

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ABSENCE POLICY

This Policy should be read in conjunction with the School's Attendance Policy.

Northampton High School believes that missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. Whilst it is understood that some absence is unavoidable, we aim to work with parents to ensure that absence from school is minimal and that pupils do not miss out on education as a result of absence. This document outlines the school's policy on requesting absence and dealing with absence from school and we seek parental support in upholding the highest standards of education for all of our pupils.

This policy draws upon the Government guidance in the document *School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities August 2020*.

Attendance and Registration

The school has a separate [Supervision of Pupils](#) policy, which outlines staff responsibilities to keep records of registration and accurate codes for different types of absence. This policy is available to parents on request.

Absence from School

Absences from school (with the exception of illness and medical appointments which are covered further on) are either 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. The Head, or their delegated representative, can authorise absence from school and this may only be done for exceptional reasons. The school will take into account all facts and relevant background circumstances when deciding to authorise an absence. If the school does not feel an absence can be authorised, they will notify parents. If the pupil is absent despite it not being authorised by the Head, it will be marked as 'unauthorised'.

Absence for routine appointments

It is understood that sometimes medical and other appointments cannot wait until the school holidays. If your child needs time off during the school day for appointments, please contact their Form Tutor in the Senior School or Class Teacher in the Junior School to let them know the details, including time of leaving/returning to school. This can be done by telephone or email.

Absence for Open Days, Work Shadowing or Career Start (Sixth Form)

Pupils in the Sixth Form are encouraged to attend Open Days at universities to help make their

choices. They are permitted an authorised absence for 2 days per academic year. We also encourage Sixth Form students to make the most of work shadowing opportunities where possible. To request an absence for open or work shadowing days please email your child's form tutor with the details and copy in the Director and Deputy Director of Sixth Form. If your child is offered a work experience opportunity lasting longer than a day or two, please refer to the *Exceptional Absence* section below.

Absence for Illness

If your child is too ill to attend school, please notify the school office or their form tutor by 8.30am on the first day of illness. If the school is not notified in time, parents will receive a text message or phone call asking them to confirm the reason for absence.

Online learning will not be provided for children who are too unwell to attend school.

Exceptional Absence

Requests for exceptional absence must be made in writing to the Head / Deputy Head Pastoral, in the Senior School or the Head of Junior School for junior pupils and should be sent at least two weeks in advance wherever possible. These requests should be sent to absence@nhs.gdst.net (Senior School) or junioradmin@nhs.gdst.net (Junior School). The circumstances surrounding the request, background information, previous absence patterns and academic progress will all be taken into account when making a decision about authorisation of absence and parents will be notified as soon as possible of the outcome.

Wherever possible the school will try to facilitate requests for pupils to take part in **enriching activities** provided the disruption to school life is minimal.

The school sends parents the term dates well in advance in order that they can arrange their **holidays** without disrupting their daughter's education. It is school policy not to allow holidays to be taken during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Absence for observation of **religious occasions** will be authorised within reason but should be requested as above.

Catching up on work

If a senior school pupil is away from school for longer than a day or two, whatever the reason, they are still entitled to a full education. You or your child should liaise with their form tutor or class teacher to ensure that missed work is completed, with notes being available via our online platforms. How and when the work is completed will vary depending on the reason for absence and your child's form tutor will discuss this with you at the time. If the absence will be for longer than a few days, where appropriate, work can be sent to your child to complete at home. It is not the norm to enable unwell students to 'dial in to' lessons as we would prefer them to focus on recovery. However, in some circumstances this may be the right approach - please discuss this with your child's Head of Year or the Deputy Head Academic.

Junior School teachers will make sure that any important information is shared upon return from extended illness and that any key tasks are completed at a later stage.

Pupils or parents should always speak to their form tutor or class teacher if they need help with catching up after an absence or if they find any difficulties in getting the information they need.

Responding to absence of vulnerable pupils:

When a pupil is deemed to be 'susceptible', by the safeguarding or pastoral teams, the Senior Receptionist, Lynn Nash, will be made aware. In the event of pupil absence, the following steps will apply.

- If they are absent from school and we have not received the required reasoning from parents, a text will be sent home as normal.
- After 1 hour, if we have not had a response from the parents or guardians, a follow up phone call will be made to attempt to contact parents or guardians.
- If no contact can be made on the first attempt, the school will attempt to contact home again via phone at lunch time, and again in the afternoon.
- If we have still not had contact from the parents or guardians, the Senior Receptionist will inform the Deputy Head Pastoral and/or the Head. They will then make a judgement call on next steps.
- If the pupil in question is deemed to be extremely vulnerable and the school has reason to believe they may be in danger, it may be appropriate to inform the police. If this happens, the Deputy Head Pastoral, in consultation with the Head will also inform the GDST Trust Office of our decision and action.

Review date: August 2024
Reviewed by: Rebecca Kneen, Deputy Head - Pastoral
Next review due: August 2025