



Whitehill
Primary School

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date Policy Originated/Amended	Date Policy Approved by WPS Governing Body	Signature
January 2019	January 2019	Barbara Buess

For review by WPSLGB

Next review due: January 2021



Attendance Policy

Statement of Intent

Whitehill Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Head Teacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Whitehill.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive by 9am. All pupils that arrive late must report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.

The Role of School Staff

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. Marking the registers twice is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. The Attendance Officer becomes aware of those children whose attendance is causing concern.

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- Parents informed of child's attendance.

Timeline of School Action for Poor Attendance

- 96% - 100% Expected level
- 90% - 95% attendance - monitored through attendance meeting
- Below 90% - consider Attendance Service or Penalty Notice referral where the absences

Children Missing Education

No child will be removed from the school role without consultation between the Head Teacher and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, local Authority guidance will be followed.

Lateness

At school the register is taken at 9.05 and again the afternoon. Pupils arriving after these times must enter the school by the main entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (code L). The register will close at 9.15am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (code U) and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents at open evenings and may be referred to the FLO and/or Educational Welfare Officer. It can provide grounds for a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for lateness

- 5 days (10 sessions) of unauthorised absence including arrival after the registers have closed. In a term may lead to a referral to the Attendance Service for a Penalty Notice Warning Letter.
- The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded.
- If unauthorised absence, is recorded during the 15 day period, Penalty Notices will be issued (one per parent per child).
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue, Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings.

Authorising Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence. Where there is doubt, the Headteacher, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation, a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that are NOT to be authorised:

- Family Holidays.
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill.
- Oversleeping
- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Confusion over school dates.
- Medical appointments of more than half a day without good reason.
- Inadequate clothing/uniform.
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip

Attendance and Lateness

Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all pupils is made.

FLO/Attendance Officer may visit as appropriate, arrange meetings within the school and refer to other agencies when applicable.

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral to the Attendance

Service is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings must be attached to the ASI referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there is at least 10 sessions (5days) unauthorised absence in a term the school will consider the following:

Educational Welfare Officer Actions

This may include:

- Attendance Improvement Meeting.
- Home Visits
- Sign posting to supportive agencies e.g. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Social Services and Early Help.
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct. The Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absences must be recorded.

If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child).

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness after the register is closed.
- Family Holiday

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Leave of Absence/Holiday

From September 2013 the Department of Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- With leave (the school has given permission)
- Due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- Religious observance
- Failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Educational Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Exceptional Circumstances - Family holidays, for whatever reason, cannot be approved, even if the parent is unable to take time off work at any other time. An "exceptional circumstance" would have to be defined as an unavoidable case e.g. a one-off emergency situation which prevents the child from attending school.

Requests for holidays in term-time will NOT be authorised.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Unauthorised Leave

1. Penalty Notices are issued with the Attendance Service Code of Conduct
2. Attendance Service receives a request to issue a Penalty Notice for unauthorised leave of 10 or more sessions (5 days)
3. Attendance Service issue Penalty Notices (one per parent per child)
4. If Penalty Notices are not paid within 28 days of issue, Attendance Service may instigate court proceedings.