

Westfield Primary School



Attendance Policy

Rational

Westfield Primary School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for all.

The school strives to promote a welcoming, caring and safe environment where each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All staff will work with pupils, parents and carers to help them meet their legal responsibility, in ensuring their children attend school regularly.

The school will establish effective systems of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance.

Parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality will be challenged.

Aims

- 1) To promote the highest possible levels of attendance by pupils the school will:-
 - Establish attendance as high profile
 - Apply the attendance policy consistently
 - Monitor progress in attendance and report to the governors
 - Endeavour to improve pupils punctuality
 - Discourage term time holidays in accordance with the Primary Behaviour and Attendance Partnership Policy

- 2) The school will make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those Associated with the school by:-
 - Regularly reporting attendance data to the school governors
 - Informing parents of school times, term dates and training days
 - Having clear procedures for parents to inform staff of pupils absence or lateness
 - Displaying materials promoting attendance
 - Liaising with the Education Welfare Service
 - Using reward systems for good/improved attendance/punctuality

- 3) The school will develop a frame work which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks by:-
 - Identifying designated staff to be responsible for first day of absence contact
 - Ensuring clearly defined late registration procedures
 - Having clear procedures and records of intervention regarding attendance concerns
 - Identifying designated staff to liaise with the Education Welfare Service re attendance issues
 - Reviewing attendance regularly

- 4) The school will provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils by:-
 - Highlighting attendance in PSHE, assemblies and parents meetings
 - Improving communication between school and parents
 - Informing parents when a pupils attendance falls below 90%
 - Providing parents with accurate and up to date information
 - Making staff available to speak with parents

- 5) The school will develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance data by:-
 - Using a computerised registration system
 - Consistent use of attendance codes following LA guidance
 - Identifying and collecting information on developing patterns of irregular attendance and punctuality
 - Providing attendance information for the head teacher, governors, relevant staff, education welfare service and parents

- 6) The school will further develop positive and consistent communication Between home and school by:-
 - Initiating first day absence contact
 - Making full use of computer generated letters
 - Promoting expectation of school
 - Encouraging parents to visit/communicate with the school

- 7) The school will use a system of rewards and sanctions by:-
 - Actively promoting attendance with associated rewards and effective sanctions
 - Ensuring fairness and consistent implementation of rewards and sanctions
 - Working in partnership with the education welfare service, parent support advisor, behavioural support service and parents

- 8) The school will promote effective partnership with the education service and other key services by:-
 - Ensuring the attendance register and admission details are accurate and up to date
 - Carrying out initial enquiries and interventions regarding attendance issues
 - Gathering and recording relevant information to refer any concerns to the education welfare service
 - Identifying key staff to liaise with the education welfare service and other agencies related to attendance
 - Supporting the education welfare service in the use of enforcement tools, when appropriate to do so

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents

- It is the legal responsibility of every parent/carer to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually
- Must contact the school without delay to report any absence
- Ensure that the school has up to date contact details
- Adhere to the Primary Behaviour and Attendance partnership policy with regard to holiday absence
- Ensure their children have a good attitude to learning and attendance
- Work in partnership with the school to promote the best interest of their child

School Administration Team

- To mark pupils arriving during registration as L (late) and those who arrive after the register has closed (15 minutes after the start of the session) as U (unauthorised absence)
- To monitor attendance on a six weekly basis
- Ensure correct attendance codes are used
- Maintain and update all contact information
- Prepare attendance data report for the Head Teacher every half term
- Send reminder letters to parents/carers re clearing unexplained absences every half term
- Will prepare a 6 weekly list of pupil's with less than 90% attendance
- Will identify and monitor pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees, using the SIMS system
- Will contact parents/carers if attendance/punctuality becomes a concern by telephone/letter
- To make first day absence telephone calls
- To send letter if no response to call
- If necessary will arrange an action plan meeting in school with Head Teacher and parent/carers
- Will hold review meetings with parent/carer with Head Teacher
- Will maintain pupil notes regarding attendance issues
- If required will make a referral to the Education Welfare Service

Class Teachers

- To record accurate details of attendance at the beginning of each session
- Pass information regarding absence to the administration office

Headteacher

- To ensure there are named key members of staff with responsibility for attendance
- To include in the termly report to the governing body information on pupil attendance
- To ensure a whole school approach to the development and implementation of the school attendance policy
- To encourage staff, including support and administrative staff, to see attendance as part of their responsibility
- To offer clear guidance to parents with regard to their legal responsibilities in relation to attendance matters and information on attendance procedures
- To establish clear channels of communication between school and parents
- To chair attendance action plan meetings
- To work closely with the Education Welfare Service with regards to enforcement action
- Present weekly awards

Governing body

- The governing body is required by legislation to see that registers are kept correctly
- Should review attendance statistics and trends and support measures to improve attendance

Education Welfare Service

- The Education Welfare Service will support school staff in identifying attendance concerns and becoming familiar with the procedures and documentation required for referring attendance concerns
- The dedicated Education Welfare Service will advise on policy, strategies and legal requirements
- The Education Welfare Service will liaise with school staff following referral to the service

Conclusion

All staff will be made fully aware of this policy and it will be applied fairly and consistently to all pupils. It is designed to be a useful living document and will be the subject of a regular review.

