THE NETHERHALL SCHOOL AND OAKES COLLEGE

ATTENDANCE POLICY

HIS POLICY WAS ADOPTED:	SUMMER 2021
THIS POLICY WILL BE REVIEWED:	SUMMER 2023
MEMBER OF STAFF WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR REVIEW:	DANIEL BERRY

1. **Aims and Objectives –** Our policy aims to

- Emphasise the importance to all students and families that attendance at school is vital for maximising every pupils' potential.
- Reinforce the notion that every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled and that parents are responsible in law for the regular and punctual attendance of their child.
- Make explicit to all (students, parents/carers, teachers) the schools' expectations on attendance levels and support strategies to help students maximise their attendance.
- Stress the need for home and school to work in partnership to achieve high attendance.
- Promote a consistent approach across the school towards attendance matters.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties linked to attendance at school.
- To confirm that attendance procedures are in place for Sixth Form students and are similar to those expected of all students in the main school.

2. **Responsibilities**

- **Students** must attend regularly (minimum of 96%) and punctually (before 8.40am/1.05pm)
- **Parents/Carers** (or anyone with parental responsibility) must ensure that students attend, regularly, on time, in correct uniform and with correct equipment. Parents/carers are expected to work in partnership with the school to secure 'good'attendance of their child and engage with intervention and support designed to improve the child's attendance.
- **School** must do 2 roll calls (am and pm) per day, monitor / report upon attendance of pupils and submit attendance data to external parties (Education Welfare service aka Local authority attendance officer) as required by law. The school is expected to be pro-active in the promotion and rewarding of 'good' attendance and to intervene effectively where issues linked to attendance arise.

The school sees **96% attendance as the minimum expectation** for all students and strives for all students to attend more than 97%. The school uses attendance information when producing references for pupils and is sometimes used as a criterion for selection in oversubscribed educational visits. Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and September 2013 make clear that Head teachers may not authorise holidays (or other Leave of Absence) in term time unless there are very exceptional circumstances. The school upholds these regulations and supports the use of financial penalties and court action where necessary. The school regularly communicates with stakeholders about attendance matters through the use of SIMS.net 'In Touch' communications, newsletter items, information on the school website and reports to Governors meetings. Staff training relating to attendance is available to all staff.

3. **Procedures and Practices**

Registration
Roll call registration (electronic – SIMS.net) takes place twice a day: at 8.40am in form rooms and at 1.05pm in lesson 5 subject classes. Additional (electronic) registration is undertaken at the start of every lesson by all teachers.

Lateness
Any student arriving in school after registration has been taken will be recorded as 'L' (late). If they arrive after registration period has finished they must to sign in at the School Reception area (Sixth Form Office for Sixth Form) using the electronic 'InvENTRY' machine. Pupils who are persistently late will be placed in a detention. Lateness to lessons is dealt with by the class teacher and Head of Department or Faculty. Any students not registered by 9.30am will be marked as O (unauthorised absence) and follow up communication with will be made to confirm the attendance status.

Absences
Absences from school will be either Authorised or Unauthorised depending upon circumstance. When students are absent from school for a period longer than 5 days due to illness, the school will expect to

see medical evidence for the illness. Students who are absent for more than 10 consecutive days, without communication with the school from parents, will automatically be coded as O unless other evidence is presented to the contrary.

<u>Authorised absences</u> are where a student has been absent and a satisfactory and legal reason has been communicated to the school via a form tutor, direct to the attendance / pastoral welfare team or whilst representing the school / educational visit. Other reasons include: genuine illness, days of religious observance, unavoidable medical appointments, exceptional circumstances (bereavement / marriage of immediate family member or traveller children going 'on the road').The school expects authorised absences to be kept to a minimum and therefore routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours or during school holidays wherever possible.

<u>Unauthorised absences</u> are when no letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parents / carers or the reason provided is not deemed as acceptable by the school. Examples of these may be attending a birthday celebration, minding a house, caring for a sibling, shopping or going on holiday.

