



**NORTHGATE**  
*High School*

# Attendance Policy

Respect | Determination | Teamwork

**Review period:** Annual

**Review by:** Mrs S Harvey & Miss S Holme

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**Next Review:** September 2025

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# Attendance Policy

## 1. Aim

Northgate High School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. There is clear evidence from educational research to show the link between school attendance and educational achievement. Attendance and punctuality issues can have a detrimental effect on the education that a student receives. Evidence shows that missing out on lessons leaves students vulnerable to falling behind and the tendency for them to achieve less than those students with a good attendance record.

At Northgate High School we believe that every student has a fundamental right to a full education.

The aim of Northgate High School's Attendance Policy is to:

Encourage an ethos where all our students want to attend school regularly and punctually.

- Encourage students to understand the importance of good attendance for academic success and their future life in the workplace.
- Provide a clear definition of authorised and unauthorised absences that are easily understood by students, staff, governors and parents/carers.
- Aid and support all staff in the management of attendance.
- Ensure that our very high standards of attendance and punctuality are maintained.

The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance and punctuality: parents/carers, students, all school staff and governors.

## 2 Parent/Carer Responsibilities

Students are expected to attend school every day. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children attend school regularly. Northgate High School will endeavour to support parents/carers and students in this.

***The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly.***

***Section 444 of the Act states: - "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence".***

If a student is prevented from attending school because of sickness or other unavoidable cause, it is the responsibility of the parent/carers to notify the school on the first and each subsequent day of absence.

School may request proof of medical appointments or sickness absence. Wherever possible, parents/carers should avoid making dental or medical appointments for their children during school hours. If no evidence is provided further absence will be marked as unauthorised.

It is the school's decision whether to authorise the absence or not.

See Appendix 1, Guide for Parents/Carers

## 3 Student Responsibilities

- Students are expected to attend all their lessons on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and be ready to learn.
- Students are expected to be in their form room by 8.40am for morning registration.

Afternoon registration is taken with their Period 4 lesson at 1.55pm.

If students arrive late (after 8.40am) they will be marked as late on the register and issued with a B3 (10-minute) detention.

If a student arrives after 8.55am, when form time has finished, then they are expected to register at reception. They will be marked unauthorised and issued with a B3 (30-minute) detention.

- Students are responsible for checking exam dates and coursework deadlines and for catching up on any work missed.

See Appendix 2, a Guide for Students

## 4 School's Responsibilities

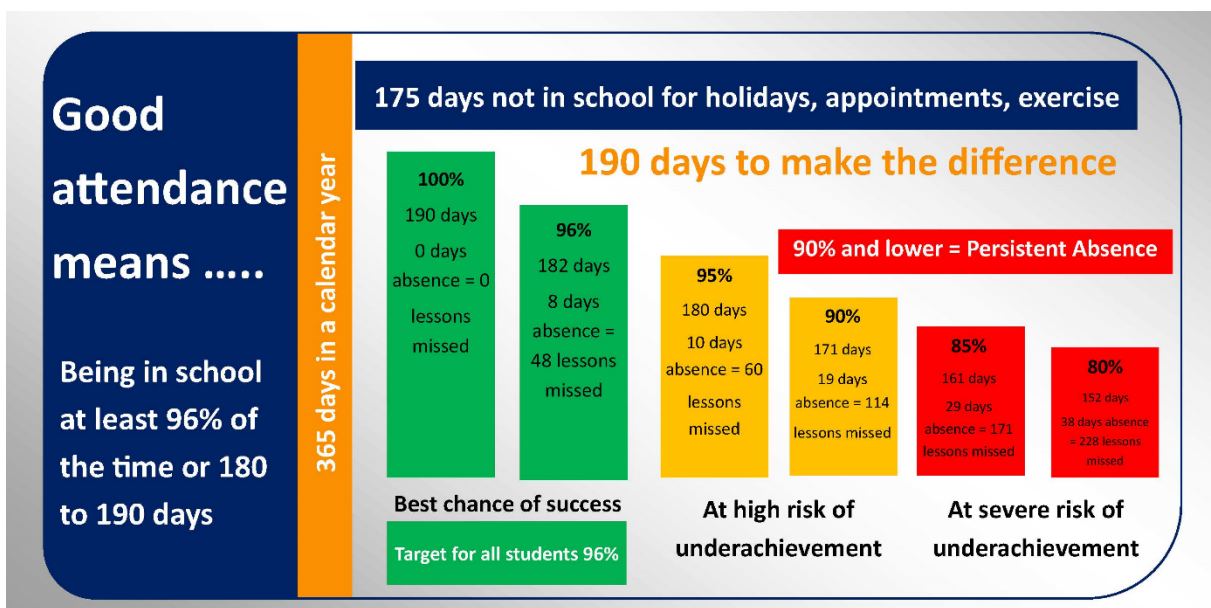
All staff at Northgate High School place a high value on students maintaining regular attendance and good punctuality, both in arriving at school and to lessons. The school will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, receive enough training to perform the task accurately. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

