

# Northern House Academy School Attendance Policy 2022-2023

part of the



## **Updated August 2022 to be reviewed August 2023**

The policy must be reviewed and updated at least annually and/or following any updates to national and local guidance and procedures

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| Date ratified                               | 13th September 2022 |
| Chair of Trustees                           | Chris Scrivener     |
| Chair of LAB/RIB                            | Julie Tridgell      |
| Designated Manager for Gallery Trust        | Alison Beasley      |
| Designated Trustee for Improving Attendance | James Shryane       |

## Contents

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Aims                                | 3  |
| Legislation and guidance            | 3  |
| Roles and responsibilities          | 3  |
| Recording attendance                | 5  |
| Authorised and unauthorised absence | 7  |
| Strategies for promoting attendance | 8  |
| Attendance monitoring               | 8  |
| Response to unexplained absence     | 11 |
| Equality Statement                  | 12 |
| Monitoring arrangements             | 12 |
| Links with other policies           | 12 |
| Appendix 1: attendance codes        | 13 |

## Key contacts

| Role  | Name                       | Contact details  |
|---|----------------------------|--|
| Head Teacher/Head of School   | Ricky Stevens / Bex Holmes | <a href="mailto:rstevens@northernhouseacademy.co.uk">rstevens@northernhouseacademy.co.uk</a><br><a href="mailto:bholmes@northernhouseacademy.co.uk">bholmes@northernhouseacademy.co.uk</a> |
| Senior leader for attendance  | Bex Holmes                 | <a href="mailto:bholmes@northernhouseacademy.co.uk">bholmes@northernhouseacademy.co.uk</a>   |
| Attendance officer/<br>individual(s) with<br>responsibility for daily<br>attendance | Fiona Morris               | <a href="mailto:fmorris@northernhouseacademy.co.uk">fmorris@northernhouseacademy.co.uk</a>   |
| LAB/RIB chair   | Julie Tridgell             | <a href="mailto:j.tridgell@thegallerytrust.co.uk">j.tridgell@thegallerytrust.co.uk</a>   |
| Designated Safeguarding<br>manager for Gallery Trust                                | Alison Beasley             | <a href="mailto:a.beasley@thegallerytrust.co.uk">a.beasley@thegallerytrust.co.uk</a>   |
| Oxfordshire County Council<br>Local Authority School                                |                            | <a href="https://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/county-atten">https://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/county-atten</a>  |

|                                      |  |  |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| Attendance Team                      |  | <a href="#">dance-team</a><br>01865 323513   |
| Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) |  | <a href="https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/keeping-children-and-young-people-safe/report-child-abuse">https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/keeping-children-and-young-people-safe/report-child-abuse</a><br>0345 050 7666 |

## 1. Aims

At Northern House Academy, we are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Northern House Academy expects good attendance from its students, in order for them to make the most of the opportunities that the school has to offer. We rely on our partnership with parents to ensure that this is achieved. We consider good attendance to be 90% or more at this school.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE's [Working together to improve school attendance](#), Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities, September 2022, and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The Board of Trustees (BOT), Rapid Improvement Boards (RIB), and the Senior Executive Team (SET) for The Gallery Trust are responsible for:**

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

#### **3.2 The Head Teacher is responsible for:**

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **3.3 The designated senior leader for attendance is responsible for:**

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Provide attendance data to the Senior executive team for The Gallery Trust
- Working with the Local Authority attendance team to tackle persistent absence
- Report concerns about attendance to the Head Teacher and the Senior Executive team when appropriate

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Bex Holmes and can be contacted via 01865 557004 email [bholmes@northernhouseacademy.co.uk](mailto:bholmes@northernhouseacademy.co.uk)

#### **3.4 Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for:**

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.00am each day.

