

Attendance & Term-Time Leave
Policy

Reviewed: March 2019
(HR Guidance Oct '18 / Jan '19)

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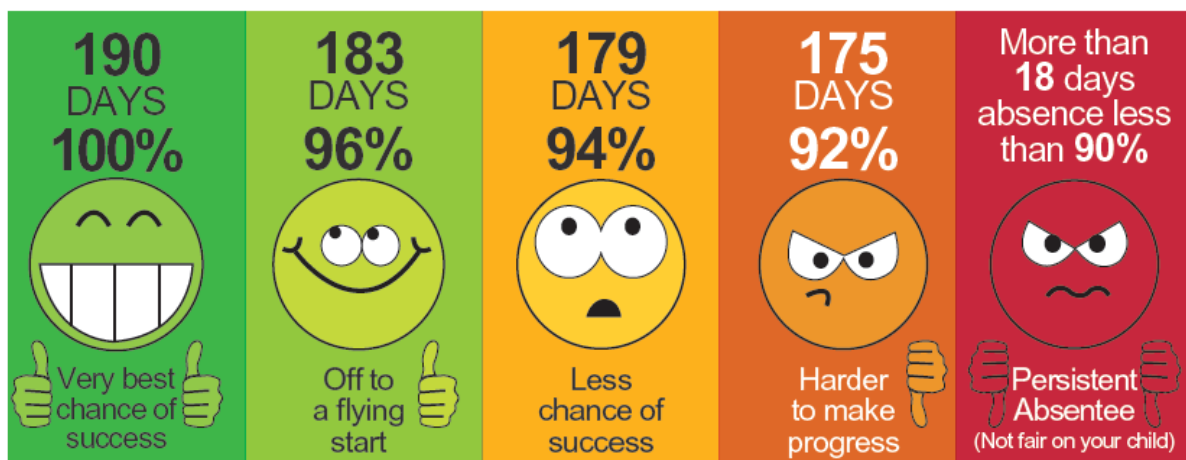
1. POLICY STATEMENT

- Wharncliffe Side Primary School is committed to maximising the achievement of all pupils. Good attendance and punctuality are vital if children are to attain their full potential as learners.
- As children start school their patterns and routines of school attendance quickly become habits. Poor routines are hard to disestablish further up the school system. A prevention and early intervention programme that helps to establish good habits can underpin the whole of a child's school career – and potentially their life opportunities.
- Young children however are dependent upon the adults in their life to get them to school regularly and on time. Therefore the focus in the infant department is to establish good habits and work closely with parents to improve attendance.
- When the children move into Key Stage 2, whilst the work continues with parents, we begin work to develop a 'self' responsibility in the children.
- The school operates within a framework of local schools, including the local comprehensive school and is fully committed to a whole school approach to attendance and a partnership relationship with parents/carers.

2. AIMS AND TARGETS

- To establish clear procedures encouraging pupils to attend school regularly
- To ensure that all parents and pupils are informed about the procedures relating to attendance.
- To ensure all teachers, non-teaching staff and governors receive information about, and understand the procedures.
- To undertake a commitment to allocate time and resources to support the policy.
- To address attendance and inclusion issues within the curriculum and during assemblies where appropriate.
- The school will benchmark their attendance against other school locally and nationally.
- **Our attendance target for 2018/19 is 97%**

There are **190** days in a school year which leaves **175** days to spend on family time, shopping, appointments and other things.



3. THE LAW

The legal requirements placed on parents, schools LAs (Local Authorities) and the DfE (Department for Education) by the 1996 Education Act and related legislation are as follows:

- Parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Failure by parents to ensure regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law.
- The LA must provide school places to parents who wish their children to be educated at school.
- The LA has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities.
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session.
- The school must report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly or are absent for more than 10 days without satisfactory explanation
- The attendance of Looked After Children (LAC) will be monitored closely by school and 'Welfare Call'.
- The school has adopted the LA policy on fixed penalty notices.
- The school has adopted the LA policy on children missing from education and will inform the Missing Pupils Department of any such children

4. PARTNERSHIP

What the school expects of children:

- To attend regularly.
- To arrive on time and be prepared for the day (PE kit, homework etc.)
- To report to the appropriate school office should they arrive late.
- To inform their teacher of any problem that will prevent them from attending school.

What the school expects of parents:

- To fulfil their responsibility by encouraging their children to attend school.
- To ensure they inform the school office of the reason for absence on the first day their child is unable to attend school.
- To ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the school day.
- To contact the Headteacher whenever any problem, (other than illness of the child), occurs that may keep the child away from school. Illness can be reported directly to the school office in the usual manner.
- To seek authorisation for any forthcoming appointments or holidays and ensure the continuity of their child's education by taking holidays during the school holiday period and, wherever possible, arranging appointments outside the school day.