Northgate will try to ensure that students have good attendance and punctuality by:

- Ensuring registers are kept accurately and that persistent lateness is noted and reported to the Attendance team.
- Differentiating appropriately between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or message from a parent/ carer does not in itself authorise an absence. Only the school can decide whether the parent/carer's explanation justifies authorising the absence.
- Responding to absenteeism and lateness firmly, consistently and with care.
- Contacting the parent/carer when they are concerned about a student's absence or lateness and recording the contact.
- Consulting with the Education Welfare Service if a student's attendance gives cause for concern.
- Acknowledging and celebrating good or improved attendance of individual students, classes or tutor groups.
- Monitoring student attendance in lessons and following up any absences to deal with truancy, which might occur throughout the school day.

## 5 Sixth Form Absence

- If a student is unable to attend Sixth Form, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to notify the school absence line on each day of absence.
- Parents/carers will be contacted if a student has an unexplained absence from registration or a timetabled lesson.
- If a parental response is not received, then the absence will remain unauthorised.
- If a student becomes unwell or needs to leave during the school day, they must notify a member of staff followed by tapping out with their student card. We would also ask that a parent/carer contacts the school to acknowledge this absence
- If a student has an agreed study leave period, student cards must be used to tap in/out appropriately so staff are aware if students are on school site.
- Sixth Form attendance is monitored regularly, and parental contact will be made if concerns are identified.



# APPENDIX 1: A guide for parents/carers

## 1. When does my child need to be in school?

Your child should be in school in good time for registration which starts at 8.40am.

## 2. What happens when my child is late?

If your child arrives after 8.40am they will be marked as late on the register and issued with a B3 (10-minute detention that day).

If a student arrives after 8.55am, when form time has finished, then they are expected to register at reception. They will be marked unauthorised and issued with a B3 (30-minute detention).

## 3. What should I do if my child is absent from school?

We expect the parent/carer to contact the school **before** 8.40am on the first day of absence.

The Attendance line is **01473 210123** and select **Option 2 for years 7 – 11** or **Option 1 for a student in the Sixth Form**.

When prompted you will leave to leave your child's full name, form group and reason for absence. You will need to complete this every day your child is absent.

## 4. What reasons will the school accept?

Northgate will accept the following reasons for absence:

- Illness, although the school may request proof of medical evidence if the absence is ongoing.
- Emergency dental/medical appointment: Please try to make routine appointments after school or during the school holidays.
- Family holiday, in exceptional circumstances and only when prior approval has been given. An Exceptional Leave of absence form (accessible on the school website and Appendix 8) must be completed well in advance, giving full details. Otherwise your request may be refused.
- Day of religious observance.
- Family bereavement (only for a limited period).
- Attending an interview for a job, college, university, etc.
- Attending a university open day.
- Attending work experience.
- Participation in an approved public performance for which a licence application has been made and the application approved by the local authority.
- Participation in regional or national competitions in recognised sporting or other activities e.g. horse riding, basketball, chess etc.
- Participation in a recognised youth group event of limited duration e.g. Scouts, Air Cadets.

