



Wavell Community Schools' Federation

Executive Headteacher: Mrs Gillian Crouch



Attendance Policy

March 2020

Rationale

Wavell Community Schools' Federation and North Yorkshire Education Authority believe that attendance and punctuality at school are important and that absence can lead to poor progress and poor attainment. Regular and full time attendance is essential if children are to benefit fully from their school life. It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life.

Aims

- To encourage prompt arrival at school.
- To encourage regular attendance.
- To ensure that routines are in place for monitoring attendance and for early identification of any difficulties.
- To work together with parents in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Roles & responsibilities

The School will:

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority.
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and their presence is valued.
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality using newsletters, celebration assemblies and other communications to parents.
- Encourage parents to fully support the policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education.
- Encourage the children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored and absences are followed up promptly, through our "first call" system and monitored by the Headteacher and our Parent Support Adviser.

Communicate effectively with other agencies (Educational Welfare Officer (EWO), Traveller Education, Health, Social Services etc.).

- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence and punctuality.
- Ensure information is available for Governors and parents.

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- Ensure good liaison where a change of school occurs.
- Develop incentives for good attendance and punctuality.

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up after actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation (but not necessarily taking this any further – responsibility of Office Staff and/or headteacher).
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings.

School Business Manager and Office staff are responsible for:

- Following up specific requests from the Headteacher for information about individuals.
 - Contacting the child's home by 9.45am on the first day of absence if the parent has not contacted the school.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence.
- Monitoring individual attendance on a daily basis where concerns have been raised.
 - Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO.
 - Providing a point of contact between individual teachers, the Headteacher and the school's EWO.
 - Including information about attendance trends and class percentages to Headteacher and teaching staff.
 - Informing the Headteacher on a formal and an informal basis of patterns of attendance noted.
 - Promptly issuing registers and processing on a weekly basis.
 - Collating attendance percentages.
 - Processing and following up holiday forms.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Acting as a point of contact for teaching and non-teaching staff where concerns need to be raised or advice sought.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

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- Ensuring that the attendance policy is followed and that the actions from EWO meetings are carried out.
- Liaising with and discussing with parents issues relating to attendance.

Feedback and discussions with the class teacher over individual cases

- Promotion of attendance issues during assemblies.

We expect the parent/carer to:

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address.
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, by 9.30 a.m. on the first day of the absence. To inform the school if the absence is continuing.
- In cases of lengthy absence, keep the school well informed so that work can be sent home in certain cases and in order for the school to be prepared for the child's return.
- Provide details indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.
- Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down; if an urgent appointment has been made.
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this with their child.
- Complete 'holiday' request forms if time out of school is needed; this is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Strategies to Promote and Maintain High

Standards of Attendance and Punctuality

- All new parents are given information on attendance.
- Newsletters are used to promote this aspect of school life and serve as a reminder.
- Individual parents are approached where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Maintain and promote a set of class rules that refer to punctuality and readiness to learn. This is at the centre of our curriculum.

It is important to remember that the vast majority of children at Wavell Community Infant and Nursery School arrive on time every day. An important part of our attendance policy is that this good practice is commended

and celebrated. In order to do this we:

- Reward good attendance on a termly basis in our sharing assembly where we have a visit from "Sirius" (The brightest star in the universe as he attends school every day!)

We also have weekly celebration assemblies where a 'mini' Sirius is presented to the class with the highest weekly attendance.

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Registers

The method of maintaining the class registers is through SIMs Attendance Module. Class teachers complete a register sheet twice daily and return it to the office. Weekly absence reports are printed and reasons for absence recorded using the relevant codes. Codes are available to staff in all registers.

Registers close at 9.15 a.m. Lateness after this time is classed as 'late after the register has closed' unless it is for a medical appointment or a reason is provided which can be authorised by the Headteacher.

Children arriving late to school or leaving during the school day are recorded in the relevant books in the main school office.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Absences can be authorised if they are for certain reasons e.g. sickness, religious observance, approved holiday, absence following the death of a close member of the family. The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Headteacher. If the Headteacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

An absence will be classified as unauthorised when:

- A child is kept off school because a parent or sibling is ill.
- The parent cannot get the child to school.
- The child is taken on a shopping trip.
- A child is absent due to family work patterns.
- The child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home.
- A child is more than half an hour late without a satisfactory explanation.
- Oversleeping without a satisfactory explanation.

