

Wharncliffe Side School



ATTENDANCE POLICY

MARCH 2017

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.

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.

THE LAW

The legal requirements placed on parents, schools and LAs 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 school has adopted the LA policy on fixed penalty notices.

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 Head teacher 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 inform the class teacher and 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.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Registration Procedures

- Registration in Key Stage 2 begins at 8.50am each morning and 1.15pm in the afternoon. Key Stage 1 registration times are 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 insert a mark on the register SIMS mark sheet for every child whether it is a present or absent mark. All paper copy marks must be made accurately in black ink.
- 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 will be brought to the appropriate school office immediately after morning and afternoon registration has been completed.

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 sent to the school office must report to the appropriate office so that their arrival can be recorded.
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- 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 either verbally or in writing on the first day that their child is unable to attend school, giving the reason for the absence.
- If the absence lasts longer than one week parents are asked to contact the school at the beginning of the second week to inform us how their child is progressing and the expected date of return to school.
- If a child has been absent from school and no explanation has been received the school will contact the parents either by phone or letter.
- 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 head feels that further confirmation of the nature of absence is required, the school may request additional information.

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.

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 90%.

Parents requiring a leave of absence must complete the “leave of absence request” form 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 (Attendance Clerk), will bring these concerns to the attention of the Head teacher. The head teacher 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
- Visit the home
- Refer to the Attendance Workers at the MAST (Multi Agency Support Team)

Criteria for referral to the 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 85% or less. DFE defines attendance of 85% or less as persistent absence.

Collecting and Analysing data

- Weekly monitoring of individual and class attendance will be carried out by the school's head and attendance clerk. Copies of the class weekly attendance percentages are sent to the Head teacher for use in assembly on Monday morning
- Monthly monitoring of individuals by the head teacher and the rapid response officer
- Half termly monitoring of individual, class and year groups by the Head teacher and the Senior Access and Inclusion Officer.
- Termly monitoring as above by the Head teacher and the Senior Access and Inclusion Officer.
- Annually by the Head teacher, Access and Inclusion Service and the DFE.

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

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

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| Class teacher | Mark register promptly on SIMS 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. |
| Admin Officer | 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 |
| Attendance clerk(Admin Officer) | Input attendance data accurately. Monitor attendance weekly and follow up any unexplained absences by informing head teacher, phoning the parents or sending out letters to parents/carers. Report any concerns or emerging patterns of absence to the Head teacher. Provide Head teacher and Senior Inclusion Officer with statistical data as required. |
| Head teacher | Oversee the implementation of the Attendance Policy. Liaise with parents. Regularly monitor and evaluate data and provide information for governors, LEA and DFES. Liaise with Access and Inclusion Service on strategic development |
| MAST (Multi Agency Support Team) | To respond promptly to referrals from school and provide written feedback of action taken. |

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 annual 100%, 99% and 98% attendance certificates presented in assembly.

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

- Penalty notices (See Authority Guidelines)
- Parenting Contracts (See Authority Guidelines)

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The policy and attendance practices will be monitored and reviewed annually by the attendance clerk, Head teacher and MAST staff. 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.

LOOKED AFTER CHILD/ CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

The School will monitor the attendance of LAC/CMFE and refer any concerns to the senior Attendance and Inclusion Officer.