## 5. Will the School contact me if my child is absent?

Northgate High School operates a first-day response to absences: we will endeavour to contact you if we have not heard from you. Parents/carers will initially be contacted by text or email, if no response is received then a telephone call will be made to establish a reason for absence.

The Attendance Officer will meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss attendance issues.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

## 6. Can we take family holidays during term-time?

Northgate High School strongly discourages parents/carers from taking their children out of school, especially during Years 10 to 13 as students take GCSE/A level examinations during these years.

If, in exceptional circumstances, you need to request permission for your child to accompany you on an annual family holiday during term-time, you should complete an Exceptional Leave of Absence application form well in advance of

the proposed date, to enable the application to be considered and a decision taken. Applications received late are unlikely to be authorised.

The school has the right to refuse permission and will not consider an application unless all the following conditions are met:

- The holiday is a single annual family holiday which can only be taken in school term-time.

**AND**

- The attendance of the student has exceeded 95% in the previous 12 months.

**AND**

- The student will not miss major assessments/ be absent during the important final preparation time for exams or miss the preparation or submission of Non-Examination Assessment.

If a student misses schoolwork as a result of any absence taken during term-time, responsibility for catching up on the missed work lies with the student and the parent/carer.

It is the student's responsibility to ascertain and check examination dates, particularly if the holiday is requested before the exam timetable has been finalised.

## **7. What absences are unlikely to be authorised?**

- If no permission has been sought in advance
- For annual holidays which could be taken in school holiday time
- For looking after siblings
- For shopping trips including buying school uniform
- For day trips (including birthday "treats")
- For visiting relatives
- For unexceptional special occasions e.g. the student's birthday, or that of a friend, or ordinary birthdays of relatives
- For family holidays longer than the duration originally authorised, including where flights are delayed
- Waiting in for plumber/electrician or similar
- Because of financial considerations
- Students accompanying parents/carers to appointments for translation purposes.
- This list is not exhaustive.

## **8. My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?**

Make sure that your child is getting enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that they leave home in the correct uniform and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value their education.

Contact your child's Form Tutor, Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year or keyworker immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – e.g., difficulties with schoolwork, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. We may involve other agencies to help and support you and your child.

In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families with attendance issues.

**Suffolk Family Focus – Education Attendance Service**  
**Children and Young People Services**  
**Suffolk County Council**  
**Endeavour House**  
**Ipswich**  
**IP1 2BX**  
**Tel: 01473 26514**

## APPENDIX 2: A Guide for students

Regular attendance will help you to make the most of the opportunities here at Northgate High School. It will help you to:

- Keep up with your schoolwork and get the best results you can.
- Get a job. Employers like people who are reliable.

Remember you can see your attendance on your Go 4 Schools accounts.

You should be in school in good time to start registration in your form room at 8.40am. The register will be called promptly. If you are late there will be consequences for you to follow.

If you are late or absent your parent/carer must contact the school to give the reason. If this does not happen, then the absence will be unauthorised and show on your school report.

### 1. If you are late to school

If you are late for registration 8.40am you will be given a B3 (10-minute detention)

If you are later than 8.55am you will be given a B3 (30-minute detention)

### 2. Exams and Coursework

If you miss schoolwork because of a holiday taken during term-time, responsibility for catching up on the missed work lies with you and your parent/carer, NOT with teachers.

It is up to you to check dates for preparation and submission of coursework with each subject teacher. No responsibility can be taken by the school if you fail your coursework because of a holiday taken in term-time.

It is your responsibility to check examination dates.

### 3. Need help?

Are you having problems with schoolwork? Being bullied? Are your friends giving you a hard time? Are things difficult at school or at home?

You may feel that missing school is the answer. It is not! It may even make things worse.

If you are feeling this way, we would encourage you to please TALK TO SOMEONE in school.

Your Form Tutor, Assistant Head of Year and Head of Year, teachers, your keyworker and of course your parents and carers are always willing to listen and help.

## APPENDIX 3: A guide for staff

### 1. Form Registers

Form Tutors and teachers are responsible for completing Attendance Registers on Go 4 Schools.

