



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Principles

Pupils are expected to attend school every day.

A pupil should only be absent if the reason is “unavoidable”. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is unlawful, and ultimately parents could be fined by the courts.

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school, not the parents, as either authorised or unauthorised. Hence information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a good reason; for 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 keeping a pupil off for trivial reasons; truancy, absences or late arrivals which have never been properly explained. Providing a note may not be sufficient if the reason given is “avoidable”. Pupils should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping, car is broken down, looking after the house, or looking after siblings or relatives. Where the letter does not specify a reason for absence, further investigation may be necessary after consultation with the Head Mistress.

On very rare occasions when a girl needs encouragement to attend school regularly, any problems are best sorted out between the school, (Head, Deputy Head, Head of Junior School, Head of Year, Form Tutor) parents and the pupil. If problems cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the pupil to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) from the local Education Authority (LEA). He or she will also try to resolve the difficulties by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the pupil's attendance have failed, these officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the girl.

Parents (or pupils) may wish to contact the EWO themselves for advice. They are independent of the school. Their telephone number is available from the school or by contacting the LEA.

Procedures

Northwood College applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Illness or Other Legitimate Absence

On the first day of absence, parents should contact the school to make us aware of their daughter's absence. If no contact is made the school will telephone the parents. After any absence, when the pupil returns she should bring a note from her parents addressed to the Form Tutor, specifying the reason and dates for each period of absence. Notes both written and signed by the parent, are encouraged, but where a note has been written by another, including the pupil, and signed by the parent, this can be accepted under some circumstances. Absence cannot be authorised without this procedure.

If a pupil is absent from school for reasons other than ill health, this must be discussed with the school on each separate occasion. Leave may be granted in an emergency (eg bereavement) or for medical appointments which are necessary in school time, provided a written explanation is received.

Holidays

Holiday leave in term time will not be granted unless circumstances are exceptional. Our terms are short and intensive and a relatively long period of holidays is available. Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be addressed to the Head of Junior School or the Deputy Head Pastoral and Well Being of the Senior School. The school requires at least 48 hour's notice with a request for permission to be granted by the school. The onus is on the pupils to catch up with work missed during the absence.

Lateness

Pupils must attend registration on time in order to be marked as present for that session. Parents are expected to ensure that their daughters are present at registration. Arriving more than 30 minutes after the start of the session without good reason is counted as unauthorised absence.

Publication of Attendance Information

Parents have a duty to ensure that their daughters attend school.

Northwood College has a legal duty to promote attendance and to publish its absence figures. Parents will receive information concerning their daughter's attendance in written reports sent twice each year.

At the end of each academic year, the College has to make a return to the DCSF giving details of both authorised and unauthorised absence.

The College is committed to working with parents to achieve as high a level of attendance as possible.

Children Missing in Education

Children absent from school for more than 10 consecutive days will trigger communication with the LEA Children's services Children Missing in Education team.