



**Winsford School Attendance Policy**  
(amended in line with CWAC recommendation: January 14)

Darnhall Community Primary School  
Grange Community Primary School  
The Oakview Academy  
Hebden Green  
High Street Community Primary School  
Oakland Community School  
Over Hall Community Primary School  
Over St. John's Church of England Primary School  
St. Chad's Church of England Primary School  
St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
**Wharton Church of England Primary School**  
Willow Wood Community Primary School  
Winsford E-ACT Academy

This policy has been written to inform staff, governors and parents of the procedures to be followed regarding attendance.

Children need to attend regularly if they are to gain maximum benefit of the educational opportunities they are provided with our schools. Irregular attendance undermines the education process and leads to education disadvantage.

Reviewed - Wharton CE Primary School May 2017  
To be reviewed May 2018



## **CONTENTS**

Partnership	<b>3</b>
Reporting Absences	3
Registration	4
Monitoring and Reporting Attendance Issues	4
Authorising Absences	5
Illness, medical and dental appointments	5
Lateness	5
Special Occasions	6
Days of Religious Observance	6
Family Bereavements	6
Leave of Absence – holiday (amended in September 2013)	6
The Education Welfare Service	7
Attendance Procedure	7
Promoting Attendance and Punctuality	8
Close of Register	8
Fixed Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Leave of Absence	8
Register Codes	Appendix A

## **Partnership**

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure the children receive efficient full-time education suitable to the child's age, aptitude, ability and any Special Educational Needs. Parents are therefore primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend school. In all Winsford Schools we encourage parents and carers to take a responsible attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that children can achieve everything they are capable of. The school's responsibility to support parents and tackle any problems that may lead to non-attendance is taken seriously.

Parental responsibility also extends to ensuring that children arrive at school in time, in appropriate dress and ready to learn.

The importance of the school and parents working in partnership together cannot be underestimated. Open discussion and liaison about attendance and punctuality issues is crucial.

## **Reporting Absences**

Responsibility for informing the school of the reason for their child's absence lies with parents. Parents should inform the school, on the first day of absence **before 9am**, whether in person or by telephone. Any unreported absences after the close of register are followed up with a phone call home in order to trace the whereabouts of the child.

When a child is ill, the school should be informed of the nature of the illness on the first day of absence and where possible the predicted date of return. Telephone messages will be noted down on absence slips provided and put into the appropriate class register.

Reasons for absences must be given by letter, by telephone or by speaking to the class teacher. Various codes must be inserted into the register. See Appendix A.

If there is regular absence for illness the school may request medical evidence.

## **Registration**

The class register is an important legal document which must be completed twice a day, first thing in the morning and again in the afternoon.

**At Wharton C.E. Primary School doors open for whole school (EYFS, KS1 and KS2) at 8.40am:-**

### **KEY STAGE 2 Children (Year 3, 4, 5 and 6)**

- Registration starts at 8.50am and registers close at 9.00am.
- If a child in Key Stage 2 arrives at school after 9.00am they will be marked as late. They must first be signed in at Reception and then an L is inserted into the register.
- Children in Key Stage 2 arriving after the register closes at 9.10am will be marked as absent for the whole session unless there is a valid reason.

### **EFFS and KEY STAGE 1 Children (Reception, Year 1 and Year 2)**

- Registration starts at 9.00am registers close at 9.10am
- If a child in EYFS/ Key Stage 1 arrives at school after 9.10am they will be marked as late. They must first be signed in by an adult at Reception and then an L is inserted into the register.
- Children in EYFS Key Stage 1 arriving after the register closes at 9.20am will be marked as absent for the whole session unless there is a valid reason.

## **Monitoring and Reporting Attendance Issues**

Any school day lost due to absence is a cause for concern, but regular absence needs to be carefully monitored.

- Each week, attendance is looked at by the Family Coordinator who is the attendance officer in school.
- If a child's attendance becomes erratic and unexplained the Family Coordinator or Headteacher will seek an explanation from the child's parent/carer.
- If an explanation is not forthcoming, or not acceptable, the Family Coordinator will then contact the parents by phone, or if necessary make a home visit following a discussion with the Headteacher, Mrs Spinks.
- If attendance does not improve then parents are informed that a monitoring process has been initiated.
- If attendance does not improve a referral will be made to the EWO.
- The head teacher and Family Coordinator meet half termly to discuss and analyse attendance issues

It is understood that there are good reasons why children are absent from school. The attendance and punctuality system has been put in place to offer support. The system aims to highlight concerns at an early stage in an attempt to prevent legal action being taken against parents who fail to ensure that their child attends school.