Registers are called promptly at 8.40am and at the start of every lesson.

Only students that are physically present in the classroom will be awarded a present (/) mark.

Any absent students should be awarded a missing (N) mark.

Students arriving after the register has been called will receive a late (L) mark and a note added to explain the reason. The student will be issued a B3 (10-minute detention).

No student's attendance should be left blank.

Students that arrive after 8.55am will need to sign in at reception, where they will be given a note to give to their teacher indicating that they have signed in correctly. Any student who arrives late to the lesson without such a note must be directed to reception to sign in. These students will receive a B3 (30-minute detention).

If a student fails to arrive at a lesson (and has been marked present in the previous session) the Attendance team must be notified. If the student is on a safety plan, then safeguarding procedures must be followed. The Safeguarding team must be contacted immediately and if the member of staff is not able to make contact a student with a red card filled in by the classroom teacher must be taken immediately to reception to register the absence of the student.

### 2. Monitoring Procedures

Attendance registers are monitored daily by the Attendance team and appropriate codes issued.

Attendance figures are regularly monitored and any student that falls below the school's threshold will be investigated (see Intervention Strategy Flow chart p12).

Attendance will be discussed at Year team, Pastoral and SLT meetings.

Fortnightly attendance figures will be provided to all Heads of Year to identify patterns, and concerns for monitoring purposes.

Heads of Year will decide which absences/ holiday requests will be authorised along with discussion with the Attendance team and Assistant Headteacher in charge of Attendance.

The Attendance team will go through the registers on a daily basis between 8.40 and 9.40am and absences noted. If no reason is available a truancy call home will be made.

### 3. Support for students who are having difficulties attending school

Where students are absent with a good reason (for example long term illness) staff may be expected to set meaningful work. Where a child is absent due to suspension/exclusion, staff are expected to set work for the period of the absence.

Where students are refusing to attend school, the school will signpost and liaise with outside agencies to offer support to the family. Such agencies include the Education Welfare Service, school nursing team, GP, Children and Young People's services. Staff are NOT obliged to provide work in such circumstances.

There is no legal obligation for the school to provide work for short term absences.

When students return after a long absence, a reintegration programme will be discussed.

Where necessary, reduced or adapted timetables may be negotiated for a student with ongoing health problems (provided medical evidence can be provided to support this provision).

