

NOTRE DAME SENIOR SCHOOL PUPIL REGISTRATIONS AND ATTENDANCE POLICY

NOTRE
DAME
SCHOOL



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Notre Dame Senior School's ("the school") Pupil Registrations and Attendance Policy has been written with due regard to all relevant legislation and guidance, including 'Children Missing Education 2016', 'The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024' and 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance – new responsibilities applied from August 2024.

1. Aims

Notre Dame School aspires to high levels of attendance from all pupils. Good attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, well-being and wider life chances. The aims of this policy are as follows:

- to develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance;
- to ensure, so far as possible, that every pupil in the school can benefit from and make their full contribution to the life of the school;
- to prioritise and where possible improve attendance and punctuality across the school, to reduce absence and set out the school's approach to the management of absence/non-attendance;
- to recognise the linkages between attendance/absence and pupil wellbeing, specifically ensuring a consistent whole school approach to safeguarding; and
- to help promote a whole school culture of safety, equality and protection.

2. Senior Attendance Champion

The board of governors has overall responsibility for all matters which are the subject of this policy. They recognise that improving attendance is a school leadership issue. They have appointed a designated senior leader to have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in the senior school, referred to in this policy as the Senior Attendance Champion (SAC). The senior school's SAC is Jessica Northcote and her contact details are jnorthcote@notredame.co.uk.

The SAC's responsibilities are:

- to set a clear vision for improving attendance in school;
- to establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure the systems are followed by staff;
- to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes;
- to have oversight of and analyse attendance data; and
- to communicate clear messages on the importance of attendance to pupils and parents.

3. Attendance Advice Officer

The school has an assigned Attendance Advice Officer from the LEA.

4. Expectations

The school expects its pupils:

- to attend regularly and on time;
- to be present throughout the school day (apart from in Year 12/13 where students may leave early if they have no lessons, are up to date with work and they sign out correctly);
- to be prepared adequately for the school day; and
- to comply with the school policies and procedures.

The school expects its parents/carers:

- to encourage their pupils to attend school every day, on time;
- to contact the school office by phone or email on the first day of absence by 09:00 at the latest, and each day of absence thereafter - 01932 869990 or office@notredame.co.uk
- to arrange holidays outside school hours;

- to arrange medical appointments (where possible) outside school hours;
- To complete the exceptional absence request form at least two weeks before the requested absence date/s;
- to regularly update emergency contact details; and
- to work with the SAC on longer term absences.

5. Admissions register

Every pupil is to be listed on the admissions register, which is held on SIMS, on the first day on which the pupil is due to attend the school. Each entry is to include:

- full name, name that the pupil uses at school, sex and address;
- full name and address of each of the pupil's parents;
- which of the pupil's parents, if any, the pupil normally lives with and at least one telephone number that each such parent can be contacted with in an emergency;
- day, month and year of the pupil's birth;
- day, month and year of the pupil's starting day at the school, or re-admission to the school;
- name and address of the last school the pupil attended, if any;
- any changes to the pupil's normal residence (including the full name of the parent, the additional or alternative address, the date from which the pupil will reside there); and
- for a pupil who leaves to attend another school or college, the date of leaving and the name and address of the new school or college and the date of starting.

6. Attendance

All staff and the board of governors regard good attendance and punctuality as a high priority. We are committed to a whole school approach to attendance and punctuality. We regard excellent attendance of paramount importance whilst being sympathetic and supportive to individual family circumstances. Our aim is to ensure our school works in partnership with parents, our local community and the local authority to support and promote good attendance and punctuality. The school's SAC oversees the strategic approach to attendance, as outlined within the 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance:

Have high aspiration for student attendance supported by an inclusive ethos – EXPECT

Have regular monitoring of student attendance in place for individuals and groups – MONITOR

Work with parents and students to support improved attendance – LISTEN and UNDERSTAND

Remove barriers and add support for students to thrive at school, in partnership with early help systems offered at school – FACILITATE SUPPORT

