



# NORTHAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL

GDST  
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

## **NORTHAMPTON HIGH SCHOOL SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**This policy relates to the whole school: EYFS, Junior, Senior and Sixth Form**

### **Policy statement and aims**

At Northampton High School we see student attendance as critical to academic success and 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. We ask parents to familiarise themselves with this policy, 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.

### **Our aims are:**

- To develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes good attendance
- To ensure, as far as possible, that every pupil can benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the school
- To build strong relationships with families, encouraging them to take an active role in promoting good attendance and punctuality
- To respond proactively to non-attendance and/or lateness in a proportionate and targeted way
- To work closely with pupils, their families and, if appropriate, the local authority where attendance becomes a concern.

We expect the highest standards of attendance and punctuality, reflecting our commitment to wellbeing and achievement. Our minimum attendance target is 95%.

### **Key contacts**

We strongly believe that maintaining good school attendance is everyone's business and we work proactively with parents and external agencies to remove any barriers students may face when it comes to attending school.

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 Mrs Amanda Wilmot in the Junior School or the relevant Head of Year in the Senior School.

### **Regulatory framework**

This policy meets the school's responsibilities under the Education and Skills Act 2008, the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

The school has regard to the following statutory guidance and advice:

- *Working together to improve school attendance* August 2024
- *Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance* August 2024
- *Children missing education* September 2016
- *Keeping children safe in education* September 2024

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.

### **How the school promotes good attendance**

- Good attendance is established as part of the school's culture, reflected in both strategic planning and day-to-day systems and processes
- We set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils and communicate these regularly and effectively to pupils and parents
- The school provides a safe, welcoming and stimulating learning environment
- Staff are supportive and approachable
- Data is used proactively to spot and address problems at the earliest possible stage
- Good attendance is recognised via e-praise system, weekly assemblies, half termly Heads Commendation awards, end of term Presentation Assemblies and our annual Awards Evening

### **Partnership with pupils and parents**

What the school expects of pupils:

- That pupils attend regularly, punctually and ready to learn
- That pupils are prepared for the day with appropriate equipment e.g., P.E. kit
- That pupils tell a member of staff if there is any problem which may discourage or prevent them from attending school

What the school expects of parents/guardians:

- To fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for absence in advance from the Head
- To notify the school of any absence or delay as soon as reasonably possible and to provide an explanation for this
- To arrange medical and dental appointments out of school times wherever possible
- To arrange holidays out of school term time
- To make any application for authorised leave of absence at the earliest opportunity and at least three weeks in advance
- To speak to relevant members of staff if they know of any problem which may affect their child's attendance or punctuality
- To cooperate with the school to improve attendance or punctuality if it has been raised as an issue

What parents/guardians can expect from school:

- A school culture that promotes good attendance
- Efficient and accurate recording and monitoring of attendance
- Regular communication with parents/carers including reporting of attendance via the SIMS parent App, form tutors and heads of year as appropriate to the situation.
- First day contact with parents/carers when absence is unexplained
- Prompt action when a problem has been identified
- Liaison with the local authority to assist and support families where needed
- Discussion with a member of the senior leadership team if attendance falls significantly or there are ongoing concerns about attendance.
- A home visit from school in situations where school attendance is low enough to cause significant detriment to pupil development and access to learning.

### **School Roles and Responsibilities**

GDST and School Governing Board

- Maintain an overview of attendance through termly reports
- Regularly monitor, review and challenge attendance data
- Review and support school interventions

Head

- Has overall responsibility for attendance within the school, including implementation of this policy
- Authorises exceptional leave of absence
- Reports to the GDST and governors on attendance

Senior Attendance Champion (Deputy Head - Pastoral)

- Is the nominated senior leader with responsibility for attendance across the school
- Ensures everyone works together to create a school culture that promotes good attendance
- Regularly monitors and analyses attendance data against a range of metrics
- Establishes and maintains effective systems for tackling absence, evaluating these at regular intervals
- Alongside the pastoral team, delivers targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

- Provides advice and support to school staff regarding attendance and punctuality issues
- Liaises with the local authority