The school, using DfE guidelines, makes the final decision about whether or not any absence is seen as authorised or unauthorised. Parents who wish to request absence may do so by writing directly to the Principal requesting an absence and setting out the reason for the request..

All absence is closely monitored and followed up. Patterns of absence and historical information is used to create an accurate profile of attendance. The school works with an assigned Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) to review absences and overall levels of attendance. Where attendance is a concern for students the school uses the Local Authority '3 letter' system to support improvement.

Letter 1 – Where attendance drops below 96% - this is a light warning / medical letter issued at the discretion of the school registering concern. An equivalent warning to Letter 1 can be issued verbally.

Letter 2 – Where attendance drops to below 94%, mostly unauthorised, over a 6 week period or greater. The letter invites parents to set up a meeting and informs them that absence will not be authorised unless accompanied by medical evidence.

Letter 3 – Where attendance drops below 92%, the child is at risking of falling into 'Persistent Absence or there has been a rapid decline in attendance. It informs the family that failure to improve the child's attendance in the next 6 weeks will result in a referral to the LAAO and possible legal intervention.

Other letters are also used to address issues around a child's attendance such as Medical letters, Lateness letters, suspected holiday letters and positive praise postcards.

Term-Time holidays

The school strongly discourage holidays being taken in term time as learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child. Netherhall School follows the new DfE guidelines from September 2013 that stated that requests for long-term leave can only be granted in 'exceptional circumstances' and decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. No term time leave will be granted, or deemed granted without a formal request on the appropriate forms (available from school reception and on the website) is received and a written response given. Interviews following a request may be conducted prior to any decision being made. The school will not authorise any holidays retrospectively and may follow up any reported illness that we feel may have been a term time holiday.

Netherhall school is obliged to refer any holiday longer than 3 days to the local authority who may issue the family with a penalty notice. If families take unauthorised holidays of less than three days they may still be issued with a Penalty Notice. This is a fine of £60 per parent per pupil (if paid within 21 days) or £120 per parent per pupil. Failure to pay would then potentially result in court proceedings being initiated. Full details of the absence request procedures are outlined in Appendix 3

Religeous observance

We respect and understand that children at Netherhall practice a number of different religions, and we are keen to ensure children and adults from different faith backgrounds are able to celebrate religious festivals at the appropriate time they occur throughout the school year.

The government guidance states:

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where

necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

For example, based on this advice children are allowed one day of school absence for Eid or Diwali. Therefore, any days taken either side of these officially agreed days will be classed as unauthorised. Even though the religious observance day will be an authorised absence, it will still be recorded as an absence and will be reflected in the child's attendance figure. If parents wish to remove a child from school for any religious festival they must contact the attendance officer prior to the day in question.

Reporting and rewarding good attendance
All pupils will have their school attendance recorded and reported to parents each term either via the reporting procedure or individual correspondence. A PRIDE point will (automatically via NIMBUS) be awarded to any student with 100% attendance for any full week in school. Certificates and / or individual praise letters for pupils with outstanding or significantly improved attendance will be awarded each term. Pupils who achieve 100% attendance will receive an award at the annual school prize giving celebrations or in celebration assemblies. There are tutor group prizes for those with the best attendance. Displays around the school buildings showing the names of students with 100% attendance are also used to reward students

4. **Strategies used to support and improve attendance at school**

In school support
The Pastoral welfare, Attendance and Inclusion teams in school all have crucial roles and responsibilities (see Appendix 2) that combine to keep the attendance of students both high profile and supported to improve. They undertake a variety of tasks and actions that all combine to help the attendance rates of individuals and the overall attendance rate for the school. Examples of the strategies that are used include:
- E-mail and Text message first day absence calling
- Lesson by lesson registration monitoring
- Awarding of PRIDE points for attendance and punctuality
- Absence authorisation / follow up
- Attendance interventions set up on 'The Register'
- Use of sanctions to punish truancy / poor punctuality
- Attendance information on Progress Reports
- Written letters / postcards and displays
- Meeting with parents / carers (e.g. at Parents' Evenings)
- Attendance reports and Action Plans (Individual Attendance Plans)
- Timetable and curriculum adaptations – Individual alternative education plans (IAEP's)
- Targets on Progress Plans, Pastoral Support Plans
- Discussions at key school meetings (Senior Leadership Team - SLT , faculty and pastoral team meetings)
- Whole school Every Child Matters (ECM) meetings

