

WHITNASH PRIMARY SCHOOL

'Learning, growing and succeeding together'

Attendance Policy



Whitnash Primary School

Attendance Policy



(This policy is to be read in conjunction with the safeguarding, anti bullying and behaviour policy)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Whitnash Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all of our pupils. We expect all of our pupils to attend school every day when the school is in session.
- 1.2 We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. We therefore strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all our pupils. Attendance is a critical factor to a successful school career and we actively celebrate and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all of our pupils.
- 1.3 We recognise that parents play a pivotal role in ensuring their child's attendance and we actively strive to ensure strong and positive home-school links. Should any problems arise which may affect a pupils regular attendance; we will work in partnership with parents, pupils and where necessary, the Local Authority, to identify and resolve these problems as quickly as possible. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

2 Aims and Objectives

Our aims and objectives in relation to our pupils attendance are to;

- Encourage and reward full time attendance and punctuality
- To ensure that all our pupils enjoy attending school and are highly motivated to attend regularly and punctually
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- Support and encourage all of our pupils to reach their full academic potential and achieve a high level of personal and social well-being
- Maintain a consistent whole school approach to attendance
- Ensure a safe and positive learning environment for all our pupils
- To record and monitor attendance and review this regularly to minimise and improve absenteeism and unauthorised absence
- To promote full time attendance by all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- To maintain and promote positive links between school and home
- To discourage families from arranging holidays during school terms
- To ensure that parents are aware of when it is appropriate for their child to be absent from school and to understand the possible consequences of failing to ensure their child's regular attendance

3 Our Principles

We recognise the importance that all of our pupils and parents feel supported. We will therefore:

- Encourage parents to actively promote their child's full time attendance
- Provide information to pupils and parents relating to attendance
- Ensure all staff are aware of registration requirements relating to attendance and the law.
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance
- Ensure all staff have access to regular safeguarding training
- Consult with school staff members, school governors and Warwickshire Attendance Compliance and Enforcement Service (ACE) in maintaining our Attendance policy
- Ensure that school staff and parents are familiar with and adhere to our procedures for registering pupils' attendance, and reporting, recording and following up a pupil's absence or lateness

4 Statutory Duty

- Under section 7 of Education act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive a full time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.
- If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at school fails to attend regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- The school is responsible for recording a pupil's attendance twice a day; at the start of the morning session and during the afternoon session. This entry must be made for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the admission roll.

5 Paternal expectations

- It is the responsibility of the parent/ carer to inform the school on the first day of their child's absence. Should the school have not been notified by 9am the first day of a child's absence; the will contact the child's parent/ carer.
- When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register and will inform the school office staff who will endeavour to contact the parent/ carer to determine the reason for the absence.
- When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or carer to explain the absence and confirm its duration.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check the safety of the child.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring that schools database is kept up to date by notifying schools as soon as possible if there are any changes in contact details or circumstances.

- Parents should try to avoid any unnecessary absences by making medical appointments outside of the school day. Should this be unavoidable; medical appointment cards should be provided to the school to authorise those absences.
- Parents should talk to their child about school and notify the school if their child is experiencing any difficulties. Parents should take active involvement in their child's work and progress and maintain regular communication with the school during any period of absence so that schools where necessary, can either involve outside agencies or offer reintegration programmes if appropriate.
- School procedures of attendance
- These procedures are to ensure and promote a whole school awareness of attendance

6 Lates

- Registers open at 8.55am and close at 9.30am Registration is not only a legal requirement but is an important point of child's day where information is often given out to all pupils. Lateness can also cause disruption to a class and embarrassment for the child arriving after the registration has started.
- Any child who arrives after 9.05 will be recorded as late unless a medical note is provided
- Any pupil arriving after 9.30 will receive an unauthorised late mark which will impact on the child's overall attendance.
- Records of persistent late attenders will be kept and discussed with parents for further intervention if felt necessary.