Work closely with our Surrey Attendance Advice Officer (AAO) and/or multi-agency teams to FORMALISE SUPPORT and escalate action where no other avenue remains

This strategy has three clear phases: **Prevention, Early Intervention, Targeted.**

The importance of regular school attendance cannot be overstated. Regular attendance is a prerequisite to an outstanding education and securing this for our students is high priority. By failing to attend school regularly, students negatively affect their educational achievement and progress, and their safeguarding is compromised. We know that when students attend Notre Dame, they make very strong progress in relation to the national progress outcomes. We also know, that in the exceptional

circumstances where attendance falls to below 90%, their progress and academic outcomes reduce as a direct consequence.

The Department for Education have set attendance targets for maintained schools. However, there is no data for Notre Dame available from the Department for Education and therefore the school cannot participate in this process.

Actions to support our attendance strategy include:

Prevention	Early Intervention	Targeted
School culture	Home visits – where required	School Attendance Meetings – with SAC and Headteacher
Regular attendance data shared with parents, staff and external agencies	EBSNA programme	SLT lead adult - School Attendance Champion
Tutor support through building positive relationships	SEN intervention/support	Surrey AAO referral
Subject teacher support	Counsellor referral	Education supervision or parenting order
Well-Being Mentors – 1:1 support	Attendance Action plan (voluntary)	
Well-Being Therapy Dogs	School Attendance Panel Meetings – with HOY & SAC	
Head of Year support - calls and meetings with parents to offer support and advice about improving attendance	Voluntary Early Help Plan – liaise with external agencies	
Mentoring for the pupil		
Careers advice		
Rewards and celebration		
Regular information for families – updates through termly bulletins, parent information evenings and letters		
Well-Being Hub – sign posting in assemblies, parent information evenings and pastoral bulletins		
Home visits – where required		

Additionally,

- consideration will be given to whether an EHCP or alternative provision would be relevant in cases of very concerning ongoing attendance issues;
- part-time timetables can only be considered in very specific cases and must be for the shortest time necessary, and will be formally reviewed regularly; and
- working with the LEA if necessary, on more formal support such as attendance contracts, fixed penalty notices and children’s services especially if attendance is below 50%.

To achieve these aims the school will:

- offer a safe and supportive environment, which welcomes pupils regardless of race, gender or learning needs;
- establish clear and effective procedures for administration;
- foster a climate where the school community, teachers, parents/carers, governors and pupils value attendance and punctuality;
- comply with legal requirements;
- analyse attendance data and weekly patterns (both individually and for cohorts of pupils including by year group, SEND pupils or specific backgrounds) and ensure any pupils presenting poor levels of attendance and punctuality are noted, monitored and appropriate action taken. Attendance analysis considers benchmarks for attendance. Attendance analysis is provided to the board of governors;
- keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance through established procedures;
- Heads of Year proactively work with parents where attendance is a concern using the data analysis carried out using our software program;
- hold meetings with parents/carers of those children who are considered vulnerable or who are persistently absent;
- refer pupils or families to external agencies as quickly as possible where there is a concern about attendance which cannot be supported fully in school or where attendance is below 90%, with a particular focus where attendance is below 50%;
- work in partnership with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service, Social Care and other outside agencies;
- work with families to reintegrate pupils after a long period of absence, and if helpful, providing for a time limited phased return; and
- provide regular guidance and training to staff on attendance to ensure staff know what is expected of them by this policy and they have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles.

The government have introduced a new national framework of penalty notices to ensure consistency of approach across the country. Whilst Notre Dame School will not be issuing the Formal Penalty Notices, we will be issuing formal notices and reporting certain thresholds of unauthorised absence to the Department for Education.