What parents and children can expect of the school:

- A broad and balanced curriculum that is dependent upon regular attendance at school.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Prompt action on any problems notified or identified.
- Close liaison with the Attendance and Inclusion Service to assist and support parents and children where needed.

5. ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Registration Procedures

- Registration in Key Stage 1 and 2 begins at 8:50am each morning and 1:15pm in the afternoon.
- Teachers should be in the classroom to ensure that the registration process begins promptly.
- Class teachers should use sQuid to record whether children are present or not. This is then imported automatically into SIMS. All paper copy marks must be made accurately in black ink.
- Absences should be recorded on SIMs using the correct code (see Appendix A).
- Any child who arrives after the start of the registration period (8:50am) will be deemed to be late and this should be recorded by the Admin Officer in the school office.
- The registers are saved on the system for the school office to check for any children who are not in school.

Punctuality

- A child is late if they arrive after the completion of the registration time (9.00am) and will be marked as late on the register.
- A child who arrives after the register has been saved must report to the office so that their arrival can be recorded.
- If in Reception, Y1 or Y2 a child is frequently late, the teacher will talk to the parent. From Y3-Y6 if a child is regularly late, a note will be sent home by the school office to inform parents and urge them to ensure that their child arrives at school on time. If the problem persists the Head teacher will be informed and contact the parents.
- Remember, we would always prefer lateness to absence and no child will be punished in school for arriving late but would point out that teaching and learning time is being missed.

Absence

- Parents are asked to contact the school by 9:15am either verbally (this can be done by leaving a message on the answerphone) or in writing on the first day that their child is unable to attend school, giving the reason for the absence.
- If the absence continues over several days, we ask parents to keep us informed of the child's condition and when we can expect them back in school.
- As soon as registers have been saved, the Admin Officer will check for absences and contact parents of children who haven't provided a reason.
- Only the school can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, in itself, oblige the school to accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation, doubt remains about the explanation offered, or when no explanation is forthcoming at all, the absence will be treated as unauthorised.
- If the absence lasts longer than a week or the child's attendance is below 95%, parents are asked to provide medical evidence of their child's absence. This could be in the form of a doctor's note, stamped appointment card or evidence of prescribed medication.

Absence should be authorised if:

- The pupil is absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the governing body')
- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.
- There is a family bereavement.
- The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and school has given leave of absence.
- The pupil is attending another school in connection with an application for a place there.
- The pupil is involved in an *exceptional* special occasion. In authorising such absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance should be considered.
- The pupil normally comes to school via SEN Transport and there has been an error on their part.

Medical Appointments

Medical appointments and similar should be made out of school hours, however we understand that this may not always be possible. In this case, parents / carers should inform school in advance of any medical appointments and provide evidence of the appointment time and venue. Pupils are expected to attend school before and after appointments as appropriate.

Holidays in term time

It should **not** be considered that it is **acceptable** to take leave from school in term time for holidays. *Government guidance states that **only under exceptional circumstances, the head may consider giving permission for a maximum of 10 days each school year.** However, in line with the guidance, there are times when leave will not be granted*

1. During the first two weeks of the autumn term (or Spring Term for January starters) when children are being settled into their new classes and becoming familiar with a new teacher and class routines.
2. During statutory and the school's annual assessment weeks.
3. If the child's attendance record prior to the request is below 95%.

Parents requiring a leave of absence must complete the 'leave of absence request' form (see Appendix C) the school office for a leave of no more than 10 school days. ***They must make an appointment to see the head to discuss their reasons for requesting the leave.*** Parents should be reminded that they cannot expect, as a right that the school will agree to a family holiday during term time. **Leave of absence will only be authorised for special or exceptional circumstances. Parents should not book holidays in term time until they have discussed their request with the head teacher.**

Parents will be informed promptly by return of the form, as to whether their request has been granted. Penalty notices can be issued for taking unauthorised holidays in term time.

Responding to poor attendance

Where there are concerns about a child's attendance the teacher or Admin Officer will bring these concerns to the attention of the Headteacher. The Headteacher will then, after discussions with the class teacher, decide on the most appropriate course of action:

- Talk to the parents /carers regarding the concerns
- Send a letter to the child's home informing the parents/carers of the concerns (see Appendices D & E)
- Visit the home
- 'Attendance Meeting' in school to discuss issues. An Action Plan is drawn up and this is recorded on the Attendance Meeting Record Form (see Appendix F)
- Refer to the Attendance Workers at MAST (Multi Agency Support Team)

Criteria for referral to MAST

Reasons for involving the above service may include

- School has alerted the parents/carers to the concerns and there has been no improvement in attendance.
- Parents/Carers have requested support.
- Patterns of absence have emerged (e.g. Mondays and Fridays)
- Attendance levels are 90% or less. DfE defines attendance of 90% or less as persistent absence.

