



Wavertree CE School Attendance Policy

Belong Believe Achieve

Introduction

This is a successful and happy school and your child plays their part in making it so. However, for our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

People Responsible for Attendance and Punctuality Matters in this School

Mrs Brooksbank – Headteacher/Designated Attendance Lead

Ms Harvey – Education Welfare Officer

Why Regular Attendance is so Important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

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

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our regular newsletter;
- Provide you with a monthly attendance notification for your child;
- Report to you monthly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;
- Reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events;
- Run promotional events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school;
- Report absence rates to governors at termly meetings.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each

absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for reasons such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. It is this type of absence which can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings and includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil is a persistent absentee when they miss 10% or more of their schooling across the school year **for whatever reason.** Absence at this level is doing great harm and we need parent's fullest support to address this.

We will give priority to any pupil either at the PA level **or at danger of reaching it** and parents will be informed of this immediately so that together we can put a plan in place to get that child back into school.

All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Education Welfare Officer.

There is a new category of **severe absence** where a child's attendance falls below 50%. If your child falls into this category, a referral will be made to Careline under educational neglect.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact school as soon as possible on the first day of absence either by our Parentapp or by telephone;
- Send a note in on the first day they return with an explanation of the absence;
- You can speak with any member of staff that you see at school and tell them why your child is or has been off school.

Please Note: If your child is unable to attend due to extenuating circumstances, e.g. a single parent is unwell and has no-one to help them, school may be able to offer support. Please contact the school office for further advice.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you;
- Write to you after three days absence if we have not heard from you;

- Invite you in to discuss the situation with the Headteacher if absence persists;
- Refer the matter to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer.

Personal Information

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times and a correct address for your child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number and address. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers and addresses throughout the year.

Support

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage if they are having difficulties in bringing their child to school. These difficulties can be varied, but it is important that parents work with the staff in resolving any problems together. School will endeavor to support families with identified issues and together, enable the child to attend school. This is nearly always successful.

Possible strategies used:

- Practical support;
- Meetings with parent and child;
- Referrals for bespoke support;
- Early Help Assessment Tool (EHAT).

The Education Welfare Officer

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Pupil Attendance & Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or the Local Authority. Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the PAEWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority on 0151 225 4980

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they will miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons and this can be embarrassing for the child. Lateness can also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day begins at **8.55am** and we expect your child to be in school by this time:

Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in school on time.

At **9.30am** the registers will be closed – in accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be present on site, **but this will not count as a present mark** in law and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This means that you may face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem

persists.

In the afternoon your child must be in school for **12.55pm (Infants) or 1.25pm (Juniors)**. The registers will be closed again at **1pm and 1.30pm** and again arrival after this time will be treated as an unauthorised absence.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher or Governors to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Holidays in Term Time

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All notifications for leave must be made in advance and will be recorded as an unauthorised holiday. A Penalty Notice will be issued for holidays taken in term time.

School Targets, Projects and Special Initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

Targets for the school and for classes are displayed in the school and you should take time to study them.

The minimum level of attendance for this school is **96.5%** and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares to this level. Our target is to achieve better than **97%**. We are aiming for this level because that is the attendance needed for pupils to achieve the best from their schooling and we believe we can achieve this and be amongst the best attended schools in the city.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

Attendance and punctuality data is monitored regularly to enable the Designated Attendance Lead to provide a targeted approach to improving attendance for pupils. This will, in turn, also improve pupil attainment and progress.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Please help us to enable your child to 'Belong, Believe, Achieve'.

Date of Policy November 2022

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