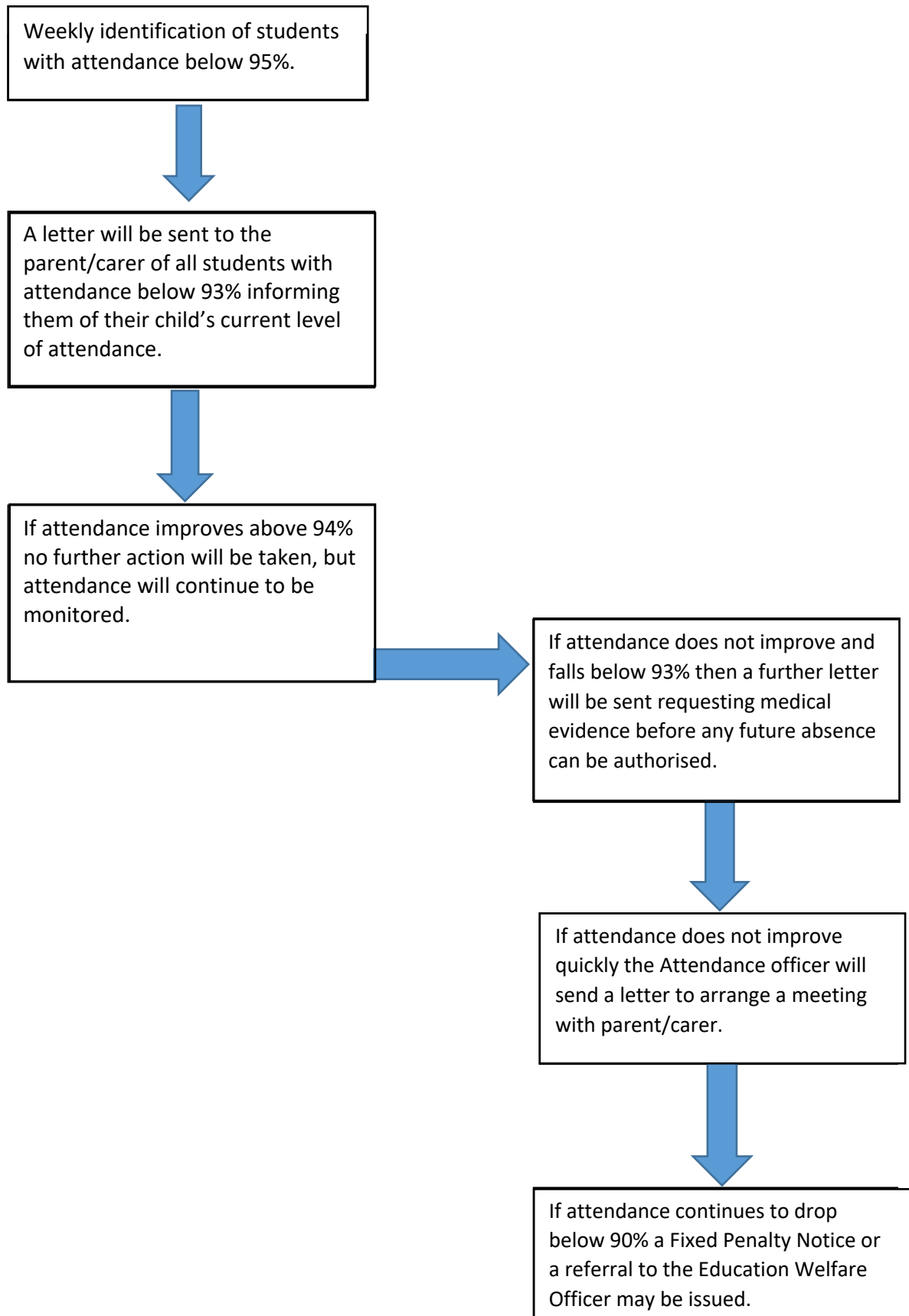
### 4. Deletions from Roll and Children missing from Education

A parent who decides to home educate their child must notify the school in writing. The school will try to encourage the child to remain in education at Northgate High School and acknowledge the request. Following this, Suffolk Education Authority will be notified of this request and the child will be taken off roll once instructed to do so.

If a child leaves Northgate High School and we have not been made aware of the student's future arrangements, the school will make all possible enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child. After twenty days the child will be removed from roll, and the Local Authority CME Team (Child missing from Education) will be informed.



## 5. Intervention Strategies for Years 7 to 11



# APPENDIX 4: Fixed Penalty Notices and the Education Attendance Service

## 1. Education Penalty Notices

Suffolk Education Attendance Service will issue Penalty Notices where unauthorised absence occurs. This can include persistently being late for school. These are aimed at reducing the levels of unauthorised absences during a school term and can be issued by the Local Authority, schools or Police.

The penalty is:

**£60** if paid within 21 days

**£120** if paid between 21 and 28 days

A penalty notice will be issued to each parent/carer for each child.

## 2. When will Fixed Penalty Notices (fines) be issued?

- Unauthorised holidays in term time.
- Parentally condoned absence where the parent is deemed capable but unwilling to address attendance problems (e.g. a failure to engage with support measures).
- Where a student is stopped with parents/carers during a truancy sweep and the absence is not authorised by the school.
- A parent continually fails to provide an explanation for a student's absence in accordance with the school's procedures.

(Usually, other than for unauthorised holidays, a telephone call will be made, followed by a letter to establish reasons for the absence. If these have not been given, or the school is not satisfied by the reason, or the required medical evidence has not been provided, then a further letter will be sent to indicate we will be pursuing a Fixed Penalty Notice).

- The student has a record of unauthorised absences including persistently late after 9.25am when the school register has closed.

