ATTENDANCE POLICY

Principles

Pupils are expected to attend school every day. Absence, whatever its cause, is detrimental to any student's academic, social and emotional development. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both junior and senior school, with a cumulative effect. Regular or persistent absence can also indicate a pupil welfare issue.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly. Parents can only allow their child to miss school if they are too ill to go in or they have advance permission from the school. The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make it clear that Heads may only grant leave of absence *in exceptional circumstances.* 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.

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.

Reviewed October 2020 date due: September 2021 (DHP)

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 for Girls 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, preferably by email to absence@nwc.gdst.net, **to make us aware of their daughter's absence. If no contact is made the school will telephone the parents and at that time we will request written confirmation of the absence. Written confirmation will be required for each day of absence, preferably by email. 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 (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which are necessary in school time, provided a written explanation is received.

Medical and other appointments

These should be made in the holidays and out of school hours where possible to minimise the impact on lessons and school events and activities. Any notifications for absence or requests for planned absence should be sent initially to absence@nwc.gdst.net. Any extraordinary requests for absence will be considered by Ms Ferguson, Deputy Head, Pupil Wellbeing or the Head of Junior School.

Sixth Form planned absence

In the Sixth Form your daughter is permitted to attend **two** open or taster days during term time in each of Year 12 and 13. Your daughter is advised to seek out additional opportunities at weekends and during holidays. Any additional days taken will be treated as unauthorised absence.

Your daughter is permitted time off during term time to sit her practical and theory driving tests, but you will need to email for permission. Although this is usually granted, it may be rejected if for example, it clashes with key events and activities in school.

Holidays

Holiday leave in term time will not be granted unless circumstances are exceptional. **Absences that are not authorised by the school will be marked as 'unauthorised'**. Our terms are short and intensive and a relatively long period of holidays is available. The school keeps a record of such absence requests and parents will be invited to attend a meeting if requests for absence are repeatedly made at the end of term. Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be addressed to the Head of Junior School or the Deputy Head Pastoral Development and Well Being of the Senior School. The school requires at least 48 hours' 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. Junior School monitors lateness in the following way: three times late triggers a letter from the Head of Junior School, reminding parents of expectations and also eliciting whether there are any family circumstances we should know about, triggering the lateness. After six lates, parents are invited to meet the Head to discuss the problem and find a solution. Frequent lateness in the Senior school will warrant the issue of a Punctuality Report card to be signed off daily by the form tutor, culminating in a review meeting with the Head of Year. Parents will be informed by email. Persistent lateness will trigger remedial proceedings beginning with a parent meeting conducted by the Head of Year.

Publication of Attendance Information

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

Northwood College for Girls 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 school has to make a return to the DCSF giving details of both authorised and unauthorised absence.

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

We are obliged to provide attendance data to prospective employers and external organisations where requested, e.g. for university application purposes.

Poor attendance usually has a detrimental impact on attainment. Students with attendance below 90% are at a significant risk of underachieving in their school examinations, GCSE examinations and ultimately in their A Levels and this will usually be reflected in In Lesson Assessments (ILAs), tests and assessment results. Parents will receive attendance data in each school report and will be contacted by a member of the pastoral team to support the pupil in improving attendance. Attendance data is regularly communicated to Sixth Form students, and where there is a concern, to parents as appropriate. Attendance data will also contribute to a range of evidence used to determine UCAS Predicted Grades which are required for application to university. In the Sixth Form your daughter is expected to take responsibility for her attendance to all her timetabled lessons unless permission has otherwise been granted. Parents can support their daughter's attendance by avoiding the arrangements of appointments which coincide with PE lessons, Form Time, Extend and Enrich lessons wherever possible.

The Senior school will act promptly to work with parents to try to prevent absence from reaching such levels. We have a clear policy to deal with absence:

- Approaching 95%- discussion with tutor and support and advice provided to help pupil improve attendance.
- Below 95%- parents contacted by Head of Year and discussions held with pupil.
- Below 90%- parents will be asked to attend an absence meeting.
- Below 85%- the school may contact the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer.

The school recognises that some pupils may experience mitigating circumstances which can affect their ability to attend school and will prioritise the pupil's welfare in the decision-making process.

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.

Attendance policy Covid 19 Annex

Parents should contact the absence line if their daughter is unwell. However, if they are experiencing Covid19 symptoms, are self-isolating, in quarantine or have received a positive test for Covid19 they should contact Mrs Crouch, Junior school pastoral Deputy Head or Jill Ferguson, Pastoral Deputy Head.