

# Wrekin View Primary School and Nursery



## Attendance Policy May 2018

Learn Encourage Achieve Respect Need



## **1. Introduction and Background**

Wrekin View Primary School recognises that the key principles underlying the importance of good attendance are:

- that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil attainment,
- regular and punctual attendance is central to academic and social development which will improve the life chances of children and young people,
- children and young people who attend school regularly and punctually are less likely to be at risk, both in terms of engaging in anti-social behaviour and in terms of their own health and safety and welfares.

This policy is written with the above statements in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding,
- ensure every pupil has access to their full time education entitlement,
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school,
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.
- any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

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

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

## **2. 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 parents/carers details on school dates as soon as they are available via e-mail, facebook, class dojo, school website and notice boards,
- Give parents/carers regular details on attendance in our newsletters,
- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report,
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall within 7% of the persistent absence figure,
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the threshold of persistent absence, currently set at 85%,
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements,
- Reward good or improving attendance through certificates and rewards.

### **3. Understanding Types of Absence**

Every half-day absence from school can only be classed by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. By law only the school can deem whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason. Authorised absences include:

- Illness, medical/dental appointments. Parents are encouraged to make appointments out of school time.
- Days of religious observance as agreed by the Local Authority.
- Interviews with prospective employers, or for a place at another school, including exam entry for that school.
- Study leave is not an approved 'educational activity', but is an authorised absence.
- The exceptional occasions when the Headteacher has agreed to a term time absence request.
- Exclusion whether fixed term or permanent is regarded as an authorised absence for the first 5 days. From September 2007, the LA is responsible for providing for all permanently excluded pupils

from day 6 of any permanent exclusion and for schools from day 6 of any fixed term exclusion. Where provision has been made and the pupil does not attend, their absence should be recorded as unauthorised unless there are valid reasons for non-attendance.

- Schools have discretion to authorise absence in certain circumstances such as domestic emergency, bereavements, but will need to consider each individual circumstance as well as the individual pupils' attendance recorded.
- Participation in public performances such as films, concerts etc. must be licensed by the Local Authority in which the pupil lives.
- Traveller pupils who are travelling.
- Pregnant schoolgirls.
- The event of exceptionally poor weather when the school has been closed to all pupils.

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 Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily, truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Lateness after the registers have closed is regarded as unauthorised absence.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and absences in term time which have not been agreed, including holidays.
- Absence of pupils classed as persistent absentees where no authorising evidence is produced.
- Absence due to poor weather when the school has been opened for pupils.

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 a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and support as appropriate. We can use outside

agencies to help with this such as the Education Welfare Officer, School Nurse or our Learning Mentor in school.

#### **4. Monitoring Attendance**

The school will:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and associated education law,
- complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session,
- stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence,
- reward good and improved attendance of all pupils,
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence,
- ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by senior managers and the school governors,
- update school website with any attendance related issues,
- work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed,
- have in place procedures which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

As a school we review attendance on a weekly basis.

The reviewing group includes the Headteacher, the Administrator with responsibility for Attendance, the Learning Mentor and the Education Welfare Officer.

All pupils with attendance below 92% are reviewed and monitored. Pupils who are at risk of becoming a Persistent Absence receive a variety of communications, including warning letters from Education Welfare, letters from school outlining the need to provide medical proof of absence, a telephone call from school, absence text message or a face to face conversation to alert them to the issue. They might be invited to an attendance panel to explain their child's absences from school.

On a termly basis we review the overall figures for the whole school in order to identify any specific trends.

#### **5. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason, i.e. their overall attendance falls below 90%. Pupils whose attendance falls below 92% are regarded as at risk of Persistent Absence. Absence at these levels is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will work with the EWO to inform the parents/carers immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully, we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment.

Persistent absences are dealt with formally through the Education Welfare Service and will usually result in penalty notices or prosecutions if all other methods to improve attendance have not succeeded.