Other Relevant Policies:

Behaviour Policy

Term Time Holiday Policy

Date of Policy/Review: March 2015 – to be reviewed annually

Westfield Primary School

Promoting Good School Attendance Information for Parents

Introduction:

We aim to provide a school environment which enables and encourages all our pupils to gain the maximum benefit from the education provided. There is a clear link between attendance and educational attainment: for children to flourish it is vital that they attend school on time, and every day unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

It is vital therefore that you ensure your child attends regularly and this guidance sets out how together we can achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

There is a clear link between attendance and attainment. Any absence affects your child's education, and regular absence seriously affects their learning, disrupts teaching routines and the learning of others in the same class.

As a parent/carer you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child attends school regularly. Permitting absence from school without good cause is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Creating a regular pattern of attendance is everybody's responsibility, parents, pupils and members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Publish details of whole school attendance in our regular newsletter
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment.
- Celebrate good or improving attendance by rewarding class achievements, through certificates and rewards.

Understanding types of absence:

The register is a legal document and every absence from school has to be recorded and classified by the school (not by the parent) as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are sessions away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical or 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. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absences include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed (15 minutes after the start of school)
- Shopping trips, 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 there are other issues that affect their attendance. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never good to cover up their absence or give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This can make things worse as it gives the impression that attendance does not matter. Any problems maintaining regular attendance are best sorted out at an early stage between the school, parents and pupil. Swift contact between home and school is more likely to result in a successful outcome for your child.

Persistent Absenteeism:

A persistent absentee is a pupil that misses 15% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is seriously detrimental to a child's educational prospects.

At this school we monitor all absence thoroughly and if your child is at risk of becoming a persistent absentee you will be informed of this immediately. Persistent absentee pupils and their parents will be invited to an action plan meeting where support and strategies to improve attendance will be offered.

Persistent absentee cases may be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Absence Procedures:

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence
- Send a note in on the first day your child returns with an explanation of the absence.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you
- If absence persists, we will invite you in to discuss the situation
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service if attendance falls below 85%

Telephone numbers:

There are times when we need to contact parents, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please make sure we have an up to date number in case of emergency.

The Education Welfare Service:

We ask that you contact the school at an early stage if you are experiencing difficulties with your child attending school. Working together nearly always results in a successful outcome; if difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer to the Education Welfare Service, who can offer further support and guidance.

Punctuality:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child missed the start of the day they will miss work and will not receive information and news for the day. Pupils arriving late disrupt the lessons and can be embarrassing for the child.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 9.00 am and we expect your child to be in class at that time.

Registers are marked by 9.15 am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.15 the register will close. If your child arrives after this time they will receive a mark which shows that they in school, but in accordance with regulations it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. This means that if lateness persists you may face the possibility of receiving a penalty notice.

Term Time Holidays:

There is no automatic entitlement in law to take time off school to go on holiday. Term time holidays will not be authorised and any required absence should be requested through the Absence from School for Exceptional Circumstances Request Form. The following exceptional circumstance may be considered:

- Where an absence from school is recommended as part of your, or your child's, rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family

- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close member of the family that is taking place out of the area
- Service personnel returning from tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future out of term time

Evidence would be required in each case

Absence will not, under any circumstances (including those mentioned above,) be authorised at the following times:

- The first six weeks of any academic year (for all pupils)
- Year six transition day (for pupils in that year group)
- Year six SAT's week (for pupils in that group)

If your request is approved, you are required to ensure your child catches up on any missed school work. This is your responsibility and the school is not obliged to provide work for your child to complete.

Any excessive family holiday or any unauthorised leave of absence will be recorded as unauthorised by the school on your child's records. This may result in legal proceedings against you, either through a Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

All staff are committed to working with parents and pupils to raise attendance levels and ensure the best outcomes for pupils attending our school. We appreciate your support in this endeavour. If you wish to discuss attendance matters please contact:

Mrs J Lyall, Attendance Office
Mrs S Hickey Head Teacher

Telephone number 01482 844369