(In circumstances where there are 10 sessions within a 12-week period of unauthorised absence, a Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued. A Fixed Penalty Notice will also be issued without a formal warning if a formal warning has already been issued to the parent/carer within the previous twelve months).

- This is not an exhaustive list and each case will be considered individually.

## 3. Non-payment of Fixed Penalty Notices

If payment in full is not received, the parent/carer will be prosecuted under S444(1) Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure the regular school attendance of a registered Pupil of compulsory school age.

## 4. Withdrawal of Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed Penalty Notices can be withdrawn in certain circumstances. If a parent/carer receives a Fixed Penalty Notice and believes that it should not have been issued, they should follow the procedure for applying for withdrawal of the notice without delay. Detailed information about how to follow this procedure is provided in the explanatory notes accompanying the Fixed Penalty Notice.

## 5. Referral to the Education Attendance Service

Northgate High School may refer a student to the Education Attendance Service (EAS) if a student is regularly absent from school (Attendance Below 90%) and fails to provide adequate reasons and/or medical evidence for continued illness.

## APPENDIX 5: Attendance letters for Years 7 to 11

### Letter for lateness

Dear «salutation»

According to our attendance records «forename» was late to registration a total of «total\_lates\_both» times this half term.

Arriving late to a lesson is very disruptive for the whole class and often instructions must be repeated. For the safety of all students, it is essential that registers are taken timely and accurately.

If your son or daughter arrives after 8.45am, they must sign in at Reception before going to their lesson. They will be issued with a 10-minute B3 detention that day. Students arriving after 9.00am will be marked with an unauthorised late and issued a full 30-minute B3 detention.

Please note that if a student arrives after the register closes this will count as an unauthorised session and could add to other unauthorised marks and lead to the issuing of a fixed penalty notice.

***‘The Education Attendance Service on behalf of Suffolk County Council will be issuing fixed penalty notices fines when unauthorised absences of 10 sessions (5 days) are recorded.’***

I would therefore ask you to impress upon «forename» the importance of arriving to school and registration on time.

Your continued support in this matter is much appreciated and if I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Harvey  
Attendance Officer

«salutation»  
«address\_block»  
  
«date\_of\_printing»

Dear «salutation»

**«chosen\_forename» «surname», «reg»: Term Time Absence**

According to our attendance records «chosen\_forename»'s currently has «percentage\_attendance»% and our target for attendance is **96%**. Whilst we appreciate that on occasion absence from school is unavoidable, a small drop in attendance can lead to a big reduction in student achievement.

We would appreciate your support in ensuring that «chosen\_forename»'s attendance improves in the coming weeks, if there are any problems that may be impacting on «chosen\_forename»'s attendance please contact me so we can attempt to resolve any issues.

Students with less than 90% attendance may be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

***'The Education Attendance Service on behalf of Suffolk County Council will be issuing fixed penalty notices fines when unauthorised absences of 8 sessions (4 days) are recorded.'***

If you have any queries in relation to this letter or wish to provide any information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Harvey  
Attendance Officer

«salutation»

«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

«forename» «surname», «reg»

Dear «salutation»

According to our attendance records «chosen\_forename»'s attendance is currently **«percentage\_attendance»%**. The target for attendance is **96%**.

Good attendance is vital to a students' success and whilst we appreciate that on occasion absence from school is unavoidable, this level of attendance is a cause for concern.

Unfortunately, as we have seen no improvement in «chosen\_forename»'s attendance since my letter of <<Letter\_1\_date>>, I can no longer authorise any more absence without medical evidence. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, letters or medical certificates.

We realise how important the attendance of your child is to you and know that you would only keep them off school when it is absolutely necessary. Therefore, we must ask that all further absence is supported by medical evidence as stated above. If the level of attendance continues to fall below 90% it is likely that Northgate will involve the Local Authority or Education Welfare Officer and a Fixed Penalty Fine may be issued.

