



A WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY (Danesholme Infant Academy)

Due to the ongoing government guidelines regarding COVID-19, there are some changes throughout this document that you will find different from previous years

2020/2021

Please be aware that this is a 'live' document and is subject to on-going amendment.

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1. Mission Statement

At Danesholme Infant Academy we recognise that attending school on time has a positive impact on learning, every lesson really does count for your child. Therefore, we must ensure that attendance and punctuality are the highest they possibly can be in order to prepare our children for their future adult life.

Good attendance is linked to achievement, better relationships with other children and better overall behaviour in school. Children can quickly fall behind if even one day is missed.

In-line with the Local Authority guidelines we expect a minimum of 96% attendance.

Minutes late per day	Equivalent of missing
5 Minutes	3.4 school days a year
10 Minutes	6.9 school days a year
15 Minutes	10.3 school days a year
20 Minutes	13.8 school days a year
30 Minutes	20.7 school days a year

2. IMPLEMENTATION

This policy received the full agreement of the School Council and parents.

3. AIMS

- That all children achieve excellent attendance at a minimum of 96% in line with National expectations.
- All children of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education in accordance with the National Curriculum regulations;
- No child should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development;
- We will create and maintain parent/carer partnerships to support attendance and allocate to external agencies as needed;

4. EXPECTATIONS

We expect the following from all our parents/carers:

- **That children attend school daily;**
 - Holidays during term time are actively discouraged and will be unauthorised. Due to the link between attendance and attainment the government has put a priority on reducing all forms of absence. Therefore

our policy on term time holidays, which is based on legislation and government guidelines is summarised as:

- o The Law says that parents/carers do not have the right to take their children out of school for a holiday in term time.
 - Any requests for holiday in term time must be made in advance in writing and in line with GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES will only be agreed in EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES. Taking a holiday in term time simply to save money does not constitute an exceptional circumstance and will result in a fine. Being unable to take holidays due to the seasonal nature of parents/carers work is also not an exceptional circumstance.
 - All parent(s)/carer(s) should apply for leave no less than 7 days prior to the period of absence and failure to do so may result in the absence being unauthorised.
 - If the absence is not agreed and the student goes on the holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may then be referred to Lincolnshire County Council and could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine under Section 444(b) of the Education Act 1996.
 - Where a child fails to return within 10 school days of a previously notified date the Academy will notify Children Missing Education at Northamptonshire County Council.
- **That children will arrive on time and be appropriately dressed and prepared for the day at 8:40am (8:30am and 12:45pm for Nursery)**

Due to Covid-19, a 'one-way system' has been implemented around staggered school drop off and collection times. Please see the Academy website for up to date information. At this time children arriving late will not be allowed to attend for that day.

- o Should your child arrive after 9:15am (but before 9:45am), their attendance will be indicated by code "L" on the attendance register.
- o Any child arriving to school after 9:45am will be classed as unauthorised and will be indicated by code "U" on the attendance register.
- o Should your child fail to regularly attend school promptly, for three consecutive occasions, you will be contacted by the Attendance Officer to discuss ways in which lateness can be improved.
- o Failure to improve punctuality will lead to overall attendance becoming affected, a parent contract being put in place and ultimately the possibility of being referred to the Education Inclusion and Partnership Team.
- **To contact the school on each morning of any absence before 8.45am, providing a reason for the absence.**

- There is an expectation for any pre-booked appointments to be made outside of school hours.
 - Absences for any medical/dental appointments require proof of appointment, e.g. appointment card, hospital letters, etc.
 - If illnesses continue for longer than five days, medical evidence **will** be required, e.g. doctor's appointment card, prescribed medicine packet (with the label).
 - Evidence of appointments can be submitted retrospectively.
 - Failure to contact the school during the absence may result in a safeguarding call or visit to the home by the Academy Attendance Team, and a possible referral to the local police.
- **Danesholme Infant Academy are strictly following the Government guidelines regarding COVID-19.**
 - Should your child develop any symptoms, they ***MUST*** remain absent from school for an isolation period of 10 days (this also includes any siblings). Please refer to the NHS or Government websites for an up to date list of symptoms. Should your child experience any symptoms, we recommend you contact **119 or 111** for further advice. It is important that you also contact the Academy with any concerns and if your child displays any symptoms.
 - For further information regarding attendance and Coronavirus, please refer to our website.
 - Please note, if your child tests positive, and subsequently tests negative within the 10 day isolation period, your household is still required by law to isolate for the full 10 days.
 - In the event the Academy closes a bubble following a positive test, the attendance of children within that bubble will NOT be affected.

