

Whole School Attendance Policy

Rationale

Whalton with Longhorsley St Helen's C of E First Schools are committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavor to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Skills.

Each year the schools will examine their individual attendance figures and set their own attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Northumberland attendance targets.

The schools will review their systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that they are achieving their set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the schools will use to meet their attendance targets.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 9am. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation, i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Afternoon registration will be at 1.00pm. The registers will close at 1.30pm.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

Absence

First Day Absence On the first day of absence parents are expected to contact the school office to let school know that their child will be absent. If the absence is for more than one day parents must continue to let the school know. The school secretary is responsible for verbally passing the information on to the headteacher and/or members of staff. The information is then entered into SIMS attendance using the correct code. The information is also entered onto the class registers by the class teacher. Staff will contact the parent if no explanation for absence is given by the close of registers e.g 9.30am

Ten Day's Absence Any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to the Children's Services Attendance Team. The Headteacher will include details of the action that has been taken.

Frequent Absence It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Health Adviser/EOTAS if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the Education Welfare service.

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. Staff will try to ensure that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Absence notes

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period.

Promoting attendance

Whalton with Longhorsley St Helen's C of E First Schools will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

The Home School Agreement is completed upon entry to school in Reception and is revised annually. Parental responsibilities are clearly outlined in the agreement.

Holidays in Term Time

Holidays during term time are to be discouraged. Parents will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement. The school will consider authorising up to 10 days absence (or more in very exceptional circumstances) but parents must request a leave of absence on the grounds of exceptional circumstances and detail them in a letter to the Headteacher.

Attendance Targets

The schools will set their own individual attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established. The Headteacher will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Annual Analysis

Our attendance varies for many reasons:

Factors we, as rural schools, have no control over eg foot and mouth!!

Unavoidable weather - staff have to travel from distant rural areas, using rural roads to get to school in a rural area. The roads in many instances are impassable for staff and children. School transport can be haphazard and dangerous. Parents opt to keep their children safe and avoid travel.

A lot of absences take place in the same weeks as inclement weather via snow. A lot of absences take place in this time period even though school is open because children living on remote farms etc can still be 'snowed in' and cannot get to school. School transport can also find accessing these roads difficult.

Action : this is a health and safety issue for all of our children. We have a snow line so parents are alerted quickly if school is open or closed. The Headteacher contacts the caretaker, bus and taxi services to check on roads and ability to get children to school safely. Staff contact the Headteacher to see if they can get into school. Every member of staff attempts to get into school.

Persistent absenteeism

We have no children with 20% absenteeism in school.

Absenteeism relating to holidays - we do not have any child with unauthorised absences or over the 10 day leave of absence without prior consent.

Action : parents are advised that holidays should not be taken during term time and will only be given consent following completion of a 'request for leave of absence - during term time'.

Absenteeism relating to sickness - we have a 48 hour rule relating to sickness which is strictly applied. This accounts for absences of four sessions or more. None are unauthorised and a letter or phone call are recorded.

Action : we need the 48 hour ruling to ensure that spreading to staff and children is minimal.

The Registration System

The School uses SIMS for keeping the school attendance records.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (authorised by the Headteacher in exceptional circumstances)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

Registers by law must be kept for at least three years. Computer registers must be printed out into annual volumes. Entries in paper registers must be in ink. All corrections must be visible.

Register Security

The registers are safely stored in the classrooms by the Class Teachers.

Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually.

WHALTON with LONGHORSLEY St HELEN'S C of E FIRST SCHOOLS

Written and agreed by staff, this Policy was formulated after considering the following:

1. aims and content;
2. teaching strategies;
3. dissemination and consultation process.

Consultation with *Governors* will take place at the Autumn 2011 *Governors Meeting* and if accepted will be implemented from that date.

1 The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable -

- [a] to his age, ability and aptitude and
- [b] to any special needs he may have.
either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and Admission Roll keeping.

The legal requirements are found in:

The Education [Pupil Registration] (England) Regulations 2006

Categorisation of Absence

Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories:

1. Unauthorised Absence
2. Authorised Absence
3. Approved Educational Activity

1. Unauthorised absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

2. Authorised absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

3. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note: pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes -
this would include:

- work experience placements
- field trips and educational visits
- sporting activities
- link courses or approved education off site
- most types of dual registration.