Attendance Policy

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Member(s) of staff responsible</th>
<th>Headteacher</th>
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<tr>
<td>Governor responsible</td>
<td>Chair of curriculum</td>
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<td>Committee responsible</td>
<td>Full Governors</td>
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<td>Date agreed with staff</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
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<td>Date discussed with pupils</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
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<td>Frequency of policy review</td>
<td>Annual</td>
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<td>Date next review due</td>
<td>September 2020</td>
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Document Version Control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue Number</th>
<th>Issue Date</th>
<th>Summary of changes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Nov 14</td>
<td>Complete update/rewrite</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>Annual, communication with governors</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
<td>Nov 2018</td>
<td>Change to the Request for Absence form; Revised policy changes and approval from governors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>March 2019</td>
<td>Changes to include updated County Council guidance (January 2019) and school procedures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Contents

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Aims and scope of the policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Roles and responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>School times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Authorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Unauthorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Leave of absence during term time (including holidays)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Appointments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Frequent absences for medical reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Longer absences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Pupils with 10+ days continued authorised absence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>When attendance causes concern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Appendix 1: Declaration of absence during term time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INTRODUCTION

Warden Hill Primary School is committed to maximising the achievement of all our pupils and there is a clear link between good attendance and educational achievement. We aim to promote regular attendance and good punctuality in order to ensure all our pupils achieve their full potential. The school’s ethos demonstrates that children feel that their presence in school is important and that they are missed when they are absent or late.

For our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital that they are at school, on time, every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Attainment, as well as confidence with peers and staff, all depend on good attendance.

Improving attendance is a school priority. The school has set itself a target for attendance to be above the nationally expected 95% and for the number of pupils deemed to be Persistently Absent – pupils with attendance below 85% – to be reduced.

1) AIMS AND SCOPE

The aims of our attendance policy are:

- To maximise the attendance of all children
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all.
- To monitor, communicate with and support children and families where attendance is a cause for concern.
- To work in partnership with parents to resolve any attendance issues.
- To analyse attendance data to inform future policy and practice.
- To work with the educational entitlement and Inclusion Team, Social Care and Health Care to improve attendance.

2) STRATEGIES

At Warden Hill, attendance is a priority and is promoted by the following strategies:

- Good attendance is celebrated, rewarded and promoted at every available opportunity. This happens on:
  - an individual basis whereby every child receives a raffle ticket for 100% attendance for the week. Tickets are drawn at random during the weekly merit mark assembly and winners receive an instant prize.
  - a class basis, whereby the class with the highest attendance for the term receives a trophy.
- Attendance targets are set for the school year.
- Parents/Carers are informed of the school’s attendance.
• Attendance data is analysed and informs future planning.
• Governors are regularly kept informed of attendance figures through the Head Teacher’s Report to Governors.
• Support and intervention is provided where poor attendance continues.
• Pupils are provided with a secure, happy and stimulating environment where they are valued and welcomed so that they feel their presence in school is important.

3) **Roles and Responsibilities**

**Parents/Carers will:**

• Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time, appropriately dressed, equipped and ready to learn.
• Let the school office know before 9.30 am **at the latest** on the first day of absence from school to explain why their child is absent and when they expect them to return to school. This can be done via telephone or on the Xpressions APP.
• Let the school know if they are having difficulty with attendance so that any available support or help can be provided.
• Seek permission from school prior to any absence that is not illness.
• Understand that there is **no entitlement** for parents to take pupils on holiday during term time and that holidays in term time are not an automatic right.
• Notify the school in writing if they intend to remove their child permanently from the school for any reason.

**Governors will:**

• Monitor, evaluate and review the attendance procedures at each full governor meeting.
• Set targets for attendance annually (agreed in each September Full Governor meeting)
• Report on the attendance data on the school website.

**The Headteacher will:**

• Ensure that everyone at school sees attendance as a priority.
• Promote the importance of good attendance to pupils and parents.
• Be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors
• Remind parents, at least annually, of attendance procedures.
• Oversee attendance procedures with the school’s attendance officer.
The school administrator will:

- Record the names of all absent pupils by 10am daily.
- Contact the parents/carers of any child who is absent from school on the first day of absence, if a satisfactory reason has not been given. This will be initially be a message on the Xpression APP, which will then be followed by a telephone call if a reply has not been received by 10am. This is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety, as well as their regular school attendance.
- Record any child who arrives after 9am, together with the reason for lateness.
- Record children arriving late or leaving early, with the reason, on a daily basis in the 'pupil signing out book'.
- Monitor lateness and where the register shows 4 separate late marks over a two week period, inform the school’s attendance officer.
- Provide the Headteacher with information to enable them to evaluate the success of the school’s policy and make fair decisions about attendance.
- Update SIMS regularly with attendance information.
- Update other data management systems with termly attendance

The School's Attendance Officer will:

- Write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about a child’s attendance.
- Work in partnership with the families of persistent absentees and work towards improving attendance.
- Communicate with any families whose child's attendance drops below 95% (without apparent medical reason), discussing the school’s policy and ways in which the school can support the family in improving attendance.
- Work with families whose children are persistently late for school.
- Communicate concerns about attendance issues to the Headteacher.
- Produce termly attendance reports, including overall attendance and by class and share these at each full governor meeting (see Headteacher’s report to Governors).
Class Teachers will:

- Emphasise the importance of attendance for successful learning through the praise and celebration of good attendance.
- Provide an accurate record of attendance by taking the class register promptly at 9:00 am and 1.15 pm, marking any child as late who arrives between 9.05 am and 9.30 am.
- Respond promptly to any issues raised in the weekly analysis of attendance in collaboration with the school’s attendance officer and the Headteacher, if appropriate.
- Log any discussions with parents concerning attendance.
- Organise for work to be sent home for any child who is expected to be away for a prolonged period through illness.
- Report attendance (%) to parents on termly reports.

