



Attendance Policy

*"Working together
with parents, church and community
to create a distinctive environment
where the unique nature of each child
is respected and fostered"*

Consultation	Staff	Date:	Governors	Date:
Ratified by Governors:				
Review Date:				
Link Policies				

Introduction

This policy outlines the management of attendance in our school. The school policy for attendance reflects the consensus of the whole school staff and has the full agreement of the Governing Body. The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all the staff in the school.

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the Governing Body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register also indicates whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Rationale

We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. Holidays in term time are not authorised. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We reward those children whose attendance is very good. We also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Definitions

Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. Only school can make an absence authorised. Parent/carers do not have this authority.

Repeated Unauthorised Absences

School will monitor and contact the parent /carers of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parent/carer will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem with the Pastoral Care Leader and the Education Welfare Office (EWO). If the situation does not improve, the EWO will undertake a monitoring process and make home visits, in order to improve the child's attendance and ensure that parent/carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the EWO, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parent/carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

Holidays in Term Time

From September 2013 the Government withdrew the Headteacher's discretionary powers to authorise holiday absence except in exceptional circumstances. The following are the exceptional circumstances in which authorised holiday absence will be considered by the Governing Body:

- Leave granted to serving Forces personnel either immediately before or after active service.
- Following a family crisis e.g. death of a parent or sibling

In all cases a request for term time holiday absence form must be completed before the holiday is taken. This form is available from the school office or on the school website.

Long Term Absence

If a child's absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will endeavour to support the child by providing activities to do at home.

Penalty Notices

From February 2004 the Government have introduced Fixed Penalty Notices under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. Penalty Notices will be used as an early deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absence developing. Penalty Notices can only be issued in cases of **unauthorised** absence.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Irregular school attendance
- Overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Holidays taken in term-time
- Excessive delayed return from holidays without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed).

To ensure consistent delivery of Penalty Notices, the following criteria will apply:

- At least 10 sessions (5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence (during any six week period)
- The parent/carer will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given a maximum of 20 school days to effect an improvement. An attendance target will be issued with the formal warning.

Outcomes

- If the target is met there will be no Fixed Penalty Notice issued
- If the target is not met parents may be sent a Fixed Penalty Notice. Payment of the Penalty Notice per child and per parent is:
 - a) £60 (within 21 days)
 - b) £120 (22-42 days)
 - c) Biological Parents who do not live in the same household will both receive a Fixed Penalty Notice
- Non-payment of a Penalty Notice will result in the withdrawal of the Notice and will lead to prosecution under Section 444 1996 Education Act for the unauthorised absence.

Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices

The EWO Service will issue Penalty Notices in Wakefield. This will ensure consistent and equitable delivery and retain school-home relationships.

Publicity

The school attendance policy and the deployment of Penalty Notices will be brought to the attention of all parents.

Registers

A daily attendance register is kept for morning and afternoon sessions. Children who arrive late should report to the main office to ensure that the appropriate mark is given.

8.45 am - Doors open and children enter school from playground

8.55 am - Doors close and children need to enter school via the Parent's Entrance and report to the office. These children will receive a Late mark in the register.

9.30 am - Registers will be closed and children will be recorded as an unauthorised absence unless the following criteria are met:

1. Documentary evidence (an appointment card or letter) of a medical appointment is provided and the child is back in school before 10.15 am.

If the above criteria are met the absence will be recorded as authorised.

Rewards for good attendance

- All children who have 100% attendance in any one half term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the designated celebration assembly.

- All children who have 100% attendance for one whole term will receive a Bronze attendance certificate
- All children who have 100% attendance for two consecutive whole terms will receive a Silver attendance certificate.
- All children who have 100% attendance for the whole academic year will receive an Gold attendance certificate at the last celebration assembly of the school year and receive a special prize.
- The class who has the highest attendance over the full academic year will take part in a special fun activity (to be decided by the winning class in consultation with the staff).

Attendance Targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Leadership Team and designated Governor at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the Wakefield Diocesan Academy Trust. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

Monitoring and Review

It is the responsibility of the Governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the Headteacher. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

The Pastoral Care Leader will be responsible for monitoring attendance in school on a daily basis, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's attendance she will liaise with the Education Welfare Officer. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, the Pastoral Care Leader will also advise the Headteacher and action will be agreed. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child and their safety, the class teacher will take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then endeavour to contact the parent/carer straight away, in order to check on the safety of the child.

The policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years, or earlier if considered necessary.