

NEWPORT GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL ACADEMY TRUST



ATTENDANCE POLICY including Leave of Absence

Policy written by: SLT
Policy written / reviewed: Summer Term 2026
Next review due: Summer 2027
Statutory Governor Approval: 18 May 2026

1. Aims

This policy aims to support excellent levels of attendance at NGHS to enable all students to achieve their potential. We believe that, if students are to benefit from education, punctuality and high levels of attendance are crucial. The school aims to work with parents/carers to ensure students meet our whole school target of 97%. Attendance below 95% is considered a cause for concern and will trigger intervention.

Our school will give high priority to sharing the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify, and strive, to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible in partnership with parents/carers and students. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the student to full attendance at all times.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and school attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of the Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments)
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The school will:

- allow students to arrive on the school site from 8:00am and remain until 5:00pm,
- complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session,
- ensure students arriving after 8:55am are marked as L, and after 9:15am marked as U,
- ensure that for the afternoon session, students arriving after 1:45pm are marked as L, and after 2:40pm as U,
- use the attendance registration codes as set out in the DfE statutory guidance,
- ensure communication is obtained each day during absence and a third day checking call with student,
- keep copies of any correspondence to and/or from parents/carers linked to attendance,
- share with parents/carers the importance of contacting School early on the first day of absence,
- regularly monitor attendance and compare this with local and national figures, for all students and vulnerable groups,
- work with students and their parents/carers to support high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- promote and reward 100% attendance,
- promote and reward attendance above 97% (school target),
- promote and reward improved attendance,
- follow our school behaviour policy where students are late to school or form time,

- have in place procedures which allow students to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members,
- work with the local authority, and where required, make appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance,
- have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education',
- collect and analyse attendance data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or pupil cohorts who need it most, in addition to identifying trends. Data will be used to:
 - Monitor absence or lateness of individual students so that appropriate action can be taken.
 - Monitor patterns of absence and lateness in relation to cohorts and vulnerable groups across the school to identify trends.
 - Compare the school's performance to available local and national figures.
 - Enable the school to publish data in relation to levels of absenteeism for Trustees and parents.
 - Assist the school in setting challenging but realistic attendance targets for the future.
 - Inform future educational establishments of previous attendance levels for students in order for them to work effectively with their students following transition.
- ensure that the Governing Body and the school's senior leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy.

We expect parents/carers to:

- ensure that their child arrives at the school on time, in the correct uniform and with the necessary equipment,
- promote the importance of regular attendance at home,
- follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from the school, failure to provide a reason for absence may result in the absence being recorded as unauthorised.
- avoid unnecessary absences, ensuring that wherever possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance,
- seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance by contacting the pastoral team through school office
- not take their child out of education for holidays during term time,
- inform the school in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live, in writing or by email (schooloffice@nghs.org.uk)
- provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school every day.
- be on time for school every day.
- attend every timetabled session, on time.
- sign in at Reception if they are late to school and provide a reason.
- sign in and out using their ID cards if leaving the site at lunchtime (Sixth Form only)
- sign in during P4 using their ID cards in the atrium if they have an independent study period (Sixth Form only)

4. Procedures

In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the students the importance of this.

The School Attendance Officer will monitor attendance and inform Form Tutors and Heads of Year when a student's attendance falls below 95%. If this occurs, there are a number of interventions that will be put into place:

STAGE 1

First contact from the Form Tutor. Discussion with the student to see if there are any reasons for the absences, including any in-school barriers to attendance. A record of this conversation will be kept and shared with the appropriate Head of Year and Attendance Officer. Where school barriers are identified, the Head of Year and Wellbeing Officers will provide further support and signposting in order to help address these. Form Tutors will remind students of the school's attendance expectations as part of the conversation.

STAGE 2

Where weekly attendance monitoring shows a further decline in attendance since Stage 1, a school attendance letter 1 (SAL1) will be sent out from the Attendance Officer. A copy will be added to the student's file. This letter serves as a reminder to parents/carers of their responsibilities in ensuring their child attends school every day except when a statutory reason applies.

STAGE 3

Where weekly attendance monitoring evidences further declines in attendance since Stage 2, school attendance letter 2 (SAL2) will be sent out by the Head of Year. This will request an appointment with the Head of Year. Parents/Carers are expected to work with the school and proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support. The Head of Year will discuss the attendance pattern with the parent / carer and student and will work through reasons for the low attendance and complete an attendance improvement plan. A copy of the agreed improvement plan will be shared following the meeting and a copy will also be added to the student's file.

