

This policy should be referenced alongside the following school or LA policies: Behaviour & Safety, Equal Opportunities, Health & Safety, Safeguarding, Special Educational Needs, Assessment.

**Aims** There is a direct correlation between attendance and attainment. The aim of this attendance policy is to raise levels of attendance and punctuality for children and young people, therefore maximising their opportunities for improved attainment. It is a simple fact - all pupils need to attend school regularly and on time if they are to take full advantage of the opportunities available to make educational progress. Poor attendance hinders progress and prevents pupils from settling well into their class family. It is so much more difficult for young children to make and keep friendships when they have irregular attendance.

**We aim for all pupils to meet our target of 96% or above attendance each term.**

### Objectives

- ✓ Include all school staff, parents, pupils and governors in school attendance strategies.
- ✓ Working with the Education Welfare Service, (EWS) support and encourage parents to fulfil their legal duty for their child to attend school.
- ✓ Comply with regulations regarding accurately and consistently recording attendance and punctuality.
- ✓ Use an electronic data handling system, enabling school staff, the LA and DfE to access statistical data in order to work in an effective partnership.
- ✓ Reduce absence and lateness, and raise awareness of the importance of school attendance for our young pupils.
- ✓ Foster good relationships to work effectively with parents/carers and partner agencies, using a range of strategies to improve the attendance of individual pupils.
- ✓ Continue to provide a welcoming and secure environment where children feel valued and are keen to make progress in all aspects of school life.

**The law** Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act states if a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence. Parents, therefore have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's attendance at school. Failure can lead to legal action being taken by the LA in the Magistrates Court, or the need to issue Fixed Penalty Fines. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence, Section 444 (1A) where a parent knowingly allows their child to be absent from school. This offence can carry a custodial sentence.

**Absence from school** Absence from school is detrimental to a child's education and progress. It disrupts routines, learning, and progress. Government research shows that 17 days lost learning in one school year can lead to a drop of one grade at GCSE and SAT level. We will follow up unexplained absences by contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence. Parents/carers may be invited into school to discuss attendance issues if there is a cause for concern. We will agree with the EWS at what point a referral to the Service will be made.

**Authorised absence** Some absences are unavoidable, usually due to illness, bereavement, and religious observance or difficult family circumstances. These absences should be supported by medical evidence where possible or a written explanation from the parent/carer. If a child is regularly absent due to sickness a parent may be invited to school to discuss their child's absences, this discussion may include the EWO or school nurse. When a child is regularly absent due to illness the school will request that a parent provides medical details from their doctor before continuing to authorise further absences. The decision as to whether this absence is authorised or unauthorised lies with the Headteacher.

**Unauthorised absence** If a child is taken out of school without the Head Teacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. These include absences, e.g. for birthdays, shopping trips, days out, term time holidays or when a child is absent and we receive no explanation. We will discuss and monitor unauthorised absences with the EWS and further action may be taken. **We do not authorise holidays taken in term time. Term time holidays may result in fixed penalty notices by the LA.** Exceptional circumstances, which have led you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, need to be shared with the Headteacher or put in writing. The Headteacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

**Persistent absence** A pupil becomes a persistent absentee if he/she has an attendance rate of below 90%. We will invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation, and referrals may be made to the EWS. A range of school and LA strategies can be deployed to improve attendance, including the fast track to attendance programme, learning mentor support, brainy breakfast club, ace attendance system, first day response and cause for concern letters sent home. Below 90% attendance means that pupils will have missed over 95 hours of learning across one academic year.

**Punctuality** The Law states that children should arrive at school on time, everyday. School doors open at 8:40am, ready for a prompt 8:45am start to the school day. Pupils arriving after 8.50am will be marked as late (L). Pupils arriving after 9.15am will be marked as an unauthorised absence (U), leaving their parents/carers at risk of legal action should this pattern persist. If a child is persistently late, it is at the Headteacher's discretion as to whether or not to authorise the absences. Therefore persistent lateness can result in unauthorised absences, leaving parents/carers at risk of legal action. The parents/ carers will be expected to record their child's name, class and reason for their lateness in the 'Children Arriving Late' book at the school reception.

