



Pupil Attendance Policy

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“Learning together, to be the best we can be”

1. Scope

- 1.1. This policy relates to all schools and settings across Nexus MAT. It may be augmented by local policies in each school that reflect their specific approach and processes in managing attendance.

2. Aim

- 2.1. Nexus Multi Academy Trust aims for all of its academies to have an environment which enables and encourages all members of school communities to fulfil the Trust vision of “learning together; to be the best we can be”.
- 2.2. For children and young people to reach their full potential it is vital that they attend and be on time every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child or young person’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.
- 2.3. We recognise that for some of our children and young people with significant medical needs, it can be very challenging to secure attendance rates above 90%. However, our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful learning.
- 2.4. Through the year, school leaders and governors monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need and can be made. We work very closely with families whose child has complex medical needs to ensure that learning continues, as appropriate. Children with complex medical needs will be reported by exception in order to acknowledge their attempts to comply with regular attendance.
- 2.5. Promoting Good Attendance:

Nexus MAT recognises that improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. Each academy will adopt a whole-school approach to attendance, promoting

the benefits of good attendance and working in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, local authorities and partner agencies.

Each academy will identify a Senior Attendance Lead responsible for leading attendance strategy, monitoring attendance data, identifying barriers to attendance and coordinating appropriate support.

Where attendance concerns arise, support will be offered at the earliest opportunity. This may include attendance support plans, pastoral support, multi-agency working, early help intervention and reasonable adjustments for pupils with medical, special educational, emotional or mental health needs.

3. Legal

- 3.1. Part 6 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents/carers must ensure that children and young people of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- 3.2. For pupils registered at a school, this means that pupils must attend regularly and punctually; failure to do so may result in their parents/carers committing a criminal offence.
- 3.3. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child or young person is no longer compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Although children and young people in Early Years Foundation Stage and Sixth Form are not compulsory school age, Nexus MAT places a high value on the need for good attendance throughout school so will therefore treat absences in these phases the same as compulsory age pupils in terms of register marks and follow up procedures.
- 3.4. Under the Education Act 1996 the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents/carers secure education for children and young people of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.
- 3.5. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.
- 3.6. The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

4. Types of Absence

- 4.1. Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either 'Authorised' or 'Unauthorised'. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.
- 4.2. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absence can only be authorised by the school **not** by parents/carers.
- 4.3. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:
 - Parents/carers keeping their child off school unnecessarily;
 - truancy before or during the school day;
 - absences which have never properly been explained;
 - pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
 - shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
 - day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed; ▪
holidays that exceed the amount agreed by the Headteacher.
- 4.4. For those children and young people who are struggling to attend school full time due to their complex medical needs, school and the parents/carers may discuss flexible hours. When a parent/carer seeks a reduction in hours or days, the school and health professionals will look at the individual child or young person and their needs and work with the parents/carers to provide appropriate education for their child. Local school procedures will be outlined in the school level policy.

5. Registration

- 5.1. The school day will be published by each academy and include details of when the morning and afternoon sessions start and end and when registers will be taken. Registers are taken by class and monitored by the senior leadership team.

6. Absence Procedures

- 6.1. Parents/carers should advise school that their child will be absent by contacting the school office no later than the scheduled start of the school day. It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform school directly. Messages via transport staff, other parents/carers or social media will not be accepted and will be followed up by a phone call. Office staff will then inform class teams that the pupil is absent.
- 6.2. Nexus academies use a first day response policy therefore if a pupil does not attend school and no adequate reason has been provided then a telephone call will be made to the parent/carer by office staff. The member of staff making the first day response call will update the school register as necessary. Any amendment to the attendance register will include:
- The original entry
 - The amended entry
 - The reason for the amendment
 - The date on which the amendment was made
 - The name and position of the person who made the amendment.
- 6.3. Parents/carers are expected to keep in contact with school when a pupil is absent for a long period to keep school informed of the situation and any expected return date.
- 6.4. Parents/carers are requested to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day wherever possible. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend for part of the day. Parents/carers should contact the office to inform school of such appointments as early as possible. Pupils may only leave school premises if they are accompanied by a parent/carer. Proof of the appointment may be requested, this could be an appointment card or a letter from hospital.
- 6.5. Valid reasons for Authorised absence include:
- Illness and medical/dental appointments