## **Authorising Absences**

Legally only the school can authorise absence, not parents. **Sometimes** parents keep children at home when there is no valid reason for their absence. This is known as parentally condoned absence and any unjustified absence will be classed as unauthorised.

**\*If the school is unable to accept the explanation or an explanation is not forthcoming**, the absence will be treated as unauthorised. In the event of the latter, a letter will be issued by the school requesting an explanation for the absence – if an explanation is still not supplied, or school obtains conflicting information as to the absence, the Educational Welfare Officer will be contacted by the Family Coordinator or Headteacher and parents will be notified that this action has been taken.

## **Illness, medical and dental appointments**

If a child is prevented from attending school due to illness and the school is satisfied with the explanation the absence is treated as authorised. When possible medical or dental appointments should be taken outside school time, but where it is not these appointments are authorised when confirmation is received from parents.

## **Lateness**

Punctual attendance is expected.

<b>Lateness = Lost Learning</b> <b><i>Over the whole school year this means</i></b>	
<b>5 minutes late each day</b>	<b>3.25 days lost!</b>
<b>10 minutes late each day</b>	<b>6.5 days lost!</b>
<b>15 minutes late each day</b>	<b>10 days lost!</b>
<b>20 minutes late each day</b>	<b>13 days lost!</b>
<b>25 minutes late each day</b>	<b>19.5 days lost!</b>

Arrival after close of registration, without suitable explanation, is classed as unauthorised. Persistent lateness will be investigated. Initially the Family Coordinator will contact the parent and if there is no improvement the EWO will be contacted as above. If a child has 10 or more unauthorised late marks, in one half term, this may result in a fixed penalty warning being issued. (see FPN pge 8)

## **Special Occasions**

Only truly exceptional occasions will be authorised.

(The link below takes you to DfE website for further details.

[www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/r](http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/behaviour/attendance/a00223868/r))

When considering individual cases regard would be given to the following:

- the nature of the event
- nearness to an assessment period
- advance notification
- overall attendance pattern of the child

### **Days of Religious Observance**

Absence on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which parents belong will be authorised.

### **Family Bereavements**

Schools would be sympathetic to requests for absence to attend funerals and would respond sensitively to such requests. Such absence would be authorised.

### **Leave of Absence – holiday (amended in September 2013)**

The Government's view is that parents do not have a legal right to take children out of school on holiday. Only in special circumstances may a school grant leave of absence for a holiday in term time; for example a forces family.

Before booking a leave of absence in term time parents should:

- request the leave of absence by completing the relevant form which will then be passed to the headteacher who may request a meeting with the parent/carer.
- 10 sessions (5 days) unauthorised absence or more will incur a Fixed Penalty. (2 = 1 x day absence)
- not book travel in term time until the school's permission has been sought; and
- remember that the school cannot agree to authorise the time off

Absence without permission and/or in excess of any agreed time is unauthorised. If a leave of absence is not authorised but the parents still chose to take the child out of school, then a fixed penalty notice **will/may** be issued to each parent/carer, per child.

A decision to authorise a leave of absence is at the Head teacher's discretion. The request form will be returned to notify the parent/carer of the decision or of further action, e.g. a meeting

*A decision made could later be reversed should conflicting information emerge.*  
(see\* **Authorising Absences p 5**)

### **Education Welfare Service**

The role of the Education Welfare Service is to help parents and the Local Authority meet the statutory obligations on school attendance. Schools liaise closely with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to support good attendance and punctuality. Registers are checked regularly by the EWO and if there are unauthorised absences legal action can be taken. It is therefore very important that school is informed of the reason for an absence so the correct code can be entered on the register.

If a child has regular absence from school the EWO may make a home visit and will work with parents and the school to help resolve the situation.