Parents/carers can expect the following from the Academy:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 15 minutes of the start of the session;
- Early contact with parent/carer when a child fails to attend school without providing good reason;
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us.
- A range of support options available, upon request, including confidential advice and family support.

5. ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE

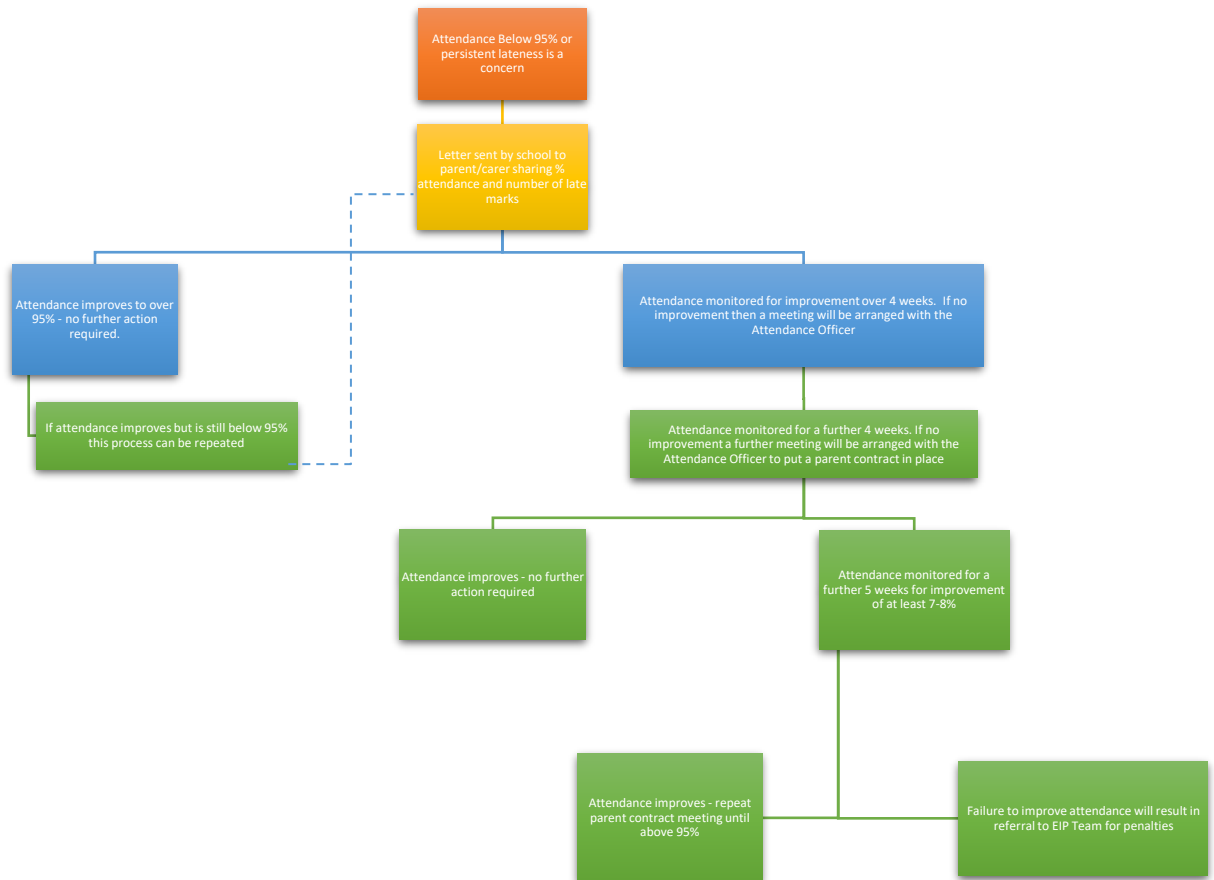
Danesholme Infant Academy aims to encourage regular attendance. Parents can expect:

- Attendance is celebrated regularly within the Academy, with children receiving certificates.