A formal notice can be issued:

- When a child has been taken out of school for 10 sessions (i.e. 10 x ½ days or 5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session.
- This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks).
- These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks).
- The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

Within a rolling 3-year period, the unauthorised absence thresholds are as follows:

- First Formal Notice – 10 sessions within 10 school weeks
- Second Formal Notice – 10 sessions within 10 school weeks (total of 20 sessions missed within a 3-year period)

The government expects schools to work with Surrey County Council in consideration of prosecution if a third set of absences occur within the parameters set out above. The Attendance Advice Officer can take legal action under the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children attend school. This will often include considering prosecution but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

The school is set up and connected to Surrey Schools Data Feed for Independent settings. This means Surrey's Education databases will receive daily updates from the school's MIS system. Cases where attendance is a concern will now be automatically highlighted to the inclusions team and the school may be contacted regarding specific cases.

Should the school be concerned about a pupil's attendance, the following process will take place:

Prevention of further absence
(Threshold up to 10 sessions / 5days)
From 19th August 2024

Letter 1 – 4 sessions missed
Letter 2 – 6 sessions missed
(*Home visit) 3-week Improvement Window
School Attendance Panel with HOY – 8 sessions missed
3-week Improvement Window
Formal Notice to Improve Letter – 10 sessions in 10 weeks.

Early Intervention
(Threshold up to 20 sessions / 10 days)
in a rolling 3yr period

Formal reminder letter of further SAP – 13 sessions missed
School Attendance Panel with HOY & SAC – 16 sessions missed
(*2nd home visit) 2-week Improvement Window
School Attendance Meeting – 18 sessions missed
2-week Improvement Window
Second Formal Notice to Improve Letter – 10 sessions in 10 weeks.

Targeted
(Threshold up to 30 sessions / 15 days)
in a 3yr rolling period

Formal Penalty Notice review meeting (SAC & Headteacher).
2-week Improvement Window
Improvement = Monitor under **FPN review process**
No Improvement = refer to **Attendance Advice Officer (AAO)** for interview under caution.

SCC Interview Under Caution with AAO.
2 Week Improvement Window
SCC Prosecution to be considered – Max fine £2500.

7. Attendance registers

The school uses an electronic (computerised) system of registration. The register is a legal document and as such can be used in a court of law (e.g. to establish a pupil's attendance or absence at a particular time on a precise day.)

The school expects pupils to be present for the whole of the school day, but this period may be extended, for example for out of school clubs, sports fixtures or school trips. Pupils are marked as present, absent, attending an approved activity (and its nature is coded) or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (i.e. if the school is closed due to an unavoidable cause). The nature of any exceptional circumstances must be recorded. Each absence is coded as authorised or unauthorised. The school uses the appropriate national attendance and absence codes.

The registers are marked at both sessions (morning and afternoon). The morning register is marked during form time which runs from 08:40 – 08:50. Pupils arriving after the start of the school day must enter the school via the main entrance at the front of the building where they will be met by the Office team. They will record the pupil's name, time of arrival and reason for lateness and amend the register on SIMS to reflect the late arrival. It is vital that any pupil arriving late is signed in, to comply with Health and Safety procedures. Pupils arriving after registration will be recorded as U or another appropriate absence code. We all have a responsibility to encourage punctuality; it is important that every pupil arrives in school on time. However, on the occasion when there is mass travel disruption to certain areas, the attendance register will remain open to accommodate for this.

Authorised absences

Absence may be authorised for the following reasons:

- sickness;
- religious observance in accordance with Local Authority guidelines;
- medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school hours. Where possible parents/carers should try to arrange these appointments for out of school hours;
- special circumstances authorised by the Head Teacher;
- permanent or fixed term exclusions;
- any application for holiday during term time must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave. Parents must complete an exceptional absence request form (accessible from Firefly) at least two weeks before the requested absence date(s) and have any leave of absence permitted by the Head Teacher;
- participation in a performance (a local authority licence or BOPA must be obtained in advance); and
- where parents who are part of the Traveller community are travelling for occupational reasons.

