



The Nottingham Free School Approach to Attendance

Dear Parents and Carers,

As a new member of the Nottingham Free School community, we are writing to provide further guidance on our approach to school attendance and what we mean by 'unauthorised absence'. As of August 2024, the government has made some changes regarding what counts as an unauthorised absence (Stricter Enforcement and Parental Responsibility).

A strong school community is one where all children are present in school, on time, every day. By attending every day, your child will experience a wonderful number of educational opportunities. We do understand that each family's circumstances are unique and you may sometimes be unsure as to whether your child should attend school.

In response to parent/carer feedback, we have compiled a key list of what counts as unauthorised absence and advice on how we can work together to support your child:

What will be counted as an unauthorised absence?	What can be done to help in this situation?
Colds, coughs, headaches, nausea, hay fever, sore throats, migraines, period pains, cold sores or conjunctivitis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please check the NHS guidance: "Is my child too ill for school?" Let school know your child is feeling ill so we can monitor them in school, if the illness is minor. Please give them doses of recommended medicine before school, for mild illnesses. If your child has been diagnosed with migraines by your GP, please let school know. If your child feels unwell in school, they should report to Student Reception and a trained First Aider can support them (children must never use their phones to contact parents to say they need picking up).
No communication at all from a parent or carer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents and carers have a duty to call in and explain their child's absence. For family emergencies, please ensure you contact us about your situation and we will offer support.
Unevidenced medical appointments (doctors, dentist, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for a letter/email to confirm your child's appointment. You can send in a screenshot of appointment confirmations.
Holidays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please always book holidays during the school holidays only.
Feeling tired after a weekend sports fixture or other extracurricular event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inform the school that your child is tired. We can monitor and support in school.
Physical injuries that could be catered for in school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If your child has a physical injury, contact school for support on how they can attend.

Your child refuses to attend school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call our Attendance Officer immediately and we can offer support. • If your child is experiencing friendship issues, or is worried about a past incident, send them to school and let us know. We can best support your child when they are in school.
Head lice and nits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please treat your child's hair with a medical shampoo and call school to let us know.
Low mood or anxiety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call our Attendance Officer immediately and we can offer support. • If your GP, or other medical professional, has expressed concerns about your child's mental health please contact school for support
Sunburn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please apply appropriate after-sun cream and give doses of appropriate medicine. Contact us if you need further support.
Unevidenced and unagreed sporting/musical activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All external sporting/music activities must be evidenced and agreed by the head/deputy head. • Contact school as soon as you know dates for these activities.
More than one day for religious observance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children are granted 1 day for religious observance. • Further absences would be unauthorised.

In our last email, we talked about our key phrase of **'Attend Every Day'**, whilst recognising and supporting students that are improving their resilience in attending school. A key theme running through the above guidance is **'Contact us for support'**. Whenever there are circumstances beyond your control that affect your child's attendance, we will always be here to support and guide you.

We hope you find this information useful. If you have a question about your child's attendance data (included at the top of this letter), please contact Mrs Mills (Attendance Officer nmills@nottinghamfreeschool.co.uk).

Yours faithfully,

Dr J Simpson (She/Her)
Headteacher

Mrs K Gray (She/Her)
Deputy Head Pastoral