- Class attendance will also be celebrated, with a trophy for a class to display each week and stickers for the children.
- At the end of every half term children with 100% attendance will have names placed in a prize draw for parents to receive a recognition gift.
- The Attendance Officer and Family Support Worker will always be available to provide confidential and appropriate support for any family struggling with attendance.

6. RESPONDING TO NON-ATTENDANCE

When a student does not attend, the Academy will respond effectively



Attendance Meetings

When the attendance meetings happen, they follow a set agenda:

Meeting date and time

Attendance will be discussed including identification of key reason(s) for absences

Outcomes wanted and why these outcomes are needed

How these outcomes will be achieved (parental action, involvement of class teacher, FSW, SENCO, outside agencies) and the impact of these outcomes on percentage %

If a Parent Contract is set, attendance targets will be discussed and agreed.

If required, an Attendance Review Meeting date will be agreed and arranged

- If a telephone call/email/text message is not received from parents/carers, they will be contacted for a reason for that absence via text message. If no reason for absence is received either before/on the day of absence then the absence will be unauthorised. Continued absence with no communication will result in a telephone welfare call from the Attendance Officer or Family Support Worker.
- If considered necessary by the Academy, the Education Welfare Officer may carry out either prearranged or unannounced home visits. **Under current Covid-19 restrictions these visits will be doorstep visits only, or made via Microsoft Teams**

7. Reintegration

- The return to school for a student after long-term absence requires special planning. The Academy Family Support Worker, Attendance Officer and Class Teacher will all work in corroboration to support reintegrating a child into school;
- A reintegration form will be filled in with the child on the first day back, and followed up with the parents as required;
- Programmes may need to be tailored to meet individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate. Support from the SEND Co-ordinator may be required. Parents will be informed of this intention if it is necessary.
- Programmes should be reviewed regularly and amended as necessary.
- Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees via the various internal communication lines.

8. SCHOOL ORGANISATION

The severe winter of 2009-10 caused all kinds of problems for schools across the country and led to the Government issuing new guidelines which came into force from September 2010. Schools will not be penalised if they are forced to close nor if they make every effort to stay open and their attendance statistics suffer accordingly.

- The school will always aim to give parents/carers as much advance notice as possible of any school closures. In the event of extreme weather or a school emergency, such as a burst pipe or gas leak, the school will aim to notify parents as soon as possible, usually before 8am.
- In the event of an unplanned school closure parents/carers will be notified by text message, email and an alert on the school website.
- In the event of a planned school closure parents/carers will be notified by letter as well as by the channels listed above.

In the event of any sudden school closure in relation to Covid-19 parents will be notified as soon as is practicably possible. Please see Covid guidance on our website.

In order for the Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to children the importance and value of education.

Staff Responsibilities

Staff	Responsibility
Principal	To oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole Attendance Policy.
Principal / Attendance Officer	To regularly report progress on attendance to governors, children and parents/carers.
Principal / Attendance Officer	To ensure that challenging but achievable targets are set to reduce absence.
Principal/ Attendance Officer	To liaise with appropriate staff.
Attendance Officer	To oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data.
Principal	To oversee the work of administrative staff.
Principal / Attendance Officer	To produce the attendance profile for the whole school.
Attendance Officer	To collate and analyse attendance data for year groups.
Principal / Attendance Officer	To oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time
Principal	To organise attendance assemblies.
Attendance Officer / Family Support Worker	To initiate contact with parents/carers in cases of prolonged unexplained absence.
Attendance Officer	To liaise with County Legal team.
Principal / Family Support Worker	To plan for the return of long-term absentees in conjunction with the SEND department.
Class Teachers	To complete registers accurately and on time.
Attendance Officer	To follow-up immediately any unexplained non-attendance by contacting parents/carers.
Attendance Officer / Family Support Worker	To contact families with regard to any unexplained absences within 2 days of the child returning to school.
Executive Principal / Attendance Officer / Family Support Worker	To challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence.
Principal / Attendance Officer	To display information on attendance.
Attendance Officer	To record all reasons for absence in the register

Academy Advisory Council

- Council members will be assigned to monitor attendance and ratify the policy;
- Request regular attendance progress reports for Council Meetings.