#### Head of Junior School

- Regularly monitors and analyses attendance data against a range of metrics in the junior school
- Establishes and maintains effective systems for tackling absence in the junior school
- Alongside the pastoral team, delivers targeted intervention and support to pupils and families in the junior school
- Provides advice and support to staff in the junior school / prep regarding attendance and punctuality issues

#### Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Becomes actively involved and leads where attendance is also a safeguarding issue

#### Attendance Officer

- Receives, updates and maintains accurate class registers in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Maintains the SIMS attendance database
- Meets weekly with the Senior Attendance Champion to report on individuals, patterns or trends of concern
- Makes contact by telephone call with parents/carers when a pupil is absent and written notification has not been received
- Runs a daily report of any missing marks and follows these up with teachers and pupils
- Runs a weekly report of any unauthorised absences and shares and follows these up with Heads of Year
- Liaises with the Head of Year and Designated Safeguarding Lead when a vulnerable pupil is absent
- Carries out relevant interventions
- Provides reports from the attendance database for the Head, Deputy Head - Pastoral and other school staff, SGB, and/or local authority officers as requested

#### Heads of Year – Senior School

- Promote good attendance and punctuality within the classroom and the school
- Analyse attendance data by individual, key group and by form group

#### Form Tutors (senior)/Class teachers (junior)

- Promote good attendance and punctuality within the classroom and the school
- Accurately mark the am and pm register using appropriate codes, in line with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Look out for trends or patterns and liaise with the Head of Year or School Attendance Champion/Head of Juniors if any concerns arise
- Deliver targeted intervention and support as appropriate

#### **Registration procedures**

Registers are a legal document, and care must be taken to ensure they are marked accurately and in accordance with the regulations. Attendance of all pupils is recorded and monitored following the procedures below:

### Junior school

- Registration is carried out at 8:30am and 3:30pm.
- Registers will be open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after registration but before the register is closed will be marked late. Punctuality is monitored and frequent or regular lateness will be considered a cause for concern.
- Any pupil arriving after the register is closed will be marked absent. Parents should provide a note of explanation for any pupil arriving after the register has closed. Lateness without reasonable cause will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- The attendance officer checks for missing marks or unaccounted absences and contacts parents where required.
- Concerns are passed to the Head of Junior School.
- Specialist subject teachers take a register at the start of their lesson and if they are concerned that a pupil hasn't arrived at their lesson, then they should inform the attendance officer immediately.
- If any pupil has to leave school before the end of the day, she must sign out at reception.

### Senior school

- Registration is carried out at 8:30am and 3:35pm.
- Registers will be open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after registration but before the register is closed will be marked late. Punctuality is monitored and frequent or regular lateness will be considered a cause for concern.
- Any pupil arriving after the register is closed will be marked absent. Parents should provide a note of explanation for any pupil arriving after the register has closed. Lateness without reasonable cause will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- Any pupil arriving after registration period should sign in at reception.
- The attendance officer checks for missing marks or unaccounted absences and contacts parents where required.
- Concerns are passed to the Heads of Year.
- Subject teachers take a register at the start of their lesson and if they are concerned that a pupil hasn't arrived at their lesson, then they should inform the attendance officer immediately.
- If any pupil has to leave school before the end of the day, she must sign out at reception.

### Monitoring and analysing attendance data and addressing issues

The school has systems to track absence and reasons for absence at an individual level and by cohorts or groups. Analysis includes lesson attendance as well as school attendance, and punctuality both for am and pm attendance. The data is monitored and analysed regularly and over a range of time periods (short term/half term/termly/annually) to trigger early intervention to address issues, trends or patterns. Absence in the autumn term is monitored closely for any emerging patterns.