Unauthorised absences

Absences may be recorded as unauthorised for the following reasons:

- truancy – a pupil is away from school without authority from the Head Teacher. This includes parentally condoned absences;
- any absence which the school has not been informed about, either by letter, telephone or via the online form;
- staying at home to look after a sibling(s) or sick relatives;
- any family holiday that has not been authorised by the Head Teacher; and
- where no reason for absence is established or the school believes the reason given does not qualify for authorised absence.

LEA requests for data

The school must make a return to the local authority (an “attendance return”) giving the full name and address of every registered pupil of compulsory school age who, since the last time an attendance return was made in relation to the school—

- has failed to attend the school regularly
- has been absent from the school for a continuous period of at least ten school days in respect of which their absence is recorded in the attendance register exclusively using one or more of the following codes (G/N/O/U)

The school must make a return to the local authority (a “sickness return”) giving the full name and address of a registered pupil of compulsory school age if—

- the pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the code I (unable to attend because of sickness); and

the school has reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil—

- will be unable to attend because of sickness for at least 15 consecutive school days; or
- will be, or will have been, unable to attend because of sickness for a total of at least 15 school days during the school year, whether consecutive or not.

Process for absences

If a child is absent from school the parent/carer should contact the school on 01932 869990 and follow the voice messages, email office@notredame.co.uk or log the absence via the online form. If a parent/carer does not inform the school the admin staff will ring the parental home on the first day of absence to ascertain why the child is absent. If the absence continues without explanation the office will follow this up again, referring to the Head of Year or DSL if there is no permissible reason for the continued absence.

The senior school uses software to analyse data on attendance (weekly, half termly, termly and full year data) and this is followed up with parents as necessary. The analysis includes looking at specific days/subjects where there is poorer attendance. The school has the services of an Attendance Advice Officer for specialist support. The school has statutory reporting obligations. The school must report unauthorised absences for a continuous period of 10 days or more to the local authority.

The school discusses the link between attendance and achievement with parents. Attendance is reported to parents on the written reports and high levels of attendance are recognised. Punctuality is expected from all pupils and any concerns are addressed by the SAC. The school will always consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. We will offer good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions and work with their parents and make reasonable adjustments for them where needed.

Where there is a concerning pattern of attendance the school will consider the potential sensitivity of some possible reasons for absence and will offer support and reassure that the school is a place of safety and support. If all avenues of support have been exhausted but severe unauthorised absence continues, then this is viewed as a safeguarding issue of educational neglect and a referral will be made. The school recognises that children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation.

Unauthorised absence data will be passed to the school’s Attendance Advice Officer. The further action they might seek to make includes fines, education supervision orders, attendance prosecution and attendance orders.

Study leave

In accordance with the DfE's *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (2024) statutory guidance, study leave may only be granted for public examinations (GCSE and A Level). It must not be used for internal examinations, including mock exams. During public examination periods, provision is available in school for students who wish to study on site, and these sessions remain part of the school's education offer. When authorised, study leave will be coded as **X** in the attendance register, in line with DfE requirements.

8. Retaining registers

Copies of the admissions and attendance register are kept for six years beginning with the day on which the entry was made, and every back-up copy of the register is preserved for six years after the end of the school year that it relates to. The admissions and attendance register will be updated each month both electronically by the SIMS manager and on paper in the school safe. If any amendments are required, this will only be if there is an absolute necessity to do so. The school will ensure the registers show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name and title of the person who made the amendment.

9. Remote education

The school is required to record all absence from in-person lessons. The school may, in limited circumstances, provide remote education to enable pupils, who are well enough to learn but unable to attend the school site, to keep pace with their education. However, this will only be in extremely limited circumstances and for the shortest time possible. If the pupil has an EHCP or has a social worker, the local authority should also be involved in the decision.

Pupils who are absent from school and receiving remote education still need to be recorded as absent using the most appropriate absence code.