If parents are worried about attendance they should:

- Talk to their child – it may be something simple
- Talk to the Headteacher and staff at school
- Talk to Education Welfare

### **Attendance Procedure**

Good attendance at school is very important. *If you are not here, you cannot learn!*

Every school in Winsford aims to have an attendance percentage of 96.7% or above. This procedure has been developed to ensure consistency of approach across the town to positively promote high attendance and punctuality.

	<b>Red</b>	<b>Danger Zone</b>	<b>Attendance below 92%</b>
	<b>Amber</b>	<b>At Risk Zone</b>	<b>Attendance between 92% and 96%</b>
	<b>Green</b>	<b>Safety Zone</b>	<b>Attendance between 96% and 100%</b>

Our aim is for all children to have at least 96% for both attendance and punctuality and be in the "green safety zone".

At the end of this school year, each child's attendance will be categorised into a Red, Amber or Green zone.

Every term, in the following new school year, each child's attendance will be re-categorised and reported to parents.

**If a child's attendance falls below 96%**

*...they will be in the "amber at risk zone."*

*Contact will be made with parents and the child's attendance and punctuality will be monitored closely. We will arrange a meeting with parents and the **Headteacher** to discuss this if improvements are not made so we can offer support to improve the child's attendance and punctuality.*

Research indicates that failure to attend school regularly can have a major impact on children's education and their future life chances. We hope that parents will support schools in promoting the new attendance and punctuality system, so all our children have the best possible attendance.

**If a child's attendance falls below 92%**

*...they will be in the "red danger zone."*

*Contact will be made with parents and the child's attendance and punctuality will be monitored closely. If significant improvements are not made a meeting between parents and the school's **Education Welfare Officer** will discuss any concerns and support to improve the child's attendance and punctuality.*

## **Promoting Attendance and Punctuality**

This system is designed to reward good attendance and punctuality, and offer support to those families who may need help with these issues.

Schools may use a variety of different strategies to promote attendance and punctuality. These may include:

- End of term draw for attendance to take place in the school celebration assemblies.
- All pupils with 100% attendance and punctuality in any term will be rewarded with an attendance certificate and celebrated in school.
- A reward/award for the class which has the best attendance and punctuality each week.

## **Close of Register**

Across the Partnership there is agreement that the official close of registers is 10 minutes after the beginning of the school day. Arrival after this time, without a valid reason, will be treated as unauthorised.

## **Fixed Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Leave of Absence**

It remains the decision of the Headteacher/Governors to authorise or not authorise leave of absence during term time.

Amendments to legislation state that leave during school time should only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If a parent/carer request a leave of absence during term time which is declined, and the child is subsequently absent in circumstances which suggest that the leave was taken despite the lack of consent, Government Guidance suggests that the absence is recorded as an Unauthorised Absence and that a Fixed Penalty Notice should be issued.

If a request for a leave of absence is declined the Headteacher should respond in writing informing parents/carers of the decision and that a Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued.

If the leave of absence request is for a holiday during term time and the absence is unauthorised it should be recorded on the pupil's registration certificate as a **G**.

A Fixed Penalty Notice can only be issued if the unauthorised leave of absence is for at least 10 sessions (5 school days) during term time. These have to be consecutive school days.

## Appendix A: Register Codes

<b>Code</b>	<b>School Meaning</b>	<b>Statistical Meaning</b>	<b>Physical Meaning</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
@	Do not use	Unauthorised	Late for session
B	Educated off site-not Dual reg	Authorised	Out for whole session
C	Other authorized circumstances	Authorised	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration-attending other estab	Approved Ed. Activity	Out for whole session
E	Excluded-no alternative provision made	Authorised	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday- not agreed/days in excess	Unauthorised	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday – leave of absence -agreed	Authorised	Out for whole session
I	Illness- not medical/dental appointment	Authorised	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Ed. Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late – before registers closed	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointment	Authorised	Out for whole session
N	No reason provided for absence	Unauthorised	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised - not covered by other code	Unauthorised	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Ed. Activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised	Out for whole session
U	Late – after registers closed	Unauthorised	Late for session
V	Education trip/visit	Approved Ed. Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work Experience	Approved Ed. Activity	Out for whole session
X	DfE ~ School closed to pupils	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Do not use	Authorised	Out for whole session
#	School closed to pupils & staff	Attendance not required	Out for whole session