

ATTENDANCE POLICY
Nayland Primary School
Autumn 2024

Introduction Nayland Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school punctuality and attendance for all. The policy has been drawn up after consultation with the school community and is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations.

School's roles and responsibilities All staff have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school punctuality and attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Leader Members of the Senior Leadership Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. Attendance will be reported to the governing body termly, issues identified promptly with individual families and support put in place to deal with any difficulties.

Registration The school is required to complete the attendance register twice each day; at the start of the morning and the afternoon sessions. Staff members are responsible for completing the attendance registers using prescribed codes. Registers are completed promptly from 9am each morning and at 1pm (EYFS/KS1) and 1.30pm (KS2) and a mark made during the registration period in respect of each child. Registers will close at 9.10 am and 1.05/1.35pm. Any pupil who arrives after the closing of the register will count as absent. Pupils who arrive before the register closes will be counted as present but will be considered late. (N.B. Bus travelers are given dispensation if the bus arrives late.)

Categorising Absence A mark is made for each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked 'unauthorised absence' unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment/correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the school.

Nayland Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Nayland will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and they will be encouraged to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised as authorisation always rests with the school.

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within 2 weeks, the absence will remain unauthorised;

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example – to participate in an approved performance for which a license has been granted by the Local Authority
- a pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
- the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- the pupil has a medical appointment (out of school hours wherever possible, return to school immediately afterwards, send him/her to school beforehand)
- there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
- the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the LA
- the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits and, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
- in other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. This must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools will consider each application individually taking into account the specific

facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. Generally, **the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.** Leave of absence should not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. (*Working together to improve school attendance, Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities – August 2024*)

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised.

Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

Approved Educational Activity Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

Staff Training The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

Collection and analysis of data The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance. Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance Attendance has a very high profile at Nayland Primary School; parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment. The school will follow up on all absences in order to secure the best attendance rate for all pupils.

First-day calling Nayland Primary School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a pupil is absent without

explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify issues at an early stage.

Meetings with parents: Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence the school will invite parents to a meeting to put plans in place to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance. If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

Lateness and punctuality: To avoid disruption of their own and other children's learning, pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence.

Pupils who arrive late, but before the register closes, will be marked L on the register.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore be signed in using the Inventory screen by their parent/carer. Pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment) or returning to school later in the day are signed out and in using the Inventory screen to record their whereabouts at all times.

Post-registration truancy: Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour will immediately be made known to his/her parents/carers and the police to ensure safety.

Unauthorised holiday absences: Where parents/carers choose to take unauthorised leave for the purpose of holidays they should be aware that school attendance registers will show evidence of these unauthorised absences. A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

'Working together to improve school attendance,' Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities August 2024 sets out the thresholds and procedures for Fixed Penalty Notices as follows:

The threshold is 10 sessions 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).

The governors of Nayland School take attendance very seriously and must follow this DFE guidance strictly in all circumstances.

Parents'/carers' responsibilities: Responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests primarily with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Nayland Primary School.

The school expects parents/carers to:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.
- notify Nayland on the first day of absence by leaving a message on the school app, by telephone, visiting the school office or sending a letter.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the necessary equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing home learning diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's learning and activities;
- contact the school without delay with concerns about any aspects of their children's school lives. School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

Pupils' responsibilities: All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher in the first instance.

Governors' responsibilities: Refer to Section 175 (2) Education Reform Act 1998.

'The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.'

Conclusion: Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the outcomes of Every Child Matters: be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic well-being.

Reviewing the policy: The school will review this policy each year with its allocated Education Welfare Officer.

Signature of Chair of Governors _____

Date _____

To be Reviewed Autumn 2025