

# Warden Hill Junior School



## Attendance Policy

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# Warden Hill Junior School

## Attendance Policy

### Aims

We share the belief with our parents that children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Good attendance is linked very closely to high levels of achievement and attainment both during school years and later in life. Evidence shows that children with poor attendance are unlikely to succeed academically and they are more likely not to be in education, employment or training (NEET) when they leave school. There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement. Of pupils who miss more than 50% of school only 3% manage to achieve five or more GCSE's at grades A\* to C including Maths and English. 73% of pupils who have over 95% attendance achieve five or more GCSE's at grades A\* to C. Evidence shows that children who miss significant amounts of their education in primary school are more likely to truant later on.

This is also true for good standards of punctuality. The school is committed to working with children and their families to develop good levels of attendance and punctuality which will stand children in good stead throughout their lives.

### Rationale

Schools are required to develop policies and practices which support and promote good attendance. School governors are required to set annual attendance targets based on previous year's data and the desire to improve this. Schools have a duty to publish absence figures annually and report these to parents.

We work with the Local Authority (LA) and Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to support good levels of attendance and offer specific support to certain children and their families.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

## **Implementation**

### **Attendance**

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend school. The vast majority of our parents fulfil this responsibility well, but the school has the duty to support parents who find this challenging.

Schools are required to ensure that the attendance register for all pupils on the school roll is taken twice a day; at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions.

The register is an important legal document and must be completed accurately. We use the symbols to record attendance as outlined in Appendix 1.

For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school.

It is the responsibility of the school to authorise absence (not the parents). These are mornings or afternoons away from

school for a good reason like illness or unavoidable cause. We need to try to reduce the number of sessions a child misses as much as possible.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given.

This includes:

- Parents keeping a child off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been explained
- Children who arrive at the school too late to get a mark

As a school, we need to educate our parents and carers that these sessions cannot be made up.

DfEE Circular 10/99 outlines guidance for defining unauthorised absences

On completion of the manual classroom register, these documents are then sent to the school office.

As part of our duty of care to the children in our school, we operate a "First Response" system. Registers are monitored early each day and any child who is absent without a prior agreement is contacted by telephone.

We are grateful for early notification of any absence by parents. This can be done on the first day of absence by telephone call and these are recorded so registers can be marked accordingly.

When a child returns to school from any unforeseen absence they should return with a note of explanation from a parent which can then be recorded in the registers as either an authorised or unauthorised absence.

When a child returns from an extended absence (over 10 days) we will always try to facilitate an informal back to school discussion to aid their reintegration to school.

Absence notes are kept in the schools reception office and are monitored (if necessary) by the EWO.

If a child returns to school without an appropriate note of explanation, then the school will send home an absence query note ( Appendix 2) for parents to complete in order for registers to be marked accurately.

These will be monitored by the Receptionist staff to ensure they are returned to school

Registers of attendance are monitored on a weekly basis by the Head teacher and regularly by the EWO.

The school and the Educational Welfare Service (EWS) will engage with children and families where attendance is a cause for concern.

Parents receive information on their child's attendance as part of their half termly report and as a part of their end of year report.

Weekly awards are presented to the class with the best attendance for the week.

Governors receive information on attendance through the Head Teacher's termly report.

Children who achieve 100% attendance in a school half term receive an attendance award at the final end of term assembly.

Children who achieve 100% attendance during a complete school year will receive a book voucher as a reward.

Good levels of attendance are regularly celebrated in the life of the school.

### **Term Time Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances**

Our school needs to work to reduce the number of requests for Term Time Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances.

Good attendance is vital if pupils are to achieve their educational potential. A pupil who has two weeks leave in a school year cannot achieve more than 93.8% attendance between September and May. This is even before any other time off as a result of illness.

Schools with high attainment levels are those with high attendance levels.

*The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 have been amended and come into force from September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013. The amendments remove references to "holiday" and extended leave of absence as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of absence should not normally be granted for the purposes of a holiday as the law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Head Teachers have the discretion to authorise leave of absence in **exceptional** circumstances. An example of this might be for service personnel who are prevented from taking holidays outside of term-time, if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupil's education.*

Parents must apply to the school for a term-time leave in advance of taking it. It must not be assumed that permission will be granted. If a request is not made prior to the absence, then any Term Time Leave of Absence will be classed as Unauthorised.

An application form for Term Time Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances and letter are sent to all parents requesting a term time leave of absence (Appendix 4). Alongside this, parents are sent the schools' Leave of Absence Policy.

This also details the date when a child is due to return to school.

Prior to a leave of absence being authorised, the school will consider this in the context of a range of factors:

- The child's attendance history ( if this is below 97% in the previous 12 months or academic year the leave will not be authorised)
- The age of the child (leave of absence will not be granted during Year 6 unless after the KS 2 SATs.)

If term time leave is granted, schools may delete from roll any child who does not return within 10 days of the agreed date.

Where a leave of absence is unauthorised the school has the duty to report this to the EWS. A Penalty Notice will be issued for five or more school days unauthorised absence in accordance with legislation.

If unauthorised term time leave reaches 20 consecutive days, then the child's name will be removed from the school roll.

### **Punctuality**

Good punctuality is a life skill we are keen to develop and support in school.

Our school day starts at 8.55 am when the whistle is blown on the playground.

If a child is not on the playground when the classes go in to school the rear doors are closed and the child will need to report to the school office.

They will then be marked as "late before registers close".

Registers are marked promptly at the start of the school day.

If a child arrives more than 15 minutes after the whistle has been blown ( i.e. after 9.10 am they will be recorded as "late after registers close" - this will then feature as an unauthorised absence on the child's attendance certificate.)

The parents of children who are persistently late will be contacted by the school. We also send home information regarding punctuality (Appendix 3).

Parents should be aware of the EWO involvement in the monitoring of Late After Registers close marks.

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