### **3.5 School admin/office staff will:**

- Retrieve messages from the school attendance line
- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Tutor/DSL/Head Teacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Call parents /carers to follow up on daily non attendance
- Ensure daily attendance data is recorded and available by 10am
- Alert Senior Team Leader and Head Teacher immediately if student's whereabouts are unknown (after calls home have been made)
- Alert Senior Team Leader and Head Teacher of any attendance concerns around individual students or alternative providers
- Follow up with alternative providers if a student's attendance has not been provided by the placement

### **3.6 Parents/carers are expected to:**

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with **more than one** emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### **3.7 Pupils are expected to:**

- Attend school every day on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register.**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. In our school we use RM Integris

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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

See [Appendix 1: attendance codes](#) for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence 9am, or as soon as practically possible by calling the school number (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carers notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents should email the school office [office@northernhouseacademy.co.uk](mailto:office@northernhouseacademy.co.uk) to alert us on any medical or dental appointments.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Punctuality issues which arise from SEN Home to School transport will be noted. The school along with parents will notify SEN Transport if there are consistent issues with lateness of transport.

#### *4.5 Following up unexplained absence*

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact the student's social worker if the pupil is open to social care.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary.
- Consider a home visit by school staff (this will take place if there are 3 continuous days of unexplained absence)
- If absence continues, the school will consider a referral to police or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- If there are more than 10 days unexplained absences, we will discuss with the Oxfordshire County Council Local Authority School Attendance Team.

#### *4.6 Reporting to parents/carers*

Northern House Academy monitors attendance daily, if a pupils attendance is highlighted as a concern then the Therapeutic and Pupil Wellbeing Manager will make contact with the parent/carer to discuss the concern and offer support to the family.

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels during parent/teacher meetings, during annual reviews and annual report meetings.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### *5.1 Approval for term-time absence*

The Head Teacher will only authorise a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence will be authorised at the Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. Parents or carers must apply in advance for permission.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request, additional evidence may be requested to support the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers 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.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We celebrate good attendance through our Learning Passport system where pupils receive 10 points extra for 100% attendance weekly. These points contribute to the pupils weekly star time.

Attendance certificates are also awarded at the end of term awards assembly.

Positive Postcards are also sent home to pupils to highlight a improvement in school attendance.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

Attendance is monitored and followed up on a daily basis. Percentage figures are monitored on a weekly basis. Fiona Morris is responsible for this monitoring.

Teachers will note both authorised and unauthorised absences in the registers and this is followed up by Fiona Morris and Bex Holmes .

Any concerns that the school believes needs additional support to ensure students maintain excellent attendance, will be brought to the attention of the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team, who has the authority to issue penalty notices or fines.

<https://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/county-attendance-team>

Northern House Academy monitors and analyses attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance on a weekly basis using in house monitoring system. This information is analysed weekly. The attendance is also reported to the Rapid Improvement Board on a termly basis. This report highlights different cohorts



## **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

At our school we will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- Identify whether or not there are individual pupils or particular groups of pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Boards for the schools and the Trustees.

## **7.2 Analysing attendance**

At our school we will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to our RIB, Trust Senior Executive Team and Trustees.

## **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

At our school we will:

- Track attendance of each pupil to be able to identify declining attendance at an early stage.
- Provide regular attendance reports to Therapeutic and Pupil Wellbeing Manager to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.
- Work with the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team.

## **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Contact parents to discuss attendance concerns
- Work with the pupil and family to try and identify the cause of the absence.

- Notify the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team of any students that have missed school for 10 days or more without the absence being recorded as authorised. This will be done on a monthly basis.
- Based on an assessment of individual cases we will also consider:
  - Home visits
  - Meetings with the parents or carers of pupils who are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
  - Working with the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team
  - Referrals to Social care e.g. Early Help Assessment
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Any pattern of regular absentees will be identified and support will be offered by the school, in finding solutions for raising attendance. Many problems such as bullying or family difficulties can therefore be detected early and support given to students and parents to address these issues swiftly.