Principal

- To oversee the policy and ensure it is appropriately applied;
- To ensure the policy is updated as required;
- To report to Academy Advisory Council/Trust;
- To award excellent attendance prizes, certificates etc.

School Attendance Officer

- To monitor attendance
- To praise good or improved attendance, rewarding as per Academy policy;
- To inform the Principal of any holiday requests or notifications of absence immediately;
- To look for patterns regarding absences and inform Principal and Family Support Worker of any concerns;
- To follow up child absence where no reason has been provided.
- Ensure that all registers are completed each morning and afternoon session;
- Contact parent/carers via telephone/text if a child is not in school and no reason has been provided for the absence;
- Ensure parents/carers sign their child into school should they arrive late.
- Issue attendance/late letters to parents/carers.
- Organise and/or completing home visits when necessary if a child is absent;
- Notify Northamptonshire County Council when a child has missed 10 consecutive days of unauthorised education via the ChildrenFirst web portal.

Class Teachers

- To inform the Principal and Attendance Officer of any situation causing concern above and beyond normal expectations;
- To arrange and organise programmes for the return to lessons.
- To praise good or improved attendance, rewarding as per Academy policy;

Family Support Officer

- Attendance and absence data analysis, comparison and tracking summary reports;
- To contact other outside agencies where appropriate to work with children experiencing difficulty attending school, this could include Early Help Assessment;
- Liaise with Principal and ensure that they are informed of any communication with parents;
- To liaise with class teachers and parents to organise reintegration.
- Organise and/or completing home visits when necessary if a child is absent;

Parents/Carers

- Contact school on every day of absence;
- Provide medical evidence to support absences for medical appointments;
- Support their child in achieving maximum attendance;
- Attend any Team Around the Child/Early Help/School Attendance Panel meetings as requested.

Northamptonshire County Council

- They will liaise with identified school staff;
- Where necessary they will instigate legal proceedings on behalf of the LA including parental prosecutions in the Magistrates' Court and applying for Education Supervision Orders through the Family Court;
- They will support schools in the use of penalty notices within the provisions of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

8. LIAISING WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES

Research has shown that schools in partnership with the full range of support services have a greater impact on school attendance than when they act alone or when the support services are uncoordinated or disjointed.

The Academy works with the following support services:

- Educational Psychologists
- Speech & Language Therapy Team (SALT)
- Special Educational Needs Service
- Early Help Workers
- Social Services
- School Nurse
- Local police
- Northamptonshire County Council Education Inclusion Partnership Team (EIPT)

Data Protection Act

The Data Protection Act places obligations on all agencies that process, store and share information on any individual. It is important to have full regard for the requirements of the Act. Each school has a Data Protection Notification which details the circumstances under which data is managed. Nothing in the legislation prevents a school sharing information with the police or social services where it is believed that a child or young person under the age of 18 is at risk of harm or is in need of safeguarding.

Appendix 1

GUIDANCE FOR ACADEMY STAFF

SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY

The Importance of Registration

- An attendance register, electronic or manual, must be kept on which, at the **BEGINNING** of each morning and afternoon session, children are marked present or absent. Registers should be saved or sent down to the designated area or person responsible. These registers must be completed within 15 minutes of the start of the registration period.
- Manual registers can be used in any instance where the electronic register is not accessible, and no other forms of instant electronic communication is possible, e.g. Microsoft Teams;
- Accurate marking of registers, and appropriate maintenance of electronic and computerised systems can have a significant impact on overall school attendance and absence figures;
- Electronic copies of attendance registers or bound copies of registration printouts must be kept for a minimum of 3 years from the date that the last entries were made.
- Peripatetic staff will be made aware of these procedures and follow them accordingly.

CATEGORISING ABSENCE

Symbols to be used in Registers (Categories)

From 1 September 2006 all schools are required to use a common set of codes to record pupil attendance and absence.

The use of fixed codes will also assist both LAs and DfE in monitoring not only whether children are absent with or without the permission of the school, but why children are absent from school.