4) School Times

We expect all children to be on the school playground by 8.55 am and they are permitted to arrive from 8.45 am onwards. Junior children are to stay on the junior playground where a supervising teacher will be on duty from 8.45 am. Infant children should wait on the infant playground with their parent/carer until the whistle goes at and 8.55 am. Children come into school at 8.55 am where the register is then taken at 9:00 am and closes at 9:05 am.

Children who arrive after 9:05 am must report to the school office so that their attendance and lateness can be recorded.

The school day finishes at 3.15 pm. If any child needs to leave before the end of the day, parents/carers must contact the school office with the reason. Children must then be collected from the school office and signed out by the parent/carer.

Children should be collected promptly at the end of the school day at 3.15 pm. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies. If the problem persists, the school has the right to place the pupil in after school club and provide the parent/carer with the bill.

5) Illness

Parents/Carers must contact the school on the first day of absence by 9:30 am at the latest to provide the reason for the absence and, where possible, on each subsequent day of absence.

If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will initially contact you on the Xpression APP. This will be followed by a telephone call if a reply has not been received by 10 am. This is because we have a duty to ensure your child’s safety, as well as their regular school attendance.
6) **Authorised Absence**

Authorised absence is when a pupil:

- Is absent with prior permission from the school
- Is too unwell to attend school or is attending a medical or dentist appointment,
- Is away for a day set aside by their parent’s religion for religious observance.
- Has suffered a family bereavement.
- Has been excluded.

7) **Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absence is when a pupil:

- Is absent and no explanation, or an unacceptable explanation, is given.
- Is away from school on a holiday for a period that is not authorised by the Headteacher.

An approved educational activity is not recorded as an absence and will be marked accordingly when a child is on an educational /school visit, is attending an approved off site activity or is receiving special offsite tuition.

8) **Request for Leave of Absence during Term Time (Including Holidays)**

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 (England) remove references to family holiday and extended leave, as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. Consequently, there is now NO legal entitlement to time off during term time. The amendments make it clear that the Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The principles for defining exceptional are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. The requirement for exceptional circumstances means that the vast majority of requests for holidays will be refused.

It is important to note that if leave is granted, the Headteacher can also determine the number of school days a child can be away.

If a request for 10 or more days is refused, but parents choose to take the leave/holiday anyway, this will constitute an unauthorised absence. This may result in the issue of a fixed penalty notice which is a fine that is issued to each parent in respect of each absent child. A written warning of this will be issued, by the school, in the first instance.
Exceptional circumstance may include:

- The need for a family to spend time together after a family crisis
- Holidays with parents who are service personnel and other employees who are and are prevented from taking holidays outside term time if the holiday will have a minimal disruption to the child's education.

Not being able to afford a family holiday during holiday time is not an exceptional circumstance.

If parents/carers wish to apply for permission from the Headteacher, a ‘Declaration of Absence during term time’ form (appendix 1) should be completed well in advance of the absence dates. The Headteacher will consider the request carefully and will look at the child’s attendance data, the pupil’s age and stage of education before notifying the parents whether she is able to authorise the absence or not.

Please note that authorisation will not be given for leave during assessment periods, or the first 4 weeks of the school year or for more than 10 days unless circumstances are truly exceptional.

9) APPOINTMENTS

Where possible, appointments should be made outside of school hours. If it is really necessary to arrange appointments during school hours, school should be notified in advance. If pupils are leaving school during the day for an appointment, then the school office should be informed when the child leaves the premises and when they return. This must be recorded in the ‘pupil signing out book’. If present during registration, then no amendment to the register is necessary. If absent during registration, then the register should be marked with an authorised absence.

10) FREQUENT ABSENCES FOR MEDICAL REASONS

When a pupil frequently misses school for medical reasons, the school will consult with the medical service. Where necessary, a referral will be made so that the school can make an evaluation of the child’s educational and health needs.

11) LONGER ABSENCES

Pupils who have been absent for a long period of time will be positively welcomed back to school; they will be supported so that they can catch up with missed work. Friendship groups will be monitored for a period of time, to ensure that the pupil settles smoothly back into school life.
12) **PUPILS RECORDED WITH 10 OR MORE DAYS OF CONTINUOUS UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

We have a legal duty to report to the Local Authority regarding the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation or without the school’s permission for 10 or more consecutive days. This will be reported to the Local Authority, using their absence reporting process.

13) **WHEN ATTENDANCE CAUSES CONCERN**

If a pupil misses 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentee. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly.

Where attendance or lateness is a cause for concern, the following actions will be taken:

- The Headteacher and/or Assistant Head will arrange a meeting with parents/carers to discuss the reasons for the absences.
- The school will work closely with the parents/carers to try and remove any barriers to regular attendance.
- Where appropriate, a formal Attendance Improvement Meeting will be held with the parents/carers, as well as the child, in order to draw up a plan, and set agreed targets. This plan will then be reviewed to ensure targets have been met. Should the parents/carers fail to attend, the meeting will continue and a plan drawn up in their absence.
- If attendance still does not improve, a referral will be made to the Education Entitlement and Inclusion Team. Parents/carers will be informed in writing of this referral and the possibility of prosecution.

*For further information, please see the Declaration of Absence form and leaflet for parents on school Attendance from the Local Authority.*

Attendance Target 2019-2020: 100%