## **Roles/Responsibilities**

**School** Staff and governors have a responsibility to support attendance, treating seriously any problems that lead to non-attendance. They will:

- Set high expectations for pupil attendance, and monitor individual and whole school attendance on a weekly basis.
- Identify causes of concern with regard to pupil attendance.
- Make contact with parents where there is an unexplained absence.
- Work collaboratively with parents and invite parents/carers into school to discuss any attendance concerns
- Work in effective partnership with EWS and other agencies
- Maintain electronic registration data systems effectively and deploy them robustly to facilitate presentation of reports.
- Analyse attendance data and provide this to parents.
- Promote attendance at all levels - within school, the community, the LA, regionally and nationally.
- Celebrate excellent and improved attendance and implement rewards and incentives.

**Parents/carers will be expected to:**

- Fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time everyday and that routines are in place at home to support this.
- Contact school by 9:15am on the first day of absence and give a reason for their child's absence.
- Obtain evidence where possible to support medical absence.
- Avoid term time holidays, and attempt to minimise any appointments in school time e.g. dental appointments. If medical appointments have to take place within the school day, it is the parents' responsibility to collect their child from school to take them to appointments and to bring them back to school once their appointment is over.
- Ensure that the school has their current contact details.

**Pupils with the support of parents/carers pupils will be expected to:**

- Arrive at school on time everyday with correct equipment and ready to learn.
- Comply with school regulations regarding attendance and punctuality.
- Discuss any concerns they may have with staff regarding attendance and punctuality.

## ***EWS Education Welfare Service***

- EWS will work in partnership with the school to promote and facilitate improved attendance, at an individual level, either through a referral system or using the Fast Track to Attendance Programme and at whole school level using proactive strategies and action plans.
- EWS will work with children and families to ensure their school attendance and safeguarding is maintained.
- EWS will provide advice and guidance regarding Children Missing Education, Child Employment and Licensing.
- EWS will work in partnership with other agencies, offering advice/signposting for referrals to appropriate organisations.
- EWS will undertake any legal action, including fixed penalty notices, on behalf of the school.
- The LA will support the school with networking and training events and with individual School Audits and Action Plans.

## **Standard school procedures**

- Brainy Breakfast club. This not only gives a healthy start to the day but also keeps pupils on time for registration
- Early Bird Reading Club. This provides an opportunity for pupils, parents and carers to read together in the library before the start of the school day at 8.30am.
- Pupils not attending the breakfast club or reading club need to be on the premises no earlier than 8.30am
- Classroom doors open at 8.40am. The school day begins at 8.45am. Classroom doors are closed promptly at 8.50am.
- Registration closes at 9.15am and 1.15pm
- We fully understand that from time to time children can be too ill to attend school. Parents are advised to leave 48 hours without sickness or diarrhoea before bring their child back to school.
- Head lice are a common problem. If a parent finds head lice, they are asked to treat the hair (see head lice information flyer) and bring their child back to school later that day. They must not keep their child away from school once they have cleared the head lice.
- We fulfil our duty to maintain electronic registration data systems effectively and deploy them robustly to facilitate presentation of reports.

### **First Day Response:**

- First day response system is in place and parents/ carers will be contacted after 9.15am if they have not notified us of their child's absence.
- Step 1: Phone parents' contact number(s).
- Step 2: Repeat this during the first morning of absence if no response.
- Step 3: Phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up-to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly.
- Step 4: Learning mentor/ class teacher to speak to the parents face-to-face or by phone the next day and establish reasons for absence and update registers.

- The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded on the electronic registers.
- **Follow up procedures** Parents who have not informed us of the reason for their child's absence are asked to give a verbal or written explanation for their child's absence. The parent will be reminded to inform us on their child's first day of absence by 9:15am as stated in the home school agreement. If the reason given is felt to be unsatisfactory, the Headteacher may record the absence as unauthorised. If the problem persists, the EWS will be informed.