10. Additional needs

It is recognised that some pupils may find it harder than others to attend school. The school will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

The school will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with pupils without a disability, in relation to school attendance. The school will also work with parents, and where appropriate the local authority, to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, e.g. ensuring the provision outlined in a pupil's EHCP is accessed. Suitable strategies will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issues that are affecting their attendance.

Where barriers are outside of the school's control, the school will work with parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

The school will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

11. Removal of a pupil from the registers

A pupil (apart from those leaving at the end of year 13) is only to be removed from the admissions and attendance registers (the LEA will be informed before this happens) if any of the following situations occur. These include:

- the pupil is registered at another school or college;
- where a pupil has a school attendance order which has been changed to name another school or has been revoked;
- if written notification is received from the parent stating the pupil is being educated at another school or college;
- the pupil has ceased to attend the school and no longer resides at a place which is a reasonable distance from the school;
- the pupil has permission for more than ten days leave but has failed to attend school for a period of over ten days directly preceding the holiday, and that there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is sick, and that the school and LEA jointly have failed after reasonable enquiry to ascertain where the pupil is;
- the pupil has been absent without authorisation for over 20 days and there are no reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is sick and that the school and LEA jointly have failed after reasonable enquiry to ascertain where the pupil is;
- a pupil is detained under a sentence of detention and the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will attend school after they cease to be detained under that sentence;
- the pupil is no longer of compulsory school age and the parent has notified the school that the pupil will cease to attend school;
- the pupil was admitted for nursery education but has not transferred to reception;
- a pupil is unlikely to return to school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age due to health reasons;
- where a pupil has died; and
- where a pupil has been permanently excluded.

Note: the compulsory school age is the last Friday of June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

12. Reporting duties

The LEA will be informed before a pupil is removed from the school roll. The school will give the LEA –

- the full name of the pupil;
- the address of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives or can be contacted in an emergency;
- the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- name of the pupil's other or future school and the pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable; and
- the ground (prescribed in regulation 9) under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admissions register.

If the pupil is leaving the school to be home educated Surrey requires the school to complete an additional form specifically for those pupils.

When pupils are added to the admissions register during the school year (i.e. not at the start of the year) or at the start of the year in any cohort apart from Year 7, the LEA is to be informed by the Registrar or a delegated person within five days. Attendance data is returned to the LEA as required.

The school will inform the LEA of the name and address of any pupil who is absent for more than 10 days without being authorised or who fails to attend regularly.

If a parent decides to home educate their child the school will contact the LEA and seek to arrange a meeting with the parent, LEA and the school.

13. Children Missing from Education

When a pupil is removed from the admissions register for any reason, parents are required to name the destination school and the expected start date, and these are noted on SIMS. The LEA is to be informed of the student leaving by the Registrar or a delegated person before the removal takes place, if the pupil leaves (or joins) at non-standard transition times. If no destination school is given, then the LEA is informed of that fact.

14. Information sharing

Personal information on attendance will only be shared in line with legal obligations and having regard to government guidance on attendance, safeguarding and children missing education. The school, local authorities and other local partners should work jointly and share data on individual cases where it is of benefit to a pupil. The school is legally required to share information from the registers with the local authority. As a minimum this includes:

- new pupil and deletion returns;
- attendance returns; and
- sickness returns.

15. Working with external agencies

The school works proactively with their assigned Attendance Advice Officer and will also refer pupils or families to children's services. Data is shared as needed with children's services, health professionals or police. The school will work with the LEA and attend Targeting Support Meetings as invited by the LEA.

Linked policies

Safeguarding and Child Protection policy

Appendix 1 - Attendance and Absence Codes

Attending the school	
/ \	Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session
L	Late arrival before the register is closed
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip
P	Participating in a sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending any other approved educational activity
D	Dual registered at another school
Absent – Leave of absence	
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad.
M	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
S	Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance
Absent – other authorised reasons	
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)
E	Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable causes	
Q	Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause
Absent – unauthorised absence	
G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register
#	Planned whole school closure