STAGE 4

Where weekly attendance monitoring evidences further declines in attendance since Stage 3, the school will refer to the Attendance Support Team at Telford and Wrekin and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) regarding next steps and to agree a joint approach moving forward. School attendance letter 3 (SAL3) may also be sent out signed by the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for attendance. This will request an appointment to an attendance support meeting with the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for attendance, the Education Welfare Officer and in some cases a Trustee of the school.

During the meeting:

- The student's attendance record and any patterns of absence will be reviewed.
 - Underlying concerns and potential barriers to attendance will be explored.
 - Clear expectations for improved attendance will be set; and
 - A formal action plan, including targets, will be agreed.
 -
- Parents / carers will be reminded of their legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Parents/Carers are expected to engage fully with this process and work in partnership with the school and relevant agencies to address any identified barriers to attendance.

STAGE 5 – Continued Monitoring and First Warning (AST 1A)

Where there is insufficient improvement following Stage 4, the school will continue to work in collaboration with the Education Welfare Officer and consider additional support strategies, such as:

- Early Help Assessment (EHA).
- Multi-agency interventions (e.g. BSAT); or
- Other appropriate external services

These support mechanisms may be implemented at any stage where appropriate in order to proactively address barriers to attendance. Parents/Carers are expected to demonstrate consistent engagement with the support offered and a sustained commitment to improving attendance.

Where concerns persist, the school, in consultation with the Education Welfare Officer, may refer the case to the Local Authority requesting the issue of an ASTIA (First Warning Letter), where it is deemed appropriate.

Stage 6 – Final Warning (AST2A)

Where attendance continues to show insufficient improvement following the issuance of an ASTIA (First Warning Letter), the Local Authority may proceed with issuing an AST2A (Final Warning Letter).

At this stage, parents/carers will be formally notified that attendance remains a significant concern and that failure to demonstrate sustained improvement may result in legal proceedings.

The school will continue to work in partnership with the Education Welfare Officer and the Local Authority to support the family in addressing any ongoing barriers to attendance.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Engage consistently with all support offered; and
- Take all reasonable steps to ensure the student attends school regularly without delay.

Stage 7 – Interview Under Caution (IUC)

Where there is continued failure to improve attendance following the Final Warning, the Local Authority may initiate an **Interview Under Caution (IUC)** in accordance with the **Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE)**.

This is a formal process and forms part of the Local Authority's consideration of potential legal proceedings. The interview will be conducted at Local Authority (Council) offices.

During the interview:

- Parents/carers will be cautioned in accordance with PACE, meaning they will be formally advised of their legal rights before the interview begins.
- The concerns regarding their child's attendance will be clearly outlined.
- Parents/carers will be given the opportunity to respond and provide any relevant information or mitigating circumstances; and
- The interview will be recorded and may be used as evidence in any subsequent legal proceedings.

Following the IUC, the Local Authority will determine whether to proceed with legal action, which may include prosecution or other enforcement measures.

The school will continue to cooperate with, and provide relevant information to, the Local Authority throughout this process.

In the Summer Term, each family will receive a letter outlining their current stage in the attendance process and confirming that this stage will carry forward into the next academic year.

Appointments

Routine dental and medical appointments should take place outside of school hours.

If this is not possible and it needs to happen during school time, the school should be notified in advance via school office and students should attempt to come in for lessons around these appointments.

Medical Evidence

For all students who have an attendance percentage below our minimum expectation (95%) it is expected that absences should be covered with appropriate medical notes to explain the absence. This can include copies of appointment cards for example. If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be notified of this.

Requesting leave during term time

- a. Parents/Carers wishing the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully and then complete and send to the Headteacher (Y7-11) or to the Head of Sixth Form (Y12-13) the leave of absence request form (Appendix 2). This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered at least one week before the desired period of absence.

Parents/carers are strongly advised not to finalise any leave in term time booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision on their request. Please note that schools cannot grant a leave of absence retrospectively. If parents do not apply in advance, leave of absence should not be granted.