### **Rewards and celebrations**

- **Ace attenders system.** We monitor class attendance on a weekly basis, each class with 96% + attendance is awarded a token to display on the whole school attendance chart. Whichever class has received the most tokens will receive a whole class reward. Individuals who have reached the 100% attendance and punctual target will have the chance to gain a weekly attendance prize, which is a voucher to spend in the local toy shop.
- All children with a termly attendance of 96% + will receive a certificate. An attendance postcard will be sent home if the child has reached 100% attendance for the half term. To celebrate 100% for the full academic year, an attendance celebration/reward takes place for the pupils and their families.
- Every minute counts. Posters are displayed around school to emphasise the importance of arriving at school on time.
- We acknowledge that for some children, 100% attendance may never be achieved due to circumstances out of their control. It is therefore important to praise all efforts made to improve attendance.

### **Monitoring attendance and punctuality**

- The Learning Mentor and school office staff monitor attendance and punctuality on a daily basis. If staff are concerned about a child's attendance they will discuss this with the Headteacher and Learning Mentor. The pupil's individual attendance record will be analysed and patterns of absence checked. Staff are encouraged to look for high levels of broken weeks or pupils who are leaving school early on a regular basis. Parents will be asked to discuss this further.
- The child may be added to the school's progress tracking system due to being at risk of making low progress. The Headteacher, Learning Mentor and EWS check registers, the 'late arrival' and 'leaving school early' books each half term. At this stage, parents are notified if their child's attendance is below 90%. The Headteacher sends letters regarding termly attendance % figures to all parents. The EWS also send letters to parents and may also make home visits.
- Termly information is sent to all parents informing them of their child's individual % attendance figure calculated for the autumn and spring terms. We also give a final % attendance figure for the full academic year. This information is also recorded on the child's end of year report. Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 90% inviting them into school. The Learning Mentor invites these parents in to talk about any attendance and punctuality concerns, support which may be needed and to set attendance improvement targets if needed.

### **Safeguarding** (Please see Safeguarding Policies and Health and Safety Policies for further details)

IMPORTANT: Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

**Child Protection** Through their day-to-day contact with pupils and direct work with families, education staff have a crucial role to play in noticing indicators of possible abuse or neglect. Where it appears to a member of staff that a child may have been abused, the school is required, as part of local child protection procedures, to report their concerns to social services immediately. The Headteacher (and the Deputy Headteacher in her absence) is the designated teacher responsible for child protection. The Chair of Governors is the designated governor responsible for child protection.

**Data Protection Act 1998** School collects data in order to meet its statutory responsibilities for the provision of education to children in accordance with the requirements of the Education Act 1996 and The School Standards and Framework Act 1998. Some of this data will be shared with Wakefield Metropolitan District Council and may be shared with other agencies that are involved in the health and welfare of school children. Please be aware that personal data is also covered by the Data Protection Act 1998 whereby you as an individual may be liable if you disclose personal data inappropriately. Please see the school's Data Protection policy.

**Safe recruitment and selection of staff.** This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All posts are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act, therefore all convictions must be declared. Providing false information is an offence. Appointed staff, governors, regular volunteers and trainees have identity, qualification and criminal records bureau checks and have been successfully cleared to work with children.

**Inclusion** This policy will be applied to all pupils. We welcome our general responsibilities under the Disability Equality Duty by promoting equal opportunities, eliminating discrimination and improving access to learning for disabled people. In order to comply with the requirements of the DDA 2006 we will make reasonable adjustments to ensure all stakeholders understand and can follow

this policy. We will actively seek to remove any barriers to learning and participation that may hinder or exclude individuals or groups of pupils.

**Monitoring and review**

This policy is monitored by the Headteacher, who reports to governors about the effectiveness of the policy on request. It will be reviewed appropriate to new legislation or to the needs of the school.

Signed .....  
Headteacher

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Chair of Governors