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – these cover Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Other exceptional circumstances where the Headteacher may authorise a leave of absence. Study leave
- Flexi-schooling requests

7. Holiday in term time

- 7.1. As of 1 September 2013, The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removed the option for Headteachers to grant leave of absence during the term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten days in a year. Leave of absence in term time is strongly discouraged. Parents are not automatically allowed to take their child out of school on holiday. Headteachers are now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance; the annual family holiday would not be deemed an "exceptional circumstance".
- 7.2. In-line with Government guidelines, Nexus MAT academies will not authorise absences for holidays in term-time unless there are exceptional reasons. All requests will be considered individually by the Headteacher.
- 7.3. Parents/carers will be required to submit any request for absence in term-time at least 4 weeks before the proposed absence using the 'Request for Leave of Absence' form included in the school's supplementary attendance policy.
- 7.4. Parents/carers will be expected to give a full explanation of why the holiday request is exceptional. A child or young person's previous absence will be considered before a decision is made. School will respond to all requests in writing, however, parents/carers should not automatically expect the request to be authorised.

- 7.5. Parents/carers should be aware that unauthorised leave of absence may result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of legal intervention. Any penalty notices issued will be administered in accordance with the current national framework and the Local Authority Code of Conduct in force at the time of the absence.
- 7.6. Nexus MAT acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the community and recognises that on some occasions religious festivals may fall outside of school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.
- 7.7. If a pupil arrives after the registers closes with no prior explanation, then they will receive a late mark. Persistent lateness will be monitored and addressed using a supportive graduated response. Where punctuality does not improve despite support being offered, further action may be considered in line with Local Authority procedures.
- 7.8. If a child is absent from school due to an unauthorised holiday or other unauthorised leave of absence, the school may refer the matter to the Local Authority. The Local Authority will determine whether a Penalty Notice or other legal action is appropriate in accordance with current legislation and national guidance.
- 7.9. The Local Authority can only issue a Penalty Notice in cases of unauthorised absence or where a child - who has been excluded from school - is seen in a public place in the first five days of exclusion.

8. Persistently Absent Pupils

- 8.1. A pupil is regarded as persistently absent when their attendance falls below the threshold defined by the Department for Education. Pupils whose attendance falls significantly below expected levels may be identified as severely absent. The school will monitor attendance regularly and provide support to improve attendance wherever concerns arise.

8.1a Attendance Support

Where a pupil's attendance gives cause for concern, schools will seek to understand the barriers affecting attendance and offer appropriate support before considering enforcement measures. Support may include:

- Attendance support plans.
- Early Help assessments.
- Meetings with parents/carers.
- Referrals to health services.
- SEN support.
- Alternative provision arrangements where appropriate.
- Multi-agency intervention.

8.2. Headteachers will work within the parameters of the local procedures for responding to persistent absence and will keep local governing bodies informed of any barriers to effective multi agency working to address these issues.

8.3. When a child or young person stops attending school for 10 days and no contact can be made to establish the child or young person's whereabouts school will complete a (CME) 'Child Missing Education' and submit this to the Local Authority. Prior to this point, the school will take the necessary actions to assure themselves that a child is safe and secure if they have not attended school, and this may involve referring to children's social care.

9. Roles and responsibilities

9.1. Parents/carers should:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- Contact the school office on 1st day of absence to give a full reason for their child not attending;
- Contact school regularly during a pupil's absence to keep staff updated;
- Do not pass on messages to school via transport staff;
- Avoid holidays in term time wherever possible and apply in advance by completing the relevant form;
- Avoid medical and dental appointments in school hours wherever possible;
- Attend meetings in school;
- Ensure their child goes to bed at a reasonable time;
- Ensure their child is ready for transport in a morning;
- Ensure their child comes in to school ready to learn;
- Discuss any issues affecting absence or lateness with school via Senior Leadership Team or keyworkers.

