



Attendance and Punctuality Policy ***September 2018*** ***Be here to learn!***

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

Rationale

As Winsford Education Partnership, all school leaders are keen to adopt a consistent approach to managing attendance and punctuality in our schools. We want all pupils to be treated equally and by implementing a shared policy we are ensuring that parents and carers are clear on the expectations and processes that all WEP schools have adopted.

Please note sections pertinent to secondary school students only are signposted.

Introduction

Our aim as the Winsford Education Partnership is for every child and young person to aspire, learn and achieve. For our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The expectation is that pupils will attend for at least 96%.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents/carers and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents/carers and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible and that every child's welfare and life opportunities are promoted.

Parents are primarily responsible for ensuring that children attend school.

Parents/carers should make sure that their child attends regularly and this policy sets out how parents/carers and the school will work together to achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important.

Learning

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines, so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a pupil's regular attendance at school is parents' or carers' legal responsibility. Permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding

A pupil may be at risk of harm if he or she does not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each pupil is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for every child encompasses:-

- Attendance
- Behaviour Management
- Health and Safety
- Access to the Curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failing to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility, parents, students and all members of school staff and governors.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give all parents and carers details on their child's attendance via school progress reporting methods;
- Report to parents and carers if their child's attendance becomes a cause for concern;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying and rewarding individual and class achievements.

The Law Relating to Attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, makes it a criminal offence for a parent to fail to secure their child's attendance at the school at which they are registered, where that absence is not authorised by the school.

The Law Relating to Safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents/carers), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, by phone call or in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings and afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Whilst any pupil may be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes a child can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the pupil. If a pupil is reluctant to attend, it is never in that pupil's interests to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily during the school day;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed by the Principal/ Head Teacher.

Modifications to policy to reflect the current COVID-19 Pandemic

Following a return to school in September 2020, an additional category to reflect authorised absences has been added.

When a child is asked to self-isolate because they have symptoms of Covid-19 they will receive an 'X' in the register. This is to reflect that they have been absent, but that this was due to Government guidance and therefore their absence is authorised. *(correct as of September 2021).*

Leave of Absence from School

There is no entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

Amendments to the **Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**, in force from **1 September 2013**, make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In exceptional circumstances, when leave of absence is granted, the Principal/Head Teacher will determine the number of school days a child or young person can be away from school.

Parents should not plan for their child to be absent from school without gaining prior agreement. Requests for a planned leave of absence under exceptional circumstances should be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the start date of the requested absence, by writing to the School (Leave of Absence forms are available – appendix 1). The Principal/ Head Teacher cannot retrospectively authorise a planned absence.

The following will not be deemed to be exceptional circumstances:

- Family holiday
- Availability of less expensive holiday
- Availability of holiday accommodation
- Parent\carer's working commitments
- Overlap with the beginning or the end of a term or a half term

Taking holidays in term time will affect a pupil's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not taking their children away in school time.

Appeals should be directed to the Principal/ Head Teacher who will decide whether they should be granted. The school will only grant leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, in line with statutory regulations.

Pupil Absence

When a pupil is absent, a telephone call must be made on the first day of absence to the school and each day thereafter, depending on circumstances. A record of the call must be kept by the school.

Absence will not be authorised on the first or last day of any half term if medical evidence is not provided.

The Attendance Team will deal with persistent and long-term absences.

Pupils having medical or dental appointments must bring a card or note from their parent/carers, which should be authorised by a member of the Attendance Team. Appointments during school time will only be authorised if a letter or appointment notification is provided from the medical practice or hospital. Where possible, every effort should be made to arrange appointments outside of school hours, especially for ongoing treatment.

Absence Procedures

Guidance for Parents

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation if absences persist;
- Request medical evidence as necessary;
- Refer the matter to the school attendance team if attendance becomes a concern;
- Complete registers accurately and in a timely fashion to ensure safeguarding of all pupils;

- Refer to the Attendance Welfare Service for legal advice if attendance deteriorates;
- Home visits will be carried out when deemed in the best interest of the pupil.

Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents/ carers about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't, then something important may be missed. You can update your information by contacting us at school on 01606 288110.

Monitoring Absence

It is the duty of parents/carers, teachers and governors to see that pupils attend regularly and see the benefit of attending regularly. Where pupils have irregular attendance, the school will meet with parents/ carers and pupils to help improve their attendance. If necessary legal action will be taken.

Attendance is closely monitored by the office team and the school safeguarding and welfare officer.

Penalty Notices

Under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003), the local authority and schools have statutory powers to tackle poor school attendance and/or unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the Principal/ Head Teacher has not given permission for or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent/carer. If your child accrues 10 sessions of unauthorised absence you may be liable for a penalty notice (one days absence equals two sessions and a five day absence is equal to 10 sessions etc.).

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absences developing. They will be issued by post directly to the home of a parent/carer after possibly just one warning, or in the case of absences without acceptable cause, warnings may not be given. This includes pupils caught on truancy sweeps, persistent late arrival after the close of registration **or absence that has not been authorised as an absence from school for exceptional circumstances.** In these cases the warning is given on the absence request form and no written warning will be given. Fines are issued by the Local Authority for unauthorised absence of 5 or more days and each school day is divided into 2 registration periods.

For example: if your child is absent for one day, this equals 2 sessions and a five day absence is equal to 10 sessions.

If a request is declined and the pupil is still taken out of school, each parent within the household may be issued with a £60 penalty notice for each child that has been taken out of school. If a penalty notice remains unpaid after 21 days it will increase to £120. If after 28 days it remains unpaid parents may be summonsed to appear before Magistrates to explain why your child has unauthorised school absences and you may be liable for a fine of up to £1000.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any pupil's educational prospects and we need parents/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk

of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

All PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through attendance panel meetings. Some acute PA students and their parents/carers will be subject to an Action Plan. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the School Attendance Team.

Pupil Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing and can also encourage absence.

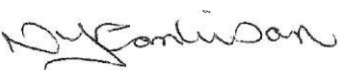
The school day

Doors open from **8.50am** to **9.10am**

Register taken at **9.10am**

In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after registers close they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be invited to a meeting to resolve the issues. However you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time and we will offer support and advice.

Signed:  **Head Teacher**

Date: December 2020

Review Date: December 2022

This policy was ratified/reviewed:

Date: September 2018

Frequency of review: Every 2 years

Wharton CE Primary School Request for Term Time Absence

Child's Name.....

Class.....

I/We request permission for my/our child to be absent from school from

.....to

My/Our child will be back in school on

Number of School days my/our child will be absent

Reason for request; please give as much detail as possible to enable the school to make an informed decision:

.....
.....
.....
.....

Signed Date

To be completed by school

Permission Refused / Permission Granted

Signed..... Head Teacher

Date.....

Attach a copy of letter to parent where applicable.

Appendix 2 – How we manage lateness



REGISTER – KS1 and KS2



All children are expected to be in the playground ready for the doors opening at **8:50am**.



Registers should be taken at **9.10am** and sent to the office.

Any children who are not present for the register should be marked **N**.



If a child arrives **later than 9.10am**, after the classroom doors have closed then they will have to report to the main office and will be marked as late, **L** in the register.

If a child arrives extremely late which is after **9.20am** then they will have **unauthorised lateness** which is marked as **U** in the register.