Newick Church of England Primary School

<u>Attendance Policy</u>

Attendance Policy

Author: Faye Lawrence

‘Be courageous, be strong;
Do everything in love’

Date of last review: August 2025

Date of next review: September 2026

Signed: ..... Faye Lawrence (Headteacher)

Signed: ..... Jonathan Sharpe (Chair of Governors)

Newick Church of England Primary School
Attendance Policy

This policy is intended to: reflect the guidelines set out by East Sussex Education Authority and the vision and aims of Newick C. E. Primary School by:

- Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- Provide clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

Principles

As a maintained academy we operate within the parameters set by the DFE, Local Authority and DCAT regarding attendance. Please refer to these documents which have informed Newick School's attendance policy and protocols:
DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance' – August 2024
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance and the East Sussex County Council Penalty Notice Code of Conduct – August 2024
https://czone.eastsussex.gov.uk/inclusion/attend/penalty-notices
DCAT Guidance: 'Attendance Matters; Guidance for Parents' and 'Delivering on Attendance' document
DfE: Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025: Keeping children safe in education 2025

For further information please read the East Sussex Local Authority guidance on attendance:
https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/education-learning/schools/attendance-behaviour/parent-responsibilities

Principles
Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting a child's absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Attendance at Newick is celebrated throughout the school. We do not offer individual incentives or rewards for attendance, but we do celebrate whole class attendance in our Friday Celebration Assembly with "Gus, the Good to be here Gorilla" going to the class with the highest attendance of the week. We also publish information about attendance in the termly newsletter. We want children to celebrate being at school as much as possible, and to talk about attendance in as positive a light as possible.

Children are occasionally reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

In a post pandemic world, we recognise that has been an increase in the number of children with anxiety, or 'Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). As a therapeutic school we want to work with families to ensure the well-being of children is prioritised. We will work with families to get through challenging times such as this, to support you in getting your child to school as much as possible. We acknowledge that in these instances attendance is not a 'one hat fits all' approach and in these circumstances we will work closely with the pupils and families involved.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required in writing.

Newick Church of England Primary School
Attendance Policy

Authorised absences are mornings and afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ***parents keeping children off school unnecessarily***
- ***truancy before or during the school day***
- ***absences which have never been properly explained***
- ***children who arrive at school too late to be registered***
- ***holidays in term time***

Absences at Newick:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. Your first port of call will be the office (admin@newickschool.co.uk) but if you are concerned about your child's attendance do talk to our office team or organise to speak to their class teacher.

If difficulties persist around attendance this is where the school may recognise a pupil to be Persistently Absent – a child whose attendance drops below 90%. When attendance drops below 90% the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher or SENDCo will make contact with you for an initial conversation around why this may be occurring. At this point we will work with you and your child to address the absence. We do this in a variety of ways to support you: e.g a conversation to get to the bottom of the problem, separation support, offering soft starts, a trusted adult meeting the pupil at the door, and in extreme cases or where the child may have SEND we may discuss reduced timetables.

After a support programme is put in place this will be reviewed the following term. If the attendance has not improved to above 90% a letter will be sent to the family. If, following the letter there is not improvement or engagement, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Service to support the family and the school. However, we will always try to resolve the situation by agreement.

If all of these attempts to improve attendance have failed the Attendance Service can call on Local Authority Officers, who can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

School attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse, neglect or radicalisation. School staff follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

The school is required to make the local authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as

Newick Church of England Primary School
Attendance Policy

unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12.

The attendance lead and the Designated Safeguarding Lead work closely to manage risks, ensure appropriate multi-agency engagement where necessary, so that children and young people receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly.

In line with DFE 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2025 Newick CE Primary School must:

- Ensure we have two contact phone numbers on record for every pupil

– Follow local and national protocols for off-rolling pupils/removing from roll

– Follow local/national protocol for reporting children missing from education

Newick Absence Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences

- Parents/carers are requested to inform the school office of a child's absence before 9.00am on the day of absence.
- Parents/carers are requested to complete an absence form a ***minimum*** of two weeks before a foreseen absence. These are available to download on our website.
- Holidays in term time are NOT permitted except under exceptional circumstances following local authority guidelines. These will be marked as unauthorised absences.
- If your child is late into school (after 9.10am), they must report to the school office and then a member of the office staff will take them down to the classroom. School gates open at 8.45am and close at 8.50am.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school's attendance target is 97.0%

Holidays During Term Time

Read what the Local Authority states about holidays in term time here:
https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/education-learning/schools/attendance-behaviour/holidays-term-time

If parents/carers remove their child for a holiday in term time for 5 school days (10 sessions) or more, the school will contact the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice. This is in line with all other East Sussex schools.

Penalty Notices

Changes to Penalty Notices (August 2024)

- A limit of no more than 2 penalty notices being issued to the same parent for the same pupil within a 3-year rolling period will apply from 19 August 2024.
- The first penalty notice issued to the parent for that pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days reducing to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days.

Newick Church of England Primary School
Attendance Policy

- A third penalty notice will not be issued within a 3-year period. Therefore, in cases where the threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) times within those 3 years, a penalty notice cannot be issued, and alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools, such as one of the other attendance legal interventions. This will be considered and agreed in consultation with the school.
- Once 3 years has elapsed since the first penalty notice was issued to the parent, a further penalty notice can be issued if appropriate, but in most cases, it will not be the most effective tool for changing what may have now become an entrenched pattern of behaviour.
- The arrangements for the paying of penalty notices will be detailed on the penalty notice.
- Revenue generated from the penalty notices will first be used for administration of the penalty notice system and prosecution. If a surplus remains, this will be spent on attendance support. In practice, 'support' means any other activity to improve attendance, not including a penalty notice or prosecution, in line with the, 'Working together to improve school attendance guidance'.

Please read this document for more information of the changes to Penalty Notices:

C:\Users\flawrence\Downloads\Penalty Notice Code of Conduct V4 - July 2024.pdf

Reasons for penalty notices

- Holidays in term time – 10 sessions (5 school days) in the academic year
- Unauthorised absences – 10 sessions (5 school days) within 10 school weeks
- Unauthorised lateness – if a pupil arrives at school after the register has closed 10 times in 10 school weeks
- A combination of unauthorised absence and lateness
- An excluded pupil is in a public place without good reason during the school day

Advice - There is no right of appeal against a penalty notice.

If you think the notice should not have been issued, contact the school. If they do not agree to change their decision you will have to pay the fine.

Contact ISEND Attendance Support Service https://localoffer.eastsussex.gov.uk/send-information-and-services/education-east-sussex/education-east-sussex-send-services as soon as possible, if you:

- can't pay
- have a warning letter and need advice, or
- if you need help with your child's attendance

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. The Home School Partnership Agreement aims to ensure the school and parents understand their part in achieving this.

Newick Church of England Primary School
Attendance Policy

Monitoring and review

The monitoring of the attendance policy is the responsibility of the following people:

- Faye Lawrence, Headteacher
- Laura Dobson, School Business Manager
- Governing Body