

# WHITGREAVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY & GUIDELINES



Mrs Redfern - Head Teacher  
Ms Westwood - Attendance Officer



## **Attendance Policy & Guidelines**

At Whitgreave Primary School, we strongly believe that attendance at school and being punctual are vital foundations for children's personal and academic growth. Establishing excellent attendance and punctuality patterns from an early age gives children the greatest chance to maximise their potential and enable children to develop a deep-rooted sense of belonging to their class and school community.

**Good attendance is deemed to be 96% or above.** Children should be in school, on time, every day that the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. School start and end times vary:

### **Nursery:**

AM - 8.30 am - 11.30 am

PM - 12.20 pm - 3.20 pm

### **Reception:**

8.45 am - 3.15 pm

### **Years 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6:**

8.40 am - 3.10 pm

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.

- Moving house.
- New babies in the family.
- 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.

### **Problems with Attendance**

When percentages start to fall below the average, research indicates that this will have a significant impact on a child's learning and progress. Attendance is extremely important. If children are not here, they cannot learn!

Attendance during one typical school year (190 days)	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
95%	10 days	2 weeks	60 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	Over 100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	Over 200 lessons
70%	57 days	12 weeks	Over 300 lessons

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 cannot authorise absence for children with a below 96% attendance, unless there are special circumstances and appropriate evidence.**

### **Children Missing Education**

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.

Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Effective information sharing between parents/carers, schools and Local Authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education.

## The Local Authority Attendance Service

Your child must be in school, every day, unless there is a valid reason for their absence. If problems cannot be sorted out between school and parents/carers, then the matter will be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Service. Referral to this 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 93% or below.

After referral, the Local Authority Attendance Service will work with the family in a bid to improve attendance for a specified period of time. If the situation has not been improved during this time, **court proceedings** may ensue. The Local Authority 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 £60 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.**  
Parents/carers can be issued with a Penalty Notice if a child has been excluded from school and contravenes the details set out in the Exclusion Letter, as to their whereabouts during the first 6 days of the exclusion.
- **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 Local Authority 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.

The people responsible for attendance matters within school are: **Mrs S Redfern, Head Teacher** and **Ms Westwood, Attendance Officer**. Contact can be made via the School Office, on 01902 558930.

School has a legal duty to promote attendance and to publish 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 Local Authority Attendance Service, or the Police.

### **Procedures for Parents/Carers**

**Good attendance is deemed to be 96% or above.** Your child must be in school, every day, unless there is a valid reason for their absence.

- **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 we will contact you 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 Local Authority Attendance Service, or the Police, as it is important that we know that ALL our children are safe and well. This is part of our statutory safeguarding responsibility.**
- **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. 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/Leave within term-time can no longer be authorised by the Head Teacher and Governing Board, unless there are any 'exceptional' circumstances. Any holiday/leave taken which is unauthorised, will be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Service for further action, which may result in a fine. Parents/carers can be fined £60 per child, per parent/carer.**
- **Late arrival** - School aims to foster good habits of attendance and punctuality. Children should arrive at school by their designated time, which is detailed above. If children arrive late, they will receive a late mark. The codes utilised will depend upon the lateness and this will be decided by the Attendance Officer. If you are running late, please call the School Office and inform us, so that we are aware of this. **Every minute late, is a minute of learning lost!**

On-going lateness is classified as an unauthorised absence and this is contrary to The Education Act. Parents/carers are reminded that **ALL** absences and lates, are part of a child's record. The records are inspected by the Local Authority Attendance Service.

### **School Closures**

The Head Teacher will make every effort to ensure that the school remains open. However, in some circumstances, such as severe weather, the school may have to close. The Head Teacher must always consider the health, safety and welfare of every person, who uses the school site, children, staff, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors.

If a decision is made to close part or all of the school, the Head Teacher will inform the Local Authority and a notice will be placed on Wolverhampton Today.

### **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 96% or above.**

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

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

96% - 97.99% Attendance = Children receive a Certificate and a Bronze Award.

**In addition, where children have significant medical needs or additional needs which impacts upon their attendance, they will also be rewarded for improving their overall attendance. (Significant medicals needs and/or additional needs will be determined by an appropriate professional)**

There are also rewards for the class with the best attendance each week and each term. Trophies are awarded to the individual, winning classes. In addition, children have daily raffle tickets for their attendance, which are entered into a weekly draw, so that children can win prizes too!

School also hold 'Golden Ticket Days' whereby all children in school on a particular day receive a special 'Golden Ticket' and again, can win prizes within school.

Children with an attendance level of below 96% 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.

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis, in line with the school's Policy Schedule and presented to the Governing Board.

Mrs Redfern - Head Teacher

Ms Westwood - Attendance Officer