Additional support for Pupil Premium (PP) Students
Whilst PP student are subject to the normal policy and procedures SLT, School Achievement leader (SAL), Form Tutors and Pastoral staff monitor these students more closely with a view to having weekly updates and conversations where attendance falls below 96%. They are also subject to 1st day calling for any absence and are discussed first as a matter of priority at key meetings.

External agency support
Where attendance level of a pupil falls below acceptable levels (e.g. 90% or into Persistent Absence) or takes an unauthorised holiday the school liaises with specialist external agencies such as LAAO, Family Workers and Social Care team) to monitor attendance, use the legal framework with parents / carers and mentor students. Examples of strategies used (in addition to in school support ones) include
- Issuing standard letters (1, 2 and 3)
- Issuing Parent Contracts

- Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices
- Issuing Education Supervision Orders
- Meetings such as planning and police and criminal evidence (PACE)

5. Post 16 Attendance

All post 16 students have their attendance recorded, monitored and analysed in line with the post 16 DfE regulations. Whilst official figures are not collected for post 16 students' attendance the school will report on attendance as part of the school Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy. Much of the attendance policy, expectations and procedures that are in place for students in the main school (years 7-11) are equally applied for students in the Sixth Form. The main adaptations to policy and procedures are highlighted below

Registration – Post 16 students are registered directly in lessons, there is no roll call. Attendance information and reports relate to overall lesson attendance not twice daily roll call.

Absences – Absences should be reported and authorised by students themselves by contacting the school either by telephone or e-mail before 10am.

Intervention – There is no official intervention and escalation procedure linked to attendance levels but Teachers, Form Tutors and the Sixth Form Management Team use a range of strategies that are expected for the main school as appropriate with any student causing concern with regard to attendance.

6. Additional information

The local authority attendance officer for Netherhall School is Zena Cooper
Zena.Cooper@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Links to other policies
The importance of good attendance at school has a major link to other policies in school. The main policies that directly link or mention attendance include:
- Teaching and Learning,
- Assessment, Reporting and Marking Policy
- Behaviour for Learning,
- Examinations
- Child Protection / Safeguarding and Prevent

Useful Guidance and Websites
Further guidance relating to attendance is recommended to all staff, parents / carers and governors can be found in the following publications
www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/schools
https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence
www.netherhall.org

Appendices
Appendix 1 – School Register Codes
Appendix 2 – Roles and Responsibilities
Appendix 3 – Intervention Strategies
Appendix 4 – Term Time Holiday information

Appendix 1 – School Register codes

The DfE offers a comprehensive set of register codes which all schools are required to use. These codes are as follows:

/ \ -   Present am/pm
B   -   Educated off site - Approved Educational Activity.
C   -   Other authorised circumstances (including public performances licensed by the local authority, family bereavements, exceptional special occasions) - Authorised Absence.
D   -   Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) - Approved Educational Activity.
E   -   Excluded (no alternative provision made) - Authorised Absence.
F   -   Extended family holiday (agreed) - Authorised Absence.
G   -   Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess of agreement) - Unauthorised Absence.
H   -   Family holiday during term-time (provided this has been agreed by the school) - Authorised Absence.
I   -   Illness (not medical/dental appointments) - Authorised Absence.
J   -   Interview - Approved Educational Activity.
L   -   Late (before registers close) - Present.
M   -   Medical/Dental appointments - Authorised Absence.
N   -   No reason yet provided for absence - Unauthorised Absence.
O   -   Unauthorised Absence.
P   -   Approved Sporting Activity - Approved Educational Activity.
R   -   Religious Observance - Authorised Absence.
S   -   Study Leave - Authorised Absence.
T   -   Traveller child travelling - Authorised Absence.
U   -   Late after registers close without an acceptable explanation - Unauthorised Absence
V   -   Educational visit or trip - Approved Educational Activity.
W   -   Work Experience - Approved Educational Activity.
X   -   Non-compulsory school age absence - not counted in possible attendances. (X subcodes are used to clarify COVID 19 absence for shielding)
Y   -   Enforced closure – not counted in possible attendances.
Z   -   Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances.
-   School closed – not counted in possible attendance.

