

WHITGREAVE PRIMARY
SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY &
GUIDELINES



September 2018

Mrs Redfern - Head Teacher
Mrs Westwood - Attendance Officer



Attendance Policy & Guidelines - September 2018

Principles

Children should be in school, on time, every day that the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. It is an offence for a parent/carer to allow a child to be absent from school without a good reason.

Every half day absence has to be classified as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This decision can only be made by school, not by parents/carers. In order to make this decision school needs to be informed of the reason why a child is not in school. This information can be given to school in person, by telephone or in writing.

Authorised Absence - These are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason. The school **may** authorise absence in the following circumstances:

- Illness - Medical evidence may be required.
- Medical appointments - Evidence will need to be provided.
- Family bereavement.
- Religious observance.
- Approved sporting activity.

A **Leave of Absence** request must be completed for any other possible absence. This must be submitted to the school, no later than 4 weeks before the actual leave is required.

Unauthorised Absence - These are mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons which school cannot authorise:

- Truancy.
- Absences for which school has not been given a reason.
- Shopping, looking after other children, oversleeping, birthdays.
- Headlice.
- Family holidays.
- Leave of absence which is taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge, and/or in excess of the time agreed by the school.
- Other absences for children within Year 2 and Year 6. (Due to SATs)

Problems with Attendance

Children can sometimes be reluctant to attend school. It is never better to give in to their pressure and cover up their absence. This gives them the impression that their education does not matter to you and could make things worse. Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you are having any problems with your child's attendance.

School will not authorise an absence for children with a below 90% attendance, without medical evidence.

The Local Authority Attendance Service

If problems cannot be sorted out between school and parents/carers, then the matter will be referred to the LA Attendance Service. Referral to the LA Attendance Service would normally take place if:

- A pattern of irregular attendance or lateness is either continuing or worsening.
- Parents/carers do not accept their responsibilities for ensuring that their child attends school.
- Condoned/unjustified absence is an increasing problem.
- Parents/carers ask for excessive authorised absence.
- Pupil overall attendance remains at 85% or below.

After referral, the Attendance Service will work with the family to improve attendance for a specified period of time. If the situation has not been improved during this time **court proceedings** may ensue. The Attendance Service have the following legal powers to enforce attendance:

- **School Attendance Orders (Parent Contracts)** - These enforce responsibility of the parents/carers for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive suitable education and to ensure that the parent/carer takes responsibility for making sure that their child attends school regularly.
- **Penalty Notice** - For irregular attendance, truancy, unauthorised absence and holidays which have not been authorised by the school. This can result in parents/carers being fined up to £50 initially (fines for non-payment may increase after 28 days), for each child who is not going to school. **This option does not require an appearance in Court and is an alternative to prosecution.**
- **Prosecution** - This may be considered for periods of poor attendance, and/or following a Penalty Notice or depending on the circumstances of the absenteeism. It is not necessary to issue a Penalty Notice initially.
- **Parenting Orders** - This is a legal requirement for a parent/carer to undertake specific measures in order to improve a child's attendance.

- **Education Supervision Orders** - This means that the Court appoints a Supervisor to help and give advice to the parents/carers and the child.

Parents/carers may wish to contact the LA Attendance Service themselves to ask for help or information. This service is independent of school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the School Office or by contacting the Local Authority Helpline: 01902 555989.

The people responsible for attendance matters within school are:

Mrs S Redfern, Head Teacher and Mrs S Westwood, Attendance Officer.

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

Parents/carers of children whose attendance is becoming a concern will be notified, by telephone or letter. Home visits may also take place, by staff responsible for attendance within school, the LA Attendance Service, or the Police.

Attendance Rewards

School staff are committed to working with parents/carers to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Rewards will be given to all children achieving a 'good level' of attendance for a term and for the whole year. A 'good level' of attendance will be deemed as 95% or above.

100% Attendance = Children receive a Certificate and a Gold Award.

98% - 99.99% Attendance = Children receive a Certificate and a Silver Award.

95% - 97.99% Attendance = Children receive a Certificate and a Bronze Award.

In addition, where children have significant medical needs which impacts upon their attendance, they will also be rewarded for improving their overall attendance. (Significant medicals needs will be determined by a medical professional)

There are also rewards for the class with the best attendance each week and each term.

Children with an attendance level of below 90% will have their attendance closely monitored, with actions taken accordingly.

Attendance Targets

The Governing Board sets targets for attendance for the whole school, in line with the School Development Plan, on an annual basis.

Procedures for Parents/Carers

- **On the first day of absence** - Parents/carers are requested to ring school, if possible before 9.30 am, on 01902 558930, to give the reason for absence. If school is not contacted, then school will contact the parent/carer by telephone, letter or home visit. If the absence continues, please keep school notified at reasonable intervals. **Please remember, no contact may result in a visit from the staff responsible for attendance within school, the LA Attendance Service, or the Police, as it is important that we know that ALL our children are safe and well. This is part of school's statutory safeguarding duty.**
- **Medical appointments** - Parents/carers are requested where possible, to make medical appointments outside school hours. Where this is not possible, please try to request early or late appointments and inform school in advance. If the child returns before 11.00am or is taken out after 2.30pm he/she can be marked present. Children should be signed in and out at the School Office. Medical evidence will need to be provided.
- **Holidays** - **Holidays within term-time have a detrimental effect on the education and progress of children.** Holidays should be taken during the school holidays. Leave of absence requests are available from the Main Reception and should be handed in at least four weeks in advance. **Holidays within term-time can no longer be authorised by the Head Teacher and Governing Board, unless there are any special circumstances.**
- **Late arrival** - School aims to foster good habits of attendance and punctuality. Children should arrive at school by their designated time. (See the School Prospectus or the School Website for further information relating to the school day). If children arrive late, they will receive a late mark.

In the event of a School Closure, information will be displayed on Wolverhampton Council's Website. Parents will also receive a text from school.

Parents/carers are reminded that **ALL** absences and lates, are part of child's record. The records are inspected by the LA's Attendance Service.

If parents/carers have any concerns about their child's attendance, they should contact the school for further support.

Mrs Redfern - Head Teacher

Mrs Westwood - Attendance Officer