Each child's unauthorised absences (including unauthorised holiday absences) will be noted and recorded on an annual report to parents.

It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents in the annual Governors Report and to the DfE.

Parents have a responsibility to telephone the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence if their child is ill. If a child needs to be absent for a medical appointment a note must be received by the class teacher before the appointment. When a child returns from a period of absence due to a sickness, a note must be provided. The class teacher dates and signs all notes in order to complete the weekly absence report.

If the parent has not contacted the school once the morning registers have been sent to the office on the first day of absence then the school will telephone the child's home to enquire about the absence.

If a child has been absent for 3 days without an explanation, parents will be sent a letter. If no satisfactory response is received, a follow up reminder will be sent. Should this still result in a nil response, the Headteacher will write informing the parent of the Policy and the school's duty to inform the Education Welfare Officer about the child's lack of attendance.

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Where there is cause for concern, i.e. when attendance is below 80% at any time in the academic year, the reasons for this will be investigated and where appropriate, discussed with the EWO during one of their regular visits.

Holidays

- The law says that parents/carers do not have the right to take their children out of school for a holiday in term time.
- The Headteacher has the discretion to grant up to a maximum of 10 days leave for family holidays in each school year. This is at the discretion of the Headteacher and may not always be granted. The decision to grant this will be taken after discussion with the AWS and ESWS.
- The Headteacher will take into account individual circumstances such as the attendance record of the child, whether the child would miss exams or any exceptional circumstances. If any child has an attendance record of less than 90% then authorisation will not be given.
- Absences will not be authorised for any child during the administration of SATs in May and Year 1 'phonics screening' in June.

Any requests must be made at least 7 days in advance on the official form obtainable from the school. The reasons must be made clear to the Headteacher in the relevant section.

- If absence is not agreed and the pupil goes on holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and reported to the Education Social Work Service. The government has introduced Penalty Notice fines for parents whose children are out of school without the schools authorisation.
- Where a pupil fails to return within 10 school days of an agreed date schools have the power to remove the child from the school roll.
- All other requests for absences due to other circumstances must be made in writing to the Headteacher in advance.
- Early collection from school towards the end of the school day will not be authorised unless permission has been sought in advance, in writing, to the Headteacher or in cases of emergency.

Taking a holiday in term time means that children miss important school time. We would therefore request the co-operation of parents in considering the effect on their child's continuity of education before making requests for leave of absence in term time.

Medical Appointments

- Parents should inform the class teacher in writing indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician before the arranged appointment unless an emergency situation has arisen.
- Children should be collected from and returned to the school office to be signed in or out when attending medical appointments during the school day. If a child has an appointment in a morning or afternoon session and does not attend school for the other session, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless it has been agreed with the Headteacher.

Public Performances

On occasions children become involved in public performances for dance groups, theatres, modelling agencies etc.

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- The Headteacher has the discretion to grant authorised absence for these events.
- The Headteacher will take into account individual circumstances such as the attendance record of the child, whether the child would miss exams or any exceptional circumstances. If any child has an attendance record of less than 90% then authorisation will not be given. Permission is at the discretion of the Headteacher and may not always be granted.
- Parents must obtain a licence to perform from the employing agency. This must be submitted to the Headteacher for completion.
- A letter must also accompany the licence indicating the time out of school that the child will require in order to participate in the performances including time required for rehearsals.
- Absences for rehearsals will be recorded as unauthorised.
- Parents are asked to reflect upon the affect performances would have upon their child as any absence because a child is tired after a performance will be recorded as unauthorised.

Punctuality

- The school day begins at 8.50a.m. We suggest that in cold and wet weather, you do not come into the playground before that time. The staff are not responsible for your children until 8.50 a.m.
- Children arriving after 9.00 a.m. will be recorded as 'late'.
- Parents of children who persistently arrive late will be approached and reminded of these times and their obligation to comply. It will be explained that the lateness not only interrupts their child's education but also that of others in the class.
- If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know.

If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a letter will be sent home asking the parent to explain the lateness or to ensure that punctuality is maintained.

- Repeated, unexplained lateness or persistent lateness without an acceptable reason will be referred to the Education Social Worker and / or Social Services where relevant.

Monitoring

- The Headteacher will keep the Governors informed about attendance matters.
- All staff will be expected to comply with the policy and any issues will be discussed at staff meetings.
- The Headteacher will consult the Parent Support Adviser each week and the EWO each term to discuss concerns and review absence data.

Review date 2020

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