- b. The granting of leave of absence in school term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the school. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The Department for Education (DfE) and Telford & Wrekin Local Authority (LA) policy is extended leave in term time should not be granted. Where such requests are made, for the leave to be granted, the Headteacher should decide if there are **exceptional circumstances**. Exceptional circumstances must be rare, significant, unavoidable and short in duration. Examples **might** include:
- i. A housing crisis preventing attendance.
 - ii. Attendance at the wedding of a child's parents if there are reasons why this could not occur during holiday periods.
 - iii. The needs of the families of service personnel where they are returning from long operational tours that have prevented contact during scheduled holiday time.
- c. If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term time, then it would not be normal to authorise absence for such an event. Holidays or other travel because of parental work commitments or due to the availability of cheaper fares or other costs would therefore not be considered exceptional circumstances.
- d. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Before making any requests for leave of absence, parents/carers need to therefore consider very carefully the demands of the National and wider School Curriculum especially at the Key Stage assessment stage. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
- i. the **exceptional** circumstances stated that have given rise to the request.
 - ii. the age of the child.
 - iii. the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements.
 - iv. the overall attendance pattern of the child.
 - v. the nature of the trip.
 - vi. students on examination courses will **not** normally be granted leave of absence.
- e. Where parents/carers have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. It is possible that because of these factors different decisions may be made. It is hoped that if this situation arises parents/carers will accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any other requests.
- f. Where requests for a leave of absence are received from only one parent, the response letter – agreeing or refusing – will be either addressed to both/all parents where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all 'parents' are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal, as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent will receive a penalty notice.

- g. Should the school decide to authorise leave of absence but the child **does not return to school at the time they were expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the authorised leave of absence period) and no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence or make known the whereabouts of the child, **their place at the school could be lost.**
- h. Should the School decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**. Parents/carers need to be aware of the following information from the Governments 'National Framework for Penalty Notices' which has applied from 1st September 2024.
- If your child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-school week rolling period, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice. These 10 sessions may include any unauthorised absence, including leave in term time and do not have to be consecutive.
 - Penalty Notices increased to £160 from September 2024. This can be reduced to £80 but only for the first Penalty Notice issued, if paid within 21 days – this reduction does not apply to any subsequent Penalty Notice.
 - Any 2nd Penalty Notice, to the same parent for the same child, issued within three years of the date of the first Penalty Notice will be charged at a flat rate of £160.
 - A third Penalty Notice will not be issued within a three-year rolling period, to the same parent for the unauthorised absence of the same child, alternative action or legal measures will be utilised for subsequent offences.
 - If in an individual case the local authority believes a Penalty Notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met. For example, when a parent purposefully tries to avoid a Penalty Notice by taking their child out of school when there is only four pupil days in school and the fifth day is for example a PD Day or bank holiday attached to that week.

In some circumstances a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued – However, a Notice to Improve will only be used in cases where support is appropriate. They will not be issued in cases of unauthorised leave in term time for holidays, where information for parents is included on school's website or a simple warning by the school that a Penalty Notice could be issued if unauthorised leave in term time is taken will suffice.

Unplanned Absence

Parents should notify the school as soon as possible, and by 9:30am at the latest, of any unplanned absences e.g. illness, either by telephone: 01952 797550 or by sending an email to schooloffice@nghs.org.uk. Please note that only emails from addresses registered with the school will be accepted, owing to safeguarding reasons and the school may choose to follow this up with a telephone call as necessary.

Where an absence is unexpectedly extended e.g. delayed flight or continued illness, parents should contact the school, as soon as possible, on each continued day of absence.

Unexplained absence

Where a student does not attend school as expected, the school will attempt to make contact home on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. The school may contact any of the emergency contacts we have for the student following the priority order we have recorded. If the school cannot reach any of the emergency contacts, the school may contact the local safeguarding board and/or the police.

Safe and well checks

Where a student is absent for three consecutive days, the school will make a wellbeing call home and request to speak to the student directly. Where absence is ongoing, even if the school is aware of the reason, the school may

also make a safe and well visit to the home to speak to the student with parents/carers present. Home visits may also occur at any other point if the school has reason to believe the reason provided is not genuine. Should other agencies be working with the family (e.g. social workers), the school will also liaise with them regarding the absence. All attendance concerns will be considered within the school's safeguarding responsibilities.

Punctuality

The school attendance register is a legal document and therefore where a student is late to school, an L code will be used on our registers regardless of the reason. The school will also follow the behaviour policy regarding punctuality unless there are exceptional circumstances (for example, a train strike or a family car broken down that morning) that have resulted in lateness to school.