Attendance thresholds and typical interventions:

|                            |            |                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Below school target</b> | <b>95%</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Class teacher or form tutor discussion with pupils.</li> </ul> |
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|                                      |                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
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|                                      |                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The class teacher and form tutor should have a one-to-one meeting with any pupil in their class/form who is absent for more than three consecutive days to check on their well-being and offer help with catching up on work.</li> <li>• When a pupil's attendance record is at 95%, parents will be advised by the class teacher/form tutor that this threshold has been reached.</li> </ul> |
| <b>At risk of persistent absence</b> | <b>91-92%</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flagged at pastoral meetings; discussion between teacher/form tutor and parents.</li> <li>• If attendance continues to fall after initial contact a meeting with the Head of Year will be arranged.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Persistent absence</b>            | <b>90% or less</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter home to parents/meeting to discuss targeted support.</li> <li>• If attendance continues to fall a further meeting with the Head of Year and Deputy Head Pastoral will be arranged.</li> <li>• If a student's attendance falls below 90% the case will be assessed by the DSL to see if a referral to social services to support the family is required.</li> </ul>                     |
| <b>Severe absence</b>                | <b>50% or less</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Home visits to re-establish links between school and the pupil</li> <li>• More intensive support including referral to external services.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

All measures 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 potential safeguarding risk.

### **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.

The school understands that some absences, such as ongoing medical illness, are outside of the family's control. The school will always take a supportive approach and will assess each case individually to ensure the right level of support.

### **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](mailto:junioradmin@nhs.gdst.net)

For Senior School:

[absence@nhs.gdst.net](mailto:absence@nhs.gdst.net) or [nhsadmin@nhs.gdst.net](mailto: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.

If contact can't be made, the school will seek to assure itself that the pupil is safe and well, through confirmed contact with external professionals or a home visit by local authority personnel or school

staff. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered missing and the school will pursue the matter in accordance with local procedures. A pupil on a Child Student/Student visa going missing will also be reported to the police and UKVI. Children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

### **Reporting to the local authority**

The school has a statutory obligation to inform the local authority of the full name and address of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent unauthorised for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

The school must also inform the local authority of the full name and address of any pupil of compulsory school age who has been recorded as ill and the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

### **Returning to school**

On her return to school, parents must supply a note to the pupil's form tutor/class teacher indicating the cause of the absence. If this is not provided the absence will be investigated and recorded as unauthorised.

It is the responsibility of the pupil to make up any work missed through absence. Sometimes a pupil who has been absent for some time finds it difficult to return. In such circumstances the school will work with the pupil and parents to support reintegration.

### **Remote education**

The school may, in very limited circumstances, provide remote education to enable pupils who are well enough to learn but not well enough to attend in person, to keep pace with their education. Such arrangements must be mutually agreed by the school, parents or carers, and if appropriate a relevant medical professional, and will normally be time limited.

Pupils who are absent from school but receiving remote education still need to be formally recorded as absent on the register using the most appropriate code. The school will keep a separate record of and monitor the pupil's engagement with remote education.

### **Reasons for planned absence**

Apart from illness, no pupil should be away from school without prior permission from the Head. All schools are expected to restrict leave of absence to the specific circumstances set out in the regulations. These are summarised below:

#### 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/ studying for a public examination

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 or taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad

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.

If a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of time the pupil can be away from school. As stated in the regulatory guidance, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation is not considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

Parents should submit a request for absence to the Head no later than three weeks prior to the date of absence. If an absence is authorised in advance parents will be notified and an absence note will not be required on return.

Absence for reasons other than those sanctioned by the regulations, for no reason given, or exceeding the terms of exceptional leave, will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

## SIXTH FORM SPECIFIC REASONS

### Flexible day

All schools are able to allow pupils of non-compulsory school age to be absent for sessions they are not timetabled to attend.

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.

## **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.

## **Pupils with individual needs**

Whilst punctuality and good attendance is an expectation for all pupils at the school, we recognise that this may be more of a challenge for some pupils, 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 make reasonable adjustments / develop individualised support approaches as appropriate to meet their specific needs. If a pupil has an EHCP, the school will communicate with the local authority if attendance falls or becomes problematic.

The school is committed to supporting pupils who may be absent because of Emotionally Based School Avoidance. Where a pupil is missing school because of EBSA, the school will work closely with professionals supporting the child and the family as it takes a team effort to help the child find a way back into full time education.

**Policy reviewed: August 2024**

**Policy reviewed by: May Lee, Head**

**Next Policy Review Due: September 2025**