

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Nower Hill High School promotes good school attendance and punctuality for every child. Regular and punctual attendance at school is both a legal requirement and essential for students to maximise their educational opportunities. School attendance is also a component of safeguarding children.

Our weekly attendance target is 96% plus for each student in each year group; Nower Hill High School considers this to be a satisfactory level of attendance for students. Please be aware that an attendance record of 90% means that a child has missed half a day every week. This is four weeks over a school year and over five school years, becomes half a school year missed. The DfE guidelines class attendance under 90% as persistent absence and parents and carers should note that the Local Authority may use its legal powers in cases of persistent absence to improve school attendance.

We ask that you inform the school if your child is unwell or unable to attend school. Please ring the main school number – **0208 863 0877 by 8.15am on the day of absence** and choose the option to leave a message to report your child's absence. If no notification is received, we are required to check the reason for absence; therefore you will be contacted by the school.

If your child has a medical appointment and will arrive at school later than 9:30am, we also ask for a message to be left informing us, as we need to ensure that our students are safe. **Please note that students will need to be collected by a parent/carer for any appointments during school hours.** With regards to medical appointments, we ask for your support in making appointments before or after school whenever possible.

Punctuality is also extremely important at Nower Hill. Students are expected to be in school for registration by 8:40am. Those who are late without a valid reason will be expected to attend a detention at break time on the same day. Persistent offenders will receive a longer detention and possible further sanctions.

LEGAL ENFORCEMENT BY HARROW LOCAL AUTHORITY

As part of promoting good attendance and punctuality, Harrow Local Authority will use its legal powers to enforce school attendance where this becomes problematic, including powers to prosecute parents who fail to comply with a School Attendance Order (Section 443 of the Education Act 1996) or fail to ensure their child's regular attendance at school (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996). In addition, the Local Authority will impose Penalty Notices as an alternative to prosecution on parents for unauthorised absence; these may also be issued where parents allow their children to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification.

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 and the Harrow Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices sets out the details of how the penalty notice scheme operates. Harrow Council will also conduct Pre Court Panel meetings in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act 1984. The Harrow Attendance Guidance and Resources (pack) provides a clear outline of the process for escalating cases for legal action which is called Attendance Intervention Model (AIM).

If your child has an unauthorised absence, such as taking holidays in term time, re-occurring lateness or persistent absence for any other reason other than certified illness, the school will refer the matter to the London Borough of Harrow for consideration of a Penalty Notice and/or Prosecution in the Magistrates' Court, leading to a criminal record, a maximum fine of £2,500 and/or up to 3 months' imprisonment.

ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

Absence in term time will only be authorised for exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers should contact the Attendance Officer to discuss the matter **well in advance of the expected absence and before a booking is made**. All requests will be considered on an individual basis in accordance with school policy. A Leave of Absence form will need to be completed for our records. Repeat requests will be identified and challenged. **Please note that in the case of travelling due to exceptional circumstances, your travel documents will be required as evidence**. If you take your child out of school without permission or if your child is away longer than the time agreed by your Headteacher, this absence will be registered as unauthorised. Sanctions can be imposed including:

- Your child could lose their school place
- You could face a penalty fine
- You could be subject to legal action by the Local Authority that could result in a fine of up to £2,500.
- 6th Form students whose attendance falls below 90% or who have a very poor punctuality record may be asked to pay for their public examination entries. Poor attendance may also affect entry to Year 13 or university.
- Poor attendance and punctuality will always be reflected in any personal reference given by the school.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

After taking advice from SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education), the school has limited the number of religious days that may be taken as an authorised absence, to a maximum of 3 days per school year. Please note that these may not be taken consecutively. One day will be authorised for each religious festival. Any additional requests must be submitted in writing to the Attendance Officer. **Parents/carers must telephone the school to advise us when their child is absent due to religious observance.**

WE ASK PARENTS/CARERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT IN: -

- Encouraging their child to attend school regularly and punctually and to appreciate both the legal and social importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Informing the school on the first morning of any absence, indicating the cause and likely duration of the absence.
- Contacting the Attendance Officer promptly whenever the child seems unwilling or disinclined to attend school.
- Making every attempt to arrange dental and medical appointments outside the school hours. **Please note that parents/carers will be expected to collect their child from the school if they are to attend a dental or medical appointment during school time, or if they are going home sick.**
- Supporting our Attendance Policy at all times.