7 Absences

- First day contact of absence and notes to be provided on child's return
- Weekly / fortnightly reviews of attendance
- Pupils with below 95% attendance to be closely monitored and contact made with parents where necessary
- Stage 1 – parents to be contacted to discuss concerns where attendance has not improved. Parents will be offered a meeting in school to discuss the reasons for the absences and outside support may be offered where necessary. School attendance targets may be set in order to see an improvement in the child's attendance. A referral to Attendance Compliance and Enforcement Service may be necessary to investigate further.
- Stage 2 – Parents to be contacted to discuss concerns where attendance has still not improved. Parents will be offered a meeting in school to discuss the reasons for absences and outside support may be offered where necessary. School attendance targets may be set in order to see an improvement in the child's attendance. Medical evidence will be requested from this point to authorise any further absences from school, absences will remain unauthorised unless this evidence can be presented to the school. A referral to Attendance Compliance and Enforcement Service may be necessary to investigate further.

8 **Definition of Authorised Absence:**

- An absence is classified as authorised when the child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian of that child. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Exceptional cases of religious observances or particular family circumstances may also result in an authorised absence being granted by the school.
- Only the head teacher of the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be recorded as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, or allows a child to stay out of school to celebrate a family birthday or go on a family outing, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

9 **Definition of Unauthorised Absence**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and the parent
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- Persistent lateness can constitute unauthorised absence
- If a pupil's attendance falls to an unacceptable level; absences will be recorded as unauthorised unless medical evidence can be provided to the school. Medical evidence can be in the form of appointment cards, doctors letters, copies of prescriptions etc.

10 **Requests for leave of absence / Fixed Penalty Notices**

- 10.1 The Government issued new regulations in September 2014 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2016 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Head teachers **shall not** grant any Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.

- 10.2 Parent and carers do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Children are required to attend school for 190 days in a school year, leaving 175 days of weekends and school holidays. Parents and carers should always endeavour to arrange family holidays when their children are not required to be in school.
- 10.3 The Head Teacher will determine how many school days a child may be Absent from school if they grant leave.
- 10.4 The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are Made by the resident parent.
- 10.5 Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice.

- 10.6 Applications for Leave of which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- 10.7 If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.
- 10.8 **Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.**
- 10.9 We believe that children need to be in school full time, so that they can make the most progress possible and do not miss out on crucial learning which may put them at an educational disadvantage. Our school considers pupils continuous attendance at school to be essential for their academic achievement.

11. Fixed Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised.
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

Amendments have been made to the 2007 penalty notices regulations in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure that his/her children's regular attendance at school.

The penalty is £60 per parent for those who pay within 21 days and £120 for those who pay within 28 days. Parents who do not pay a fine within 28 days may be prosecuted.

This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices.

The procedure for issuing Penalty Notices will be in accordance with the Local Authority's Penalty Notice Protocol.

12. Rewards for good attendance

- 12.1 While the school would always seek to avoid disadvantaging children who, through illness or other circumstances, have been unavoidably absent from school, we do, from time to time, give attendance incentive rewards or

certificates for children with 100 per cent attendance over a term or a whole school year, in order to maintain a focus on the importance of regular attendance.

13 Attendance targets

13.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors as part of our annual target-setting process. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

14. Monitoring and Performance

- We recognise the importance of good practice by:
- Keeping and maintaining accurate attendance records. These will remain on file for a minimum of 3 years.
- Recognising the links between attendance and achievement
- Rewarding pupils for outstanding or improved attendance on a regular basis
- Working closely with the Attendance Compliance and Enforcement Service
- Ensuring all appropriate staff have training and guidance related to the accurate completion of registers and attendance information.
- Providing parents with information related to attendance in school documentation e.g. School website, newsletters, prospectus, etc.
- Regularly analysing attendance information and ensuring follow up action in the case of non-school attendance
- Reviewing the attendance policy with the governing body two years or sooner if necessary.

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