5. Key Information and Contact Details

Mrs T Hazlett - Attendance Officer

Mrs V Worthington – Receptionist

Mrs H Birch – Assistant Headteacher with oversight of Attendance

Mrs K Griffin – Head of Sixth Form

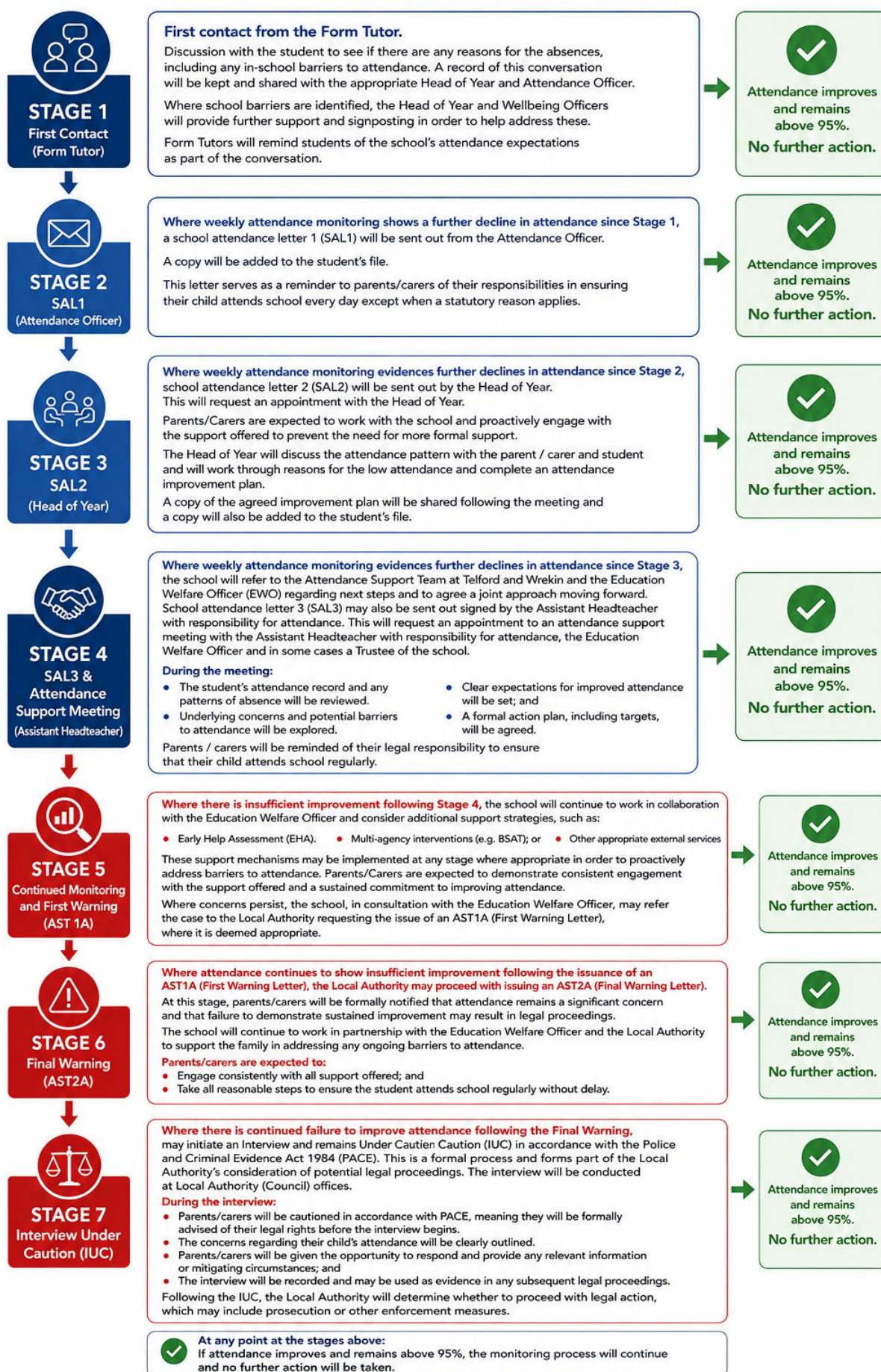
Mr D Santopietro – Education Welfare Officer

Mrs K Kang – Education Welfare Officer

All staff are contactable via schooloffice@nghs.org.uk or 01952 797550.

APPENDIX I: NEWPORT GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

Attendance officer monitoring identifies attendance of student is below 95% or there is a pattern of absence causing concern.



Appendix 2 Newport Girls' High School Request for Leave During Term Time

To: The Deputy Headteacher, Newport Girls' High School

Date

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I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

my child (full name) school year

for the period from (date) to (date)

.....

The **exceptional** circumstances and reason for this request are:

.....

.....

.....

.....

I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows:

Child(ren) (full name(s)) School(s) attended

.....

.....

.....

.....

(Signature of 1st Parent/Carer(s) Print Name

(Signature of 2nd Parent/Carer(s) Print Name

Please return completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

For Office Use Only

Current Attendance%

Last Year's Attendance%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time (this Academic Year)

Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed Date

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent/carers.

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