



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Reviewed: September 2021

Next review date: September 2022

Rationale

The staff and governors feel strongly that good attendance and punctuality are vital if children are to achieve their full potential. The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Any absence from school will disrupt your child's learning. You may consider that a holiday will be educational but your child will still miss out on the teaching that their classmates will receive during your holiday. Children returning from a term-time holiday are also unprepared for the lessons which build on the teaching they have missed. Teachers then have to give more time to help individual children catch up on missed work. This poses a potential risk of the under achievement of other students in the class. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

Purpose

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- reduce absence including persistent absence;
- ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- act early to address patterns of absence;
- ensure parents perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend early;
- ensure all pupils are punctual to their lessons and attend school regularly.

Broad guidelines

- Holidays taken in term-time are recorded as unauthorised and a fixed penalty fine will be issued unless there are special circumstances for the absence;
- Pupils who are late for registration will be recorded as unauthorised and a U recorded in the register. A fixed penalty fine will be issued if a child has 10 U's recorded in the register;
- The academy asks parents to complete an "Application by parent/Carer for Child's Leave of Absence from School during Term Time" form, letters will not be accepted. This should be returned to the school at least 14 days before the start of the holiday. A copy is put in the child's file.
- Where possible parents/carers should try and arrange medical appointments before and after the school day. If this is not possible, then a letter must be provided for school from the doctors/hospital for our school records;

- If a child leaves school for a medical appointment or for another reason, or if a child returns to school following an appointment, the parent/carer must sign the "child leaving or returning to school" book for our records in case of an emergency and in line with health and safety and safeguarding regulations;
- We monitor attendance and punctuality weekly and keep records of all pupils who are late for school;
- A member of our staff phones parents daily to check why their child is absent;
- We contact parents to make them aware if their child's attendance/punctuality is not acceptable and inform the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO);
- We invite parents in to discuss persistent poor attenders/latecomers;
- We reward children with 100% attendance by giving them a certificate each half-term. The class with the best attendance each half-term earns a £40 class reward.
- We involve the EWO if parents are not responsive to school requests to improve attendance/lateness
- Attendance figures are put on the school's newsletter weekly and displayed outside classroom doors.
- SAM (school attendance matters) the dog is given weekly to the best class attendance.
- Attendance data is also displayed in the main hall for children to see which class each week has the best attendance.

School times

- Doors open 8.45am
- Classroom doors closed 9.00am
- Children arriving after 9.00am must enter through main reception. Parents must sign their children in giving a reason for late.
- Registers close at 9.10 children after this time will receive a U mark.
- School finishes at 3.15pm
- Nursery morning session 8.45-11.45

Penalty Notices

A penalty notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence. Use of penalty notices will be restricted to two per pupil per academic year. In situations where a parent meets the criteria for more than one penalty notice to be issued, because there is more than one child with irregular school attendance, multiple issue may occur.

Circumstances in which a penalty notice might be issued are:

- Irregular school attendance;
- Overt truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps);
- Parentally-condoned absences;
- Unauthorised holidays in term-time;
- Pupils on the "Fast Track to Attendance" scheme.

To ensure consistent service of penalty notices the following criteria will apply:

- Where there are at least 10 sessions (half days) recorded as unauthorised absence due to a holiday in term-time; or
- Where a child has at least 10 sessions (half days) lost to unauthorised absence during the previous six months period. A suitable circumstance is where a parent continually fails to provide a reasonable or acceptable explanation for a pupil's absence; or where a pupil has a record of unauthorised absence from school and the circumstances appear to have been avoidable;
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed);

The policy is in line with Wakefield Council Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices and falls under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 set the framework for the operation of the Penalty Notice scheme. The Code of Conduct states that a Penalty Notice may be issued where there are at least 10 sessions (half days) recorded as unauthorised absence due to a holiday in term-time.

Conclusion

- This year, the aim is to ensure daily attendance rises to at least in line with the national average (96%).
- To reduce persistent absence to at least in line with national average (8%).