Fixed Penalty Notices (fines)

The school follows the Local Authority policy on the issuing of fixed penalties. The local authority are responsible for the decision to issue these to ensure consistent practice across all schools in Sheffield.

They can be issued for the following reasons:

1. As a result of taking unauthorised leave during term-time
2. For ongoing attendance issues AFTER attendance meetings have been carried out

Fines in Sheffield are currently £120 per parent if paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Fines are only issued against one child within each family so we check with other schools if siblings are not with us.

Collecting and Analysing data

- Daily monitoring of individual and class attendance will be carried out by the school's Admin Officer. Copies of the class weekly attendance percentages are sent to the Headteacher for use in assembly on Friday afternoon. These are shared with parents via a weekly newsletter which goes home on Monday afternoon.
- Half termly monitoring of individual, class and year groups by the Head teacher.
- Termly monitoring as above by the Headteacher and the Attendance Officer (MAST) – see Appendix B.
- Letters are sent to parents of children whose attendance falls below 95% or 90% respectively (see Appendices D & E)

The purpose of the above is to:

- Enable the school to identify problems early
- To praise and reward good and improved attendance
- To have up to date data readily available to inform parents
- Provide annual data for the LA and DFE
- Provide attendance data for parents on their child's annual report

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Class teacher	Mark register promptly on sQuid system and accurately at the beginning of each school session. Collect absence notes and store in register pocket and record any verbal messages on sheet in register file. Send any paper copy registers to office immediately after marking at the start of morning and afternoon school. Discuss any concerns re attendance with Head teacher.
Office staff	Amend registers if children arrive late by entering the 'L' code. Take the registers out to assembly point and distribute to staff during fire drill/alarm.
Admin Officer	Input attendance data accurately. Monitor attendance weekly and follow up any unexplained absences by informing Headteacher, phoning the parents or sending out letters to parents/carers. Report any concerns or emerging patterns of absence to the Headteacher. Provide Headteacher and Attendance Officer with statistical data as required.
Headteacher	Oversee the implementation of the Attendance Policy. Liaise with parents. Regularly monitor and evaluate data and provide information for governors, LA and DfE. Liaise with Attendance Officer on strategic development. Liaise with other schools if siblings are not with us. Report to the Governors and share whole-school attendance information.
MAST (Multi Agency Support Team)	To respond promptly to referrals from school and provide written feedback of action taken.
Local Authority	Decide whether or not to issue fixed penalty notices (fines)

7. STRATEGIES

We use the following strategies to promote good attendance and punctuality:

- The bell rings at 8.48am to enable the school day to start promptly at 8.50am.
- Weekly awards are given for the class with the best attendance in each key stage and for classes with 100%.
- Termly and annually 100%, 99% and 98% attendance certificates presented in assembly.
- Attendance information shared with parents on weekly basis via the school newsletter
- Sharing good practice with other local schools via 'Family of Schools' or 'Locality' Network Meetings.

We can use the following strategies where necessary to ensure good attendance:

- Penalty notices (using guidance from the local authority)
- Parenting Contracts

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The policy and attendance practices will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Headteacher and Attendance Officer (MAST). Data and targets will be analysed with regard to the effectiveness of the policy and any recommendations for amendments to the policy or changes in practice will be discussed with staff and Governors. Parents will be informed promptly of any changes. This policy is available on our school website for parents to access.

9. APPENDICES

a) Attendance codes on SIMS:

/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
B	Educated off site (not dual reg.)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration
E	Excluded
G	Family holiday (not agreed)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical / dental appointment
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Non-compulsory school-age absence
-	No mark recorded

b) Blank attendance monitoring record

Period: (dates)

Value Range: Less Than 95 percent (colour coded yellow / red for less than 90%)

Class:

Name	Year	Gender	SEND	PP	% Attend	Previous year	Comments	Key Staff

c) Leave of absence request form (*on school letterhead*):

Term Time Absence Guidance

Nurturing confidence, nurturing potential, nurturing success.

Our Policy

Raising the attendance of pupils in all schools is a national issue. The more time children spend in school, the more effective teaching and learning is.

To promote good attendance we:

- Give individual termly certificates / end of year certificates for 100%, 99% and 98%.
- Have a weekly Trophy for the class with the highest attendance.
- Monitor attendance weekly and termly for all children and inform parents quickly of any concerns by phone or letter.
- Meet with parents to discuss concerns and also use Education Welfare Service to support parents and pupils.
- We review our policy each year, a full copy available on request.
- Contact Parents on the first day of unexplained absence.