At Danesholme Infant Academy, teaching staff will mark children as either present (Code /) or absent (Code N). Reason codes will be maintained by the Office staff and Attendance Officer.

Authorised or Unauthorised Absence

Authorised absence (Code C) is where the Academy has either given approval in advance for a child to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

All other absence must be regarded as **unauthorised (Code O)**.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences.

- Illness **(Code I)**;
- Medical and dental appointments where evidence is available **(Code M)** – if **no medical evidence is supplied, the absence will be coded as unauthorised (Code O)**;
- Absence due to self isolation (in regards to COVID-19 and in line with Government Guidance) **(Code X)**;
- Fixed term exclusion **(Code C)**;
- Bereavement **(Code C)**;
- Public performance/examination (where a LCC Performance Licence has been obtained) **(Code C)**;
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated **(Code E)**;
- Dual registration, for example if a child attends another educational setting **(Code B)**.

Holidays

From 1st September 2013, the new law gives NO entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must only be in exceptional circumstances and the Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of leave.

Principals would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional.

Holidays are granted only in **exceptional** circumstances **(Code H)**. Requests for absence are expected to be prior to booking and made in writing at least 14 days before the absence.

Any holiday taken without a written request will automatically be unauthorised. However, if a request is not granted and the parent/carer takes the child on holiday, the absence will also not be authorised **(Code O)**.

If the absence is not agreed and the child goes on the holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised **(Code G)**. This absence could be referred to Northamptonshire County Council and could result in a Fixed Penalty Fine under Section 444(b) of the Education Act 1996.

Resolving Disagreements

Where there is a lack of agreement between the school and the LA as to the appropriateness of issuing a penalty warning letter or a penalty notice, the matter will be referred to the County Legal Proceedings Panel whose decision shall be final.

Approved Educational Activity

Where children are away from school but are undertaking an approved educational activity, this should be marked as **Code P**. To avoid confusion in emergency situations students who are off site should not be marked as present. The following activities fall within this category.

- Trust or inter-school sporting activities;
- Field trips and educational visits;
- Students receiving approved education off site, e.g. those receiving specialist support or those in receipt of home tuition but remaining on the roll of the school.

Absences will not be authorised under the following circumstances:

- Shopping trips;
- Holidays in term time where the permission of the school has not been given;
- Minding the house or looking after siblings;
- Lateness if registration is missed without explanation;
- Medical appointments that cannot be verified or are for another person;
- No reason given;
- Oversleeping/tiredness;
- Translating for parents/carers or family friends;
- School staff have cause to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid;
- Choosing to self-isolate for Covid-19 for personal reasons, other than those under current Government advice at the time.

This list is not exhaustive and will be at the discretion of the Principal.

Unusual circumstances may arise that lead to a child being absent from school. It is for the Academy to decide whether the explanation offered is reasonable. In such situations, the individual circumstances, previous attendance pattern and frequency of such incidents should be considered.

Removal from the school roll

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a student may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in the Education (Student Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended 1997) and in the Schools Administration Handbook (section A2). **Removal from the school roll under circumstances other than those detailed below is illegal.**

- Where a school has been notified that the child has been registered as a pupil at another school;

- Where a child has ceased to attend the Academy and the parent/carer(s) have satisfied the County Council that the child is receiving education otherwise than by attendance at school;
- Where the child has been absent without reasonable cause for four school weeks and the school has failed, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with Children Missing Education to obtain information on the cause of the absence;
- Where the Principal has been notified that the pupil has died;
- If a child has not returned to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time and no communication has been received, after reasonable enquiry and consultation with Children Missing Education to obtain information on the cause of the absence;
- Where the pupil has been permanently excluded and this decision has been confirmed by the Trust Discipline Committee.
- Where the family have notified the Academy of intention to leave the country. A forwarding address and location of new overseas school should be supplied where possible, or after reasonable enquiry and consultation with Children Missing Education to obtain information on the international location of the child;

Ensuring Student Information is up to date

The Academy should ensure, as far as possible, that the information they hold on pupils and parents/carers is accurate and up to date. This will help to ensure that contact with families is productive and that referrals to other agencies can be actioned effectively. Parents/carers are encouraged to contact the school to keep the information schools hold up to date.