## **7.5 Penalty Notices and Legal Action**

The Law The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall ensure they receive efficient full time education suitable-

[a] To their age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or by education otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to students who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school”

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the County Attendance Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning, which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates’ Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- They fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- They allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school’s authorisation;

- They fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- Their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting may be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. PA cases may be discussed and referred to the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

As a restorative school we will always do our best to work with families and pupils to address attendance concerns without the need for legal intervention, but parents and carers must note that where all avenues of support have been facilitated by the school, local authorities, and other partners and persistent or severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues this may be the only available course of action.

## **8. Response to unexplained absence.**

### **First Day Response**

If a student is absent from school and we have **not** been informed, either by telephone or letter, a phone call home will be made to establish the reasons for the absence. This will happen on the **first day of your child's absence from school**.

Please note that for students not living in the close vicinity of our school, if they have a medical/dental appointment, we do not expect them to take a full day off school.

If the parent cannot be contacted, the school will call other emergency contacts that have been provided to the school to try and establish the safety and whereabouts of the pupil.

A home visit may take place if there are concerns about the wellbeing of the pupil

All phone calls are made with the utmost consideration of the needs and feelings of the recipient and politeness is a primary factor.

A follow up email or letter will be sent requesting an explanation for the absence.

### **Third Day Response**

For safeguarding reasons we will make a home visit (this may have already been carried out previously). However if we are unable to get a response then we will report it to the police as your child will then be classed a 'missing child'.

## **Pupil Missing From Education**

Any pupil who is absent without an explanation after 5 consecutive school days and the school are unable to make contact with the family must be referred to the LCSS. LCSS will visit the home. If this is unsuccessful then the police will visit the home. If the pupil cannot be located, a MP1 form must be completed and sent to the Students Missing Education Administrator

## **Ongoing considerations**

On each day that a student is absent we will consider any additional vulnerabilities or concerns that we may have around the individual and make an assessment of risk. This may mean that actions are taken sooner, for example contact with police or social care on day one of absence where no explanation is provided.\

## **9. Equality Statement**

We understand our obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We understand the individual needs of our pupils, and we always take these into consideration when working with our pupils and families.

## **10 . Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by The Designated Safeguarding Manager for The Gallery Trust and the Head Teacher for our school. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trustees.

## **10. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy.

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

| Code | Definition                    | Scenario  |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| /    | Present (am)                  | Pupil is present at morning registration  |
| \    | Present (pm)                  | Pupil is present at afternoon registration                                      |
| L    | Late arrival                  | Pupil arrives late before register has closed                                   |
| B    | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school   |
| D    | Dual registered               | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered  |
| J    | Interview                     | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment    |
| P    | Sporting activity             | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V    | Educational trip or visit     | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school     |
| W    | Work experience               | Pupil is on a work experience placement   |

| Code                        | Definition                        | Scenario   |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| <b>Authorised absence</b>   |                                   |  |
| <b>C</b>                    | Authorised leave of absence       | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| <b>E</b>                    | Excluded                          | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made         |
| <b>H</b>                    | Authorised holiday                | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances   |
| <b>I</b>                    | Illness                           | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness        |
| <b>M</b>                    | Medical/dental appointment        | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment                                |
| <b>R</b>                    | Religious observance              | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance                      |
| <b>S</b>                    | Study leave                       | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations           |
| <b>T</b>                    | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school  |
| <b>Unauthorised absence</b> |                                   |  |

|          |                            |   |
|----------|----------------------------|---|
| <b>G</b> | Unauthorised holiday       | Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school   |
| <b>N</b> | Reason not provided        | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| <b>O</b> | Unauthorised absence       | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence   |
| <b>U</b> | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed   |

| <b>Code</b> | <b>Definition</b>                                 | <b>Scenario</b>  |
|-------------|---|--|
| <b>X</b>    | Not required to be in school                      | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend   |
| <b>Y</b>    | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| <b>Z</b>    | Pupil not on admission register                   | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school  |
| <b>#</b>    | Planned school closure                            | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day  |