



# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Attendance Officer**

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**Governor responsible for  
Attendance**

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## **Introduction and legal framework:**

Whitehall Infant School aims for our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education. It is therefore vital that they attend school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is entirely unavoidable.

We work with the Local Authority Participation Team to enforce the legal frameworks as defined in the Education Act and the Children's Act. This policy sets out how we enforce these frameworks, by setting out responsibilities on parents, the school and the Local Authority.

## **Expectations and why regular attendance is so important:**

The law states that children of statutory school age must attend school regularly. The minimum level of attendance expected by the school is 96%. Any attendance level below 90% is classed as very low and termed 'persistent absence'.

Regular absence will seriously affect a child's learning. Research clearly shows that children who miss school regularly, do not achieve as highly as those who do. As a school with high expectations of achievement, we want our children to attend school as regularly as possible.

Ensuring regular attendance at school is a parent / carer's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## **Roles and responsibilities**

### **Parents / Carers**

- To ensure the regular attendance and good punctuality of their child
- In Reception to Year 2: to ensure that their child arrives at school from **8.40am** and are in class for registration to be taken at **8.50am**
- In Nursery: to ensure that their child arrives at nursery between **8.30am and 9.00am** if they attend the morning session, or between **12.30pm and 1.00pm** if they attend for the afternoon session
- To ensure a good attitude to attendance and punctuality
- Communicate to the school any issues which may be affecting their child's attendance or punctuality
- To ensure your child is collected on time at the end of the school day or contact school in the unlikely event of being late
- **To contact the school every day their child is absent, giving a legitimate reason for absence**
- To ensure their contact details held at the school are up to date

### **Pupils**

- Have a good attitude to attendance and punctuality
- Communicate with parents and the school any worries or anxieties that may affect attendance
- Go to bed at an appropriate time and come to school on time, ready to learn

### **School**

- To educate parents and pupils on the importance of good attendance and punctuality
- To keep accurate and up to date records on punctuality and attendance
- To reward children who have good levels of attendance and punctuality, using a variety of class and individual rewards
- To communicate with parents and carers regarding attendance and punctuality concerns
- To provide support for children and families to overcome barriers to good attendance and punctuality, including support from the learning mentor, welfare officer, attendance officer or referral to other agencies
- To contact parents if no message has been received regarding absence
- To liaise with the Local Authority regarding concerns over children's attendance

### **Governors**

- To ensure that there is clear policy and guidance, which is applied fairly by the headteacher
- To scrutinise attendance data at regular meetings, questioning the school's actions and impact on attendance

## **School action regarding absence & punctuality concerns**

If the school is concerned regarding a pupil's attendance or punctuality, it will take the following actions:

**Stage 1:** Contact parents explaining we have concern regarding their child's low level of attendance and / or punctuality.

**Stage 2:** If attendance and / or punctuality do not improve, we will begin a period of attendance monitoring where the child's attendance and punctuality is very closely watched. You will have the opportunity to meet with the school at this stage to discuss any reasons contributing towards low attendance or punctuality.

**Stage 3:** If attendance and / or punctuality continue not to improve, you will be invited into school for a meeting to discuss the concerns and put in place an attendance action plan, with the aim of improving attendance and / or punctuality as rapidly as possible.

**Stage 4:** If attendance and / or punctuality concerns persist, we will refer to the Local Authority Participation Team. The Local Authority may convene an attendance panel, to which parents / carers will be required to attend, see below.

## **Attendance panels**

- Whitehall Infant School and the Local Authority follow DfE guidelines for Attendance panels.
- Referral to The Participation Team may result in an attendance panel. Parents / carers will be required to attend a meeting at school with the Participation Officer from the Local Authority.
- Attendance targets will be set at the panel meeting, where a review date will be set.
- If targets are not met, the Local Authority may have to consider taking legal action in the form of a penalty notice or a summons to the Magistrates Court.

## **The Education Penalty Notices (England) Regulations 2007**

The 2007 regulations set out the procedures for issuing penalty notices (fines) to each parent who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fails to ensure that their excluded child is not in a public place during the first five days of exclusion. Parents must pay £60 if they pay within 21 days; or £120 if they pay within 28 days.

## **Exceptional circumstance leave**

We recognise that there may be very exceptional circumstances, which may result in a pupil being unable to attend school. **Please note that family holidays are not an exceptional circumstance in any instance.**

All requests for exceptional circumstance leave must be put in writing to the **headteacher**. This letter must contain: **the reason for the request and the dates of absence, including the return date.**

**Unauthorised leave during term time, will be referred to the Local Authority Participation Team, this could incur a penalty notice of £60 per parent per child, if not paid on time it advances to £120 per parent per child or summons from the magistrate's court.**

## **Children missing from education**

If a child is missing from education for a period of ten days, without reason, we have a duty to refer this to the Local Authority, which can result in the child being removed from the school roll.

## **Absence for religious observance**

The school will follow local authority guidance regarding absence for religious observance. The school must be contacted by parents, prior to the absence, to request time off school for religious observance.