9.2. Pupils should:

- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school e.g. early bedtime;
- Attend school punctually;
- Speak to parents/carers/teacher if issues arise that may have an effect on their school attendance.
- Co-operate and participate in interventions and support offered by the school or other agencies.

9.3. Headteachers should:

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance is promoted and has a high profile within the school;
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters;
- Ensure adequate protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities;
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance;
- Ensure there are designated staff to oversee educational provision for children and young people who are too poorly to attend school (class teacher and Senior Leadership Team).

9.3A Senior Attendance Lead

Each academy will appoint a Senior Attendance Lead who will:

- Monitor attendance patterns and trends.
- Identify pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.
- Coordinate attendance support and intervention.
- Work in partnership with families and external agencies.
- Report attendance information to governors and trust leaders.
- Ensure attendance procedures comply with statutory guidance.

9.4. Designated Staff should:

- First day response: Contact parents/carers if an adequate reason for absence has not been provided;
- Input and update the attendance registers;
- Regularly identify and monitor school attendance and punctuality levels;
- Work with children and young people and parents/carers to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance;
- Ensure, if appropriate, children and young people who are unable to attend school due to medical reasons have opportunities to access educational activities.

9.5. All staff should:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and young people and provide a safe learning environment;
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum;
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupils' concerns;
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance; ▪ See pupil' attendance as the responsibility of all school staff;
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures;
- Be pro-active in providing learning opportunities for children and young people who cannot attend school due to significant medical needs.

appendix 1 **Attendance Codes – 2026-2027**

As stated in the DfE guidance – 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'

Code	Attending the School	Present	Authorised
/ \	Present at the school / present for the morning session \ present for the afternoon session	✓	✓
L	Late arrival before the register is closed	✓	✓
Code	Attending the School	Present	Authorised

B	Attending any other approved educational activity	✓	✓
D	Dual registered at another school	θ	θ
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	✓	✓
P	Participating in a sporting activity	✓	✓
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	✓	✓
W	Attending work experience	✓	✓
Code	Absent – Leave of absence (authorised)	Present	Authorised
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances	X	✓
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	X	✓
C2	Leave of absence for the compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	X	✓
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	X	✓
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment	X	✓
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination	X	✓
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school	θ	θ
Code	Absent – other authorised reasons	Present	Authorised
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made	X	✓
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	X	✓
IR	Illness due to recovery following hospital admission	X	✓
R	Religious observance	X	✓
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	X	✓
Code	Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause	Present	Authorised
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements	θ	θ
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	θ	θ
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	θ	θ
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	θ	θ
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed	θ	θ

Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	θ	θ
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	θ	θ
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	θ	θ
Code	Absent – Unauthorised absence	Present	Authorised
G	Holiday not granted by the school	X	X
N	Reason for absence not yet established	X	X
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	X	X
U	Arrived after the register closed	X	X
Code	Administrative Codes	Present	Authorised
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	θ	θ
#	Planned whole school closure	θ	θ

✓ - Yes

X - No

θ - Not applicable (codes that do not count towards a child's attendance)

Use of the B Code

The Department for Education has clarified that the B code can only be used when a pupil is taking part in an approved educational activity and that they are physically supervised by an adult considered by the school to have the appropriate skills, training and knowledge. It cannot be used for remote learning, even if supervised by a parent.

Use of the Q Code

The Q code can only be used when a child is unable to attend because the local authority is responsible for arranging school transport and this has not yet been set up. Where local authority transport has been set up but fails (e.g. a taxi does not arrive or the bus breaks down), the Y1 code must be used.

Use of the D Code

Code D (Dual Registered at Another School) is used when a pupil is registered at more than one school and is attending the other school at the time of registration. The pupil is therefore not expected to be present at the school using the D code for that session.

Use of the Y7 Code

Y7 is the attendance code "Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause." It is used when a pupil cannot attend school due to a genuinely unavoidable circumstance that is outside the control of the pupil, parent, and school, and where no other attendance code is more appropriate