Form tutors are only required to use a limited number of the codes. The attendance office, manager and attendance leader should be consulted before entering codes that are different to those on the default settings via the electronic registration system.

Further coding information for C-19 are available from DEB

Appendix 2 – Roles and responsibilities

All staff - are expected to be excellent role models by having outstanding attendance and punctuality records

Subject Teacher
- Take an electronic register within the first 10 minutes of all lessons
- Follow up any suspected truancy from their lessons (with Student support officer SSO/School Achievement leader (SAL) and parents)
- Provide work for students who are long term absent (or truant their lessons to do in detention).

Form Tutor/Mentor
- Carry out electronic register at 8.40am
- Review weekly attendance data for tutor group and look for concerns and patterns
- Deal with students that are persistently late
- Make contact with the families of poor attenders / timekeepers
- Liaise with Year Leader, Attendance officer / SAL about pupils causing concern e.g. patterns of absence or truancy from lessons – agree a plan of action
- Complete, monitor and review attendance interventions for students

Pastoral Support Workers
- Attend a fortnightly meeting with the Attendance Office, School Achievement leader (SAL) and SLT link (PSW/YL)
- Work with vulnerable students and families that are identified in 'Transfer and Transition' process. (PSW)
- Follow up day-to-day attendance issues under the direction of School Achievement leader (SAL) (PSW)
- Attend Parents Evenings to hold discussions about attendance with selected families. (PSW)
- Meet with LAAO when required
- Prepare and present attendance information at key meetings for students

School Achievement Leader
- Ensure that the day-to-day implementation of the Attendance Policy is efficient
- Organise and supervise the 'Late Gate' system during a.m. registration period
- Follow up truancy with appropriate sanctions
- Instigate/hold follow up meetings with the families of poor attenders (following tutor contact).
- Manage the process of getting work for excluded, long term absent and adapted timetable students using Pastoral Support Workers when necessary
- Review attendance figures and tutor follow up / interventions on a weekly basis
- Monitor/quality assure the work of tutors including setting attendance targets, interventions recorded on NIMBUS and communications with families for pupils,
- Attend a fortnightly meeting with the Attendance Officer, PSW and SLT link staff
- Lead the process of using Attendance Plans for students in their year group
- Provide information to Attendance Officer of any student on the PA register.
- Issue rewards / certificates for students with consistently high attendance.
- Use assemblies / other forms of communications with pupils /families to reinforce the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. Praise those with consistently high attendance
- Attend meetings related to attendance: Team around a child (TAC) meetings, Planning meetings, Pre court meetings.
- Produce case studies linked to attendance for students in their year groups

Attendance Officer and Student Services staff
- Process attendance data and lates / signing in and out information
- Organise and run the absence calling system
- Organise INVENTRY punctuality system
- Monitor missing registers / roll call information
- Produce weekly attendance information for tutors, pastoral staff and SLT
- Keep attendance information on 'Staff shared' up to date each week SSO)
- Produce absence letters and attendance certificates for School Achievement leader (SAL) when requested
- Attend a fortnightly meeting for each year group to discuss attendance rates and students causing concern with YL/PSW and fortnightly with Key Stage Directors
- Meet at least weekly with the assigned school LAAO

- Complete statistical analysis and data returns for SLT,LGB, DfE. OfSTED

SLT
- Set school attendance target
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and reviewed on a systematic basis'
- Line manage the work relating to attendance of the Attendance Manager and School Achievement leader (SAL)
- Set and monitor annual Attendance Action Plan / Ensure Attendance policy is implemented.
- Analyse attendance data to identify trends, areas improving and areas for improvement – this includes information by year group cohort, gender, and other significant groups
- Liaise with the Governing Body member linked to Attendance and report each term
- Decide upon issues relating to the issue of 'Fixed Penalty Notices'