***'The Education Attendance Service on behalf of Suffolk County Council will be issuing fixed penalty notices fines when unauthorised absences of 8 sessions (4 days) are recorded.'***

If you have any queries in relation to this letter or wish to provide any information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Harvey  
Attendance Office

«salutation»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

«forename» «surname», «reg»

Dear «salutation»

After reviewing «forename»'s attendance and finding we have seen no improvement since our last letter <<Dated>>, I am writing to invite you to a meeting at school to discuss the reasons for «forename»'s absence from school. I have arranged to meet at the following time:

Date:

Time:

Venue:

The meeting is to discuss with you any additional support that we might be able offer to help your child's attendance going forward. It would be helpful if you could bring any medical evidence relating to «forename»'s absence – this might be a letter from your GP or a Consultant, a Primary Mental Health Worker letter, or other documents related to medical appointments and/or treatments.

Please complete and return to school the attached reply slip confirming that you are able to attend this meeting. If you are unable to attend at this time, please call as soon as possible to arrange a mutually convenient time. It is important that we can work together to improve «forename»'s attendance; further absence could lead to a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Harvey  
Attendance Officer

**Attendance letter 4 to be issued to parents/carers who are failing to call in student absences promptly.**

Dear «salutation»

I am writing to you about «forename»'s attendance. I note from our attendance records that «total\_unauthorised\_absences» sessions have been marked as unauthorised this term and their attendance sits at <<Percentage Attendance>>.

I must remind you how important it is that you phone absences in by 8.45am to the attendance officer so we have a reason for any absences. If we do not receive a call from you and I have been unable to contact you, then the absence will be unauthorised.

The Education Attendance Service on behalf of Suffolk County Council will be issuing a fixed penalty notice fine when a student reaches 8 sessions (equal to 4 days) of unauthorised absence in a 12-week period.

If you would like to discuss ways in which we can assist in improving your child's attendance, then please contact myself or their Progress Director as soon as possible on 01473 210123.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Harvey  
Attendance Officer

«salutation»  
«address\_block»

«date\_of\_printing»

«forename» «surname», «reg»

Dear «salutation»,

I am very pleased to be writing to you in respect of «forename»'s attendance which has shown a positive improvement and is now «percentage\_attendance»%.

This is an important step towards «forename»'s academic achievement and it's wonderful to be able to share this good news.

I look forward to seeing this improvement continue and thank you for your support.

Kind regards

Mrs S Harvey  
Attendance Officer



## APPENDIX 6: Exceptional Leave of Absence form



**NORTHGATE**  
High School

### Exceptional Leave of Absence Application Form

Governors have agreed that we will not routinely sanction absence during term time. The effect of such absence is damaging for students and staff because it disrupts learning. The Government have also made it clear that parents should not take their child on holidays during term time and **there is no legal right to do so**. Parents applying for their child to have leave from school in exceptional circumstances should complete this form and return it to the school for authorisation well in advance of the requested absence.

**A separate form must be completed for each child attending Northgate High School.**

|   |  |                   |  |                               |  |
|---|--|-------------------|--|-------------------------------|--|
| Student Name  |  |                   |  | Tutor Group                   |  |
| Student Address   |  |                   |  |                               |  |
| Parent Carer Name   |  |                   |  | Parent/Carer Telephone number |  |
| Date requested from   |  | Date requested to |  | Total number of school days   |  |
| Does this Exceptional Leave involve any siblings?    Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/> <i>If yes please state:</i> |  |                   |  |                               |  |
| Name(s):  |  |                   |  |                               |  |
| School(s):  |  |                   |  |                               |  |
| Year Group(s):  |  |                   |  |                               |  |
| Reason for requesting exceptional leave during term:  |  |                   |  |                               |  |
| Parent/Carer's signature:   |  |                   |  | Date                          |  |

#### For School Use Only

|  |                          |      |
|--|--------------------------|------|
| School Response:   | % Attendance             |      |
|  | % Unauthorised sessions  |      |
|  | Last year % Attendance   |      |
| Attendance lead Signature  |                          | Date |
| Authorised – Exceptional circumstances                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |      |
| Not Authorised – Not in line with County Guidelines                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |      |
| Pass to LA for penalty fine if 4 days ( 8 sessions) or more unauthorised | <input type="checkbox"/> |      |