Appendix 2

GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

SUGGESTIONS FOR SECURING PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN ENSURING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

The Academy

The Academy is committed to providing a quality education for all children. We believe that children can only benefit from the education in our school through regular school attendance. We will, therefore, strive to achieve the maximum possible attendance for all children and we will make sure that any problems are identified and resolved quickly. We will make contact with parents/carers when a child is absent from school without good reason.

How parents/carers can help us

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and that they arrive on time;
- Provide up to date contact information. Notifying the school of any changes.
- Provide up to date medical information to enable the school to adequately support students who have health issues affecting their attendance. No absences for medical appointments will be authorised without appointment cards, letters or texts from GPs/Dentists which have been forwarded to the Academy (this can be provided retrospectively).
- Contact the Academy whenever their child is absent, giving details of the reason for the absence;
- Help their child prepare for the school day by ensuring that homework has been done and the child has everything he/she needs for the day ahead;
- Attend Parents/Carers Consultation Evenings to discuss progress or problems and talk to the staff if there are problems or changes in family circumstances which may affect the child;
- Contact the Academy if problems arise which may keep their child away from school, so that the school can help.

Appendix 3

Persistent Absence Information for Parents/Carers

If your child is absent for just one day every 2 weeks, they will miss out on a year of education over their school life.

This information will show you some ways in which schools and families can improve student attendance and improve communication between home and school.

An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee if their attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

A number of issues might affect a child's attendance; these issues are shown in the list below.

Children who:

- have recently moved in the area or have joined the school midway through the school year;
- are "Looked After";
- have caring responsibilities at home;
- have recently missed a lot of school time through illness;
- have siblings and/or parents/carers who are/were poor attenders;
- tend to have poor performance/attainment levels;
- have peer issues;
- have difficulty accessing the curriculum;
- are persistently disruptive;
- have previously been excluded;
- have parents/carers who are experiencing severe financial hardship (and may not be able to afford bus fare, uniform, etc);
- have parents/carers who have recently separated;

It does not mean that all children who might be affected by the above issues will be poor attenders but the list is a way of helping school to identify early the children who may be at risk of non-attending. We understand how it is difficult for families to discuss any difficulties they might have but the more the Academy knows about a situation, the more it will be able to help. Therefore, if there is anything that is preventing your child from attending regularly and punctually, please let us know so we can work together to improve the situation.

It is firmly established that children who attend regularly and on time are more likely to fulfil their potential and achieve their best than those who do not.

If your child does not attend school regularly, they may not be able to keep up with school work. They will also miss out on the social side of school life. This can affect a child's ability to make and keep friends and being able to mix socially is a very important part of growing up.

Regular and punctual attendance is essential to effective learning. When children are not in school, they are missing the educational opportunities that the school can offer them. They are also at greater risk of being excluded or disadvantaged in other ways. If they are not in school, they might be at risk of being involved in a crime or becoming the victim of a crime themselves.

The ethos of our Academy will show children, parents/carers and the wider community how much they value good attendance and punctuality and show that they will respond promptly to all non-attendance and lateness.

Appendix 4

BIBLIOGRAPHY

DfE Publications

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk>

New Exclusion Regulations

New arrangements for school exclusion came into force in September 2012. These will apply to any child excluded on or after 1 September 2012 from a maintained school, academy school or free school, alternative provision academy/free school or student referral unit in England.

Revised regulations and guidance for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion are also available now:

The School Discipline (Student Exclusions and Reviews) (England) Regulations 2012.

Guidance from the DfE at:

<http://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00210521/statutory-guidance-regs2012/guidance>

LEA Plans and Guidance

Children and Young People's Plan

Northamptonshire County Council ChildrenFirst - Fixed Penalty Notices
(Unauthorised Absences and Truancy) Code Of Conduct **to be read in conjunction with :**

Guidance on The Use Of The Education Related Provisions Within The Anti- Social Behaviour Act 2003

Schools Administration Handbook

Raising Standards Through the Improvement of School Attendance

Legislation

Education Act 1996

Data Protection Act 1998

Human Rights Act 1998

Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003