Leave in term time

We would advise parents not to book holidays in term time at all, but we do appreciate that this is sometimes difficult.

The school does not have to automatically authorise leave, including holidays in term time.

We will consider authorisation in **exceptional circumstances** but only when:

- A child has a record of 95% attendance up to the date of the request.
- The holiday is not to be taken during the first 2 weeks of Autumn Term (or Spring Term for January starters).
- The holiday will not fall in testing weeks (usually during the months of May and June).

Applying for Leave in Term Time

If you wish to apply for leave in term time please return this form duly completed back to school and book an appointment to see the Headteacher **You will be notified by the return of the form if it has been approved, or not. Requests must be made at least 20 days in advance by parent / carer.**

REQUEST FOR TERM TIME LEAVE: APPLICATION FORM

This form should be completed and returned to the school office.

Requests must be made 20 days in advance by Parent / Carer to enable time for schools to consider.

The form will be completed below and returned.

You must book an appointment with the Head Teacher to discuss your application.

Name of pupil/s:			
Siblings in other schools:			
Name of parents / carers			
Telephone no:			
E-mail:			
Dates of request:	<i>From:</i>	<i>To:</i>	<i>No. of school days:</i>
Why are you requesting leave of absence during term time?			
Do you consider there to be exceptional circumstances? <i>(Please indicate & attach relevant evidence to support your circumstances)</i>			YES / NO
What steps have you taken to minimise the impact of the leave on your child's learning?			
Where will you be staying during this leave period? Please provide the full address & emergency contact details:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I confirm that the information on this form is true. I agree to keep the school informed of any changes to my travel arrangements or if my child is unable to return to school on the due date. I am aware that if my child does not return to school by the date provided that he/she is at risk of losing their place at this school. I am aware that I may be fined and/or prosecuted for any time which my child is absent from school that has not been authorised by the Headteacher. 			
Signed by Parent / Carer:	Print name & relationship to child:	Date:	
FOR SCHOOL USE ONLY and return to Parents / Carers			
Date request received:		Number of days requested:	
Signed:		Number of days authorised:	
Dated:		Number of days unauthorised:	
Attendance %:	Application Approved:	Application Denied:	
Comments:			

d) Letter sent to parents if attendance below 95% for a term (on school letterhead):

Dear Parent / Carer,

Attendance (date)

We write to inform you our school target for attendance is 97% and that your child's attendance this school year is below 95%.

DfE's recommended minimum attendance is 90% and if your child's attendance falls below this it is considered to be 'persistent absenteeism' and monitored by the Local Authority. Attendance below 90% can seriously undermine your child's progress at school and our school target is to have attendance over 97%.

We enclose a Registration Certificate for your child and would be grateful if you would check this, so that we have the right information on our register.

Please let me know if we can assist you in ensuring that the % attendance increases over the remaining school year. In some circumstances we can access support from other professionals such as Attendance Officers or School Nurses.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss this any further.

Yours faithfully,

Headteacher

e) Letter sent to parents if attendance below 90% for a term (on school letterhead):

Dear Parent / Carer,

Attendance (date)

We write to inform you our school target for attendance is 97% and that your child's attendance this school year is below 90%.

DfE's recommended minimum attendance is 90% and if your child's attendance falls below this it is considered to be 'persistent absenteeism' and monitored by the Local Authority. Attendance below 90% can seriously undermine your child's progress at school and our school target is to have attendance over 97%.

Whilst there may be good reasons as to why your child has been absent from school, I am duty bound to bring to your attention your child's poor attendance record. Please remember, a 90% result sounds good if in a test, but 90% attendance means your child is missing the equivalent of half a day a week.

We enclose a Registration Certificate for your child and would be grateful if you would check this, so that we have the right information on our register.

Please let me know if we can assist you in ensuring that the % attendance increases over the remaining school year. In some circumstances we can access support from other professionals such as Attendance Officers or School Nurses.

Please contact me if you wish to discuss this any further.

Yours faithfully,

Headteacher

f) Attendance Meeting Record Form :



<Date>

WHARNCLIFFE SIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE MEETING - CONFIDENTIAL

RE: <Name of child>

% Attendance	Number of Lates

Thank you for attending today's attendance meeting for your child. Please note the actions that we have agreed below:

Action	Timescale

Also discussed:

-

The Department for Education has published data on their website that clearly shows the link between attendance and attainment. This shows that there will be an impact on your child's education if attendance is not consistently above 95% throughout a pupil's schooling. Our school's target is set at 97%.

Signed: Name: (school)

Signed: Name: (parent)

Office Use:		
Copy given to parent	Date:	Initials:
Scanned to CPOMS	Date:	Initials:
Review on	Date:	Initials: