



Wheatfield Primary School

'High Achievement Through Growing and Learning Together'

Respect • Inspire • Believe • Enjoy • Learn • Achieve

Attendance Policy

(Statutory Policy Document)

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Attendance Policy

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CHANGE RECORDS SHEET

Issue No.	Date	Summary of Change	Amended by
1	May 2006	Original policy document.	K Donaldson
2	December 2007	Document reviewed and updated.	K Donaldson
3	September 2008	Document reviewed and updated.	K Donaldson
4	March 2010	Document reviewed and updated.	K Donaldson
5	November 2010	Document reviewed and updated.	L Watkins
6	September 2010	Document reviewed and updated.	C Dursley
7	October 2014	Document reviewed and updated.	C Dursley
8	July 2015	Document reviewed and updated.	C Dursley
9	May 2017	Policy re-written	L Haydon
10	October 2017	Policy updated.	P Winterburn

SUMMARY

At Wheatfield Primary we will promote and secure high levels of school attendance.

This policy outlines practices and procedures that we believe will promote a strong attendance ethos. In delivering this we will provide every child with a full education and maximise their opportunities to achieve.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead in school is the Head teacher. The WPS Pupil and Family Support Worker has a specific responsibility for pupil attendance. This policy will be reviewed bi-annually or earlier if national guidance changes.

REFERENCES

- Education Act 1996
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- South Gloucestershire Council Code of Conduct (revised 13.9.2013) Penalty Notices

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MAIN DOCUMENT

1 RATIONALE

At Wheatfield we believe that strong links exist between attendance and achievement. If children are absent from school they may experience difficulty in catching up on missed learning. Absence from school can also affect a child's ability to form and maintain friendships and risk leaving them socially isolated. The school works alongside parents / carers and the Local Authority in promoting regular attendance and punctuality.

2 HOME / SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Parents are responsible for ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education (Section 36, 1944 Education Act)

Parents / carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring their child attends school punctually and regularly.
- Contacting the school on the first day of any unplanned absence e.g. when their child is unwell.
- Contacting the school again if an unplanned absence goes beyond a third day.
- Completing a 'Application for Leave of Absence' form for any planned period of absence (ideally this should be completed at least 10 working days before the period of absence begins).
- Keeping the school informed about any factors which they believe may affect their child's attendance or punctuality.

Children are responsible for:

- Being honest with their families and teachers about any reason why they may not want to come to school (rather than simply saying they are unwell).
- Ensuring they proceed quickly to class, once they have been dropped on site, to avoid being late for registration.
- Bringing themselves directly to school in order to arrive safely and on time (for those older children who walk themselves to school).

The school is responsible for:

- Ensuring parents are fully informed of their responsibilities with regard to attendance.
- Publishing expected school times and holidays (including inset days) to parents.
- Ensuring accurate registers are taken twice a day.
- Deciding whether an absence will be authorised or unauthorised.
- Informing parents / carers twice a year (at the end of Term 3 and Term 6) of their child's attendance rate.
- Keeping parents informed of attendance levels via school newsletters.
- Ensuring the school is a welcoming place where children want to attend and learn.
- Reintegrating and supporting any pupils who have been absent for a significant period of time.

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- Contacting families where concerns about a child's attendance is identified.
- Working closely with the Education Welfare Service.
- Providing regular reports to the Governing Body about attendance.

3 AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. A letter or telephone call from parents/carers does not in itself authorise an absence. Only the school's acceptance of the explanation will do this. Parents do not have the right to take a child out of school during term time to share a family holiday.

3.1 Authorised Absences

Authorised absences are accepted reasons for absence and may include:

- Periods of illness.
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments. Where possible, we ask that such appointments are booked outside the school day.
- Days of religious observance such as Eid or Diwali. This must be agreed with the Head teacher beforehand (by completing an absence request form).
- Exceptional circumstances such as a bereavement.

3.2 Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school when no acceptable reason is given. This includes:

- Parents /carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because it is their birthday or because the car won't start.
- Holidays in term time (including day trips).
- Children who arrive at school after 9.15am.
- Truancy before or during the school day.

3.3 Family Holidays

The school will not authorise holidays in term time. Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's education as much as any other absence. We expect parents to support their child's education by not booking holidays during term time.

The Local Authority publishes its term dates two years in advance, enabling people in most professions to plan holidays around these. Children attend school for 190 days a year, so there are 175 days in the year where holidays can be taken without interrupting a child's education.

The Head Teacher will look at each case individually, but the following reasons will never be considered exceptional:

- Cheaper holidays in England or abroad during term time.
- Family day trips.
- Relatives coming to visit.
- Visiting family / friends who have different half term holidays.
- A holiday attached to a family event e.g. a family wedding.

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Only in truly exceptional circumstances can a holiday be authorised in term time. Exceptional circumstances are unlikely to recur during a child's primary education. Even where the Headteacher judges there to be 'exceptional circumstances' the school will only authorise a maximum of 5 days within one academic year.

'Exceptional circumstances' may include:

- Forces personnel returning from a long foreign posting for a period of leave.
- A family who have experienced a significant trauma.
- Where a child within the family has significant needs which would make taking a holiday during high season almost impossible.

3.4 Broken Weeks

A broken week is any week where one or more sessions of school is missed. Lots of broken weeks are concerning because it means a child's learning is being frequently interrupted by absence. This will ultimately impact on your child's progress and achievement. As well as monitoring the percentage attendance of each pupil, the school will also monitor the number of 'broken weeks'.

3.5 Leave of Absence Requests

All requests for leave of absence during term time must be made on the 'Application for Leave of Absence' form available on the school website or from the school office not less than one week before the date for which leave of absence is requested.

- The school will decide whether each request will be authorised or unauthorised in line with this policy.
- The school will request the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice where more than 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence occur within and 70 session (35 day) period. Penalty Notices are currently £60 (per parent, per child) if paid within 21 days (this rises to £120 per parent per child). E.g. A two parent family taking 2 children out of school would be liable for Penalty Notices totalling £240 if paid within 21 days or £480 if paid thereafter.

4 PROCEDURES

4.1 Daily (Mornings)

- The school is open from 8.45am each morning.
- Registers are taken at 8.55am each morning (the start of the school day).
- Registration closes at 9.00am.
- Children arriving after 9.00am must enter the school through the main doors and sign in at the school office.
- Children arriving after 9.00am (but before 9.15am) will be marked as late (an L code on the register).
- Children arriving after 9.15am will receive an unauthorised absence code.

4.2 Daily (afternoons)

- EYFS / KS1 registers are taken at 1.15pm. Children arriving after 1.15pm (but before 1.30pm) will be marked as late. Children arriving after 1.30pm will receive an unauthorised absence code.
- KS2 registers are taken at 1.30pm. Children arriving after 1.30pm (but before 1.45pm) will be marked as late. Children arriving after 1.45pm will receive an unauthorised absence code.

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4.3 Daily (reporting an absence)

- Parents/carers must inform the school office of the reason for the absence of their child, either verbally (by phone or in person) or in writing, by 8.45am, on the first day of absence.
- The designated member of the office staff will contact the parent or carer on the first morning of their child's absence, where no message has been received.
- If no explanation is provided for an absence, it will be marked as unauthorised.
- Children suffering from sickness or diarrhoea should not attend school for 48 hours after their last bout of vomiting or diarrhoea.

4.4 Attendance Rewards

- The school has a duty to promote regular attendance. We will celebrate children whose attendance is good using a variety of rewards. This will not be limited to children who achieve 100% attendance.
- Parents and carers will be kept informed of school expectations and procedures through information in the school newsletter and the circulation of an 'Attendance Information' leaflet.

4.5 Monitoring of Attendance

- The school office will monitor 'day to day' attendance. Where no explanation has been received for an absence they will contact families to try to find out why their child is absent.
- If the school office have concerns about an emerging pattern of non-attendance, they will share this with the Pupil & Family Support Worker.
- If the school office have concerns about the safety or welfare of a pupil they will report this to the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- The Pupil & Family Support Worker will conduct regular attendance audits (at least 3 times per year). Children whose attendance is causing concern will be monitored by the Pupil & Family Support Worker; if concerns persist, they will invite the parent / carer in for a discussion and it may be decided that an attendance plan needs putting together.
- The Pupil & Family Support Worker will liaise with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor the attendance of any child who is in danger of becoming a persistent absentee. They will jointly decide what course of action is most appropriate to secure an improvement in the child's attendance.
- A child's individual attendance will be reported to parents in February and July each year.
- The Governing Body will monitor school attendance and expect the Headteacher and responsible staff to secure excellent attendance for pupils at the school.