Governors
- Review Attendance Policy every 2 years
- Monitor policy implementation via reports to meetings and link governor system
- Set attendance targets with SLT

Locality Team / LAAO's
- Meet with Attendance Officer in school
- Work with students identified by school as being in PA
- Chairing meetings for students where the escalation / intervention process is needed
- Implement the LA procedures in enforcing attendance and the legal consequences
- Lead on work with families identified as causing significant concern
- Issue Fixed Penalty Notices

Appendix 3 - Intervention Levels and expectations

Attendance Flow Chart
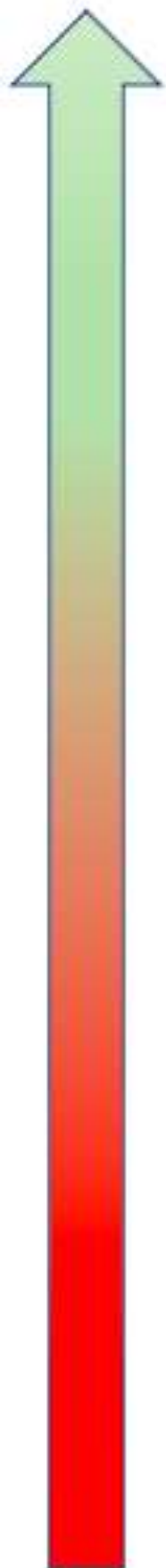
Attendance 96-100%
Individual (praise) conversations with students
Absence follow up by tutor and SAL, if required
Regular review of attendance in tutor time
Rewards issued for excellent / improved attendance
Contact with home to share praise

Attendance 94-95.9%
Individual tutor conversations with students
Absence follow up by tutor and SAL, if required
Regular review of attendance in tutor time/SAL AO meetings
Rewards issued for improved behaviour
Contact with home to remind of expectations and progress
"Soft Letter" reminding of expectations

Attendance 90-93.9%
All of the above plus: -
Letter 1 issued plus meeting/call with parents setting targets for improvement. 4-6 weeks to demonstrate sustained improving attendance to meet the attendance target
Active attendance tracking by tutor, SAL and AO

Attendance 85-89.9%
All of the above plus: -
Letter 2 issued plus meeting/call with parents setting targets for improvement. 4-6 weeks to demonstrate sustained improving attendance to meet the attendance target.
Active attendance tracking by tutor, SAL and AO
Discussion with LAAO (Zena Cooper)

Attendance <85%
All of the above plus: -
Letter 3 issued plus meeting/call with parents setting targets for improvement. 4-6 weeks to demonstrate sustained improving attendance to meet the attendance target.
Active attendance tracking by tutor, SAL and AO
Liaise with LAAO (Zena Cooper) to facilitate formal proceedings

SAL = School achievement leader

Appendix 4 - Information about Term Time Holidays

The following information has been taken directly from the Cambridgeshire County Council website

Term time holidays

Children of school age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Regular attendance is the best way of ensuring that a child makes the most of the educational opportunities which are available to him or her.

When a child is absent from school, he or she misses not only the teaching provided but is also less prepared for the lessons after his or her return.

There are only 190 statutory school days in one year and 175 days (weekends and school holidays) available to use for holidays. Therefore every school day counts!

Key information

Prior to June 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed for headteachers to grant leave of absence for a term time family holiday in 'special circumstances' and for extended leave in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to these regulations remove references to family holidays and extended leave. The amendments make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and that headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Your rights and responsibilities

If your child is registered at school you must ensure that s/he attends regularly.

The regulations make it clear that parents, carers or relatives do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term time holiday.

If parents take their child on holiday in term time this will be counted as unauthorised absence - this is the same as truancy and you may be at risk of 🔲 being applied.
http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/3331/penalty_notice_code_of_conduct

What you can do

Look at the school's attendance policy on the website for full information.

Speak to the school direct if you feel you need to take your child out of school in exceptional circumstances