Wharncliffe Side Primary School Attendance Policy

A Parent Guide - Key Information

At Wharncliffe Side Primary School, we believe that regular attendance is one of the most important factors in helping children achieve their full potential. Every day in school matters, both for learning and for children's social, emotional and personal development. The school is committed to working positively with families to support attendance and remove barriers wherever possible.

Our Attendance Expectations

We aim for every child to achieve **97% attendance or above**. Attendance at this level gives children the best opportunity to succeed academically, build friendships and feel fully involved in school life. The school monitors attendance carefully and will contact families if attendance begins to cause concern.

School Day and Punctuality

- School starts at **8:50am** (the bell goes at 8:45am)
- Children can arrive from **8:35am**.
- Breakfast Club is available from **7:30am**.
- Registers close at **9:10am**.
- Children arriving after 9:10am will normally receive an unauthorised late mark.

Reporting an Absence

If your child is absent, please contact the school office **before 8:50am on the first day of absence** and explain:

- Why your child is absent.
- How long you expect them to be away.

You can report absence by:

- Emailing the school office.
- Telephone or voicemail.
- Speaking directly with school staff.

If no reason is provided, the school will contact parents and emergency contacts to ensure the child is safe.

Illness and Medical Appointments

Children should attend school whenever they are well enough to do so. Medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside school hours wherever possible. If an appointment takes place during the school day, children should attend school before and after the appointment whenever practical.

The school may request medical evidence where attendance is causing concern or has fallen significantly.

Term-Time Leave

The government expects children to attend school during term time. Requests for exceptional leave must be made to the Headteacher in advance, normally at least two weeks before the proposed absence. Family holidays during term time are unlikely to be authorised except in genuinely exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised leave of **5 days or more** is likely to result in the school requesting a penalty notice from the Local Authority.

Support for Families

We understand that attendance difficulties can arise for a range of reasons, including:

- Medical needs.
- Mental health concerns.
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Family circumstances.
- Young caring responsibilities.

The school will always seek to work collaboratively with families to understand challenges and provide support before considering formal action.

When Attendance Causes Concern

If attendance begins to fall, the school will:

- Monitor attendance closely.
- Contact parents.
- Meet with families to understand barriers.
- Develop support plans where needed.
- Work with outside agencies when appropriate.

Children with attendance below **90%** are classed as **persistently absent** and will receive targeted support to improve attendance.

Penalty Notices

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-school-week period**. Penalty notices may also be issued for unauthorised term-time leave. Current fines are:

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.
- £160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days.

Working Together

Good attendance is a shared responsibility between school, parents and pupils. By working together, we can ensure every child benefits from the education, opportunities and support they need to thrive. If you have any concerns about your child's attendance, please contact the school as early as possible so we can help.