## **6. Absence Procedures**

If a child is absent it is the parent/carer responsibility to follow these procedures:

- Contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.20a.m. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call,
- Or they can call into school and report to reception,
- Or they can e-mail school on [a2204@telford.gov.uk](mailto:a2204@telford.gov.uk).
- Or they can create an absence message on 'Parentmail'

If a child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you,
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer and/or Learning Mentor, Senior Leader, EWO or attendance panel which includes members of the School Governing Body if absences persist.
- Complete a home visit if no response after 5 days and consider a referral to 'Family Connect' if contact with a parent is not made.

**In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.**

## **7. Holidays in Term Time**

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. It is the school and Local Authority policy that family holidays should not be taken during term time.

Whilst the school does not support term time holidays, in exceptional circumstances the school will exercise some discretion and authorise up to a maximum of 5 days in any academic year. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time.

All applications for leave must be made in advance and it is at the discretion of the school whether a maximum of 5 days in any academic year may be authorised.

Booking a holiday before requesting absence leave will not be regarded as an exceptional circumstance, nor is the gift of a holiday to a family from an uninformed friend or family member.

We will not agree leave during term time under the following circumstances:

- Prior to and during assessment periods (SATS) for year 2 and year 6 pupils,
- during school assessment periods (usually the 2 weeks prior to each half term),
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence,
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below 92% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

There are two types of holiday that are subject to separate areas of law. These are:

- Short term holidays i.e. any holiday authorised by the school of 5 days or less,
- Extended trips i.e any holiday authorised by the school for more than 5 school days in one continuous stretch.

A Child's name can be removed from the register of the school if the pupil has been granted leave of absence exceeding 5 days and:

- he/she has not returned by the agreed date,
- and he/she has continued to be absent for a further 10 school days and the Head Teacher is not satisfied that this is because he/she is ill or the absence is unavoidable.

## **8. Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss crucial learning introductions and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons. It is also embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

The school doors open at 8.45am. Registers are marked at 8.55am and children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by that time. We ask that all parents/carers have also left the building at this time.

At 9.25am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

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



We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class punctuality.

## **9. The Education Welfare Officer**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the 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 EWO 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 Education Authority. Currently our EWO is Mr Stuart Will he can be contacted directly on 01952 387300.

## **10. Modified Timetables**

Modified timetables are only implemented in exceptional circumstances and will have been agreed through Team Around the Child Meetings, as part of a phased integration into or return to school. They have clearly defined objectives and are for a specific period. If a child is on a modified timetable, then the school must complete a modified timetable form and send it to the Attendance Support Team within the LA within 5 working days. These timetables are reviewed regularly

## **11. Education other than at School**

Parents have a duty to ensure that their child receives a suitable education. They do not have to do so through registering them for attendance at a school. However, if a parent decided to undertake elective home education they will be required by law to demonstrate that they are providing a suitable education.

## **12. Deletions from the School Register**

The following are the only legal grounds for removing a pupil from a school register:

- The pupil is registered at another school,
- The school has received communication in writing about the intent to educate otherwise than at school,

- The pupil has died,
- After a granted leave of absence exceeding 10 days for the purpose of a family holiday the pupil has failed to attend school in the ten days immediately after the period for which the leave was granted,
- The pupil has been permanently excluded from the school and the time for lodging appeals has passed,
- The pupil is certified by a school medical officer as unlikely to be fit to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age,
- the pupil has been continuously absent for a period of not less than 4 weeks and the school and LA have failed after reasonable attempts to locate the child.

### **13. Targets**

Targets for the school are shared in the weekly attendance whole school assembly to encourage participation by all in reaching these. The current school target is 96.1%. This target is a requirement by law and is set in the Autumn term by the Governing Body in conjunction with the Headteacher and the Education Welfare Officer.

We will keep parents updated regularly on their child's progress.

Our target is to achieve better than this, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling.

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

### **14. People Responsible for Managing School Attendance**

Attendance is an important whole-school issue and needs to be managed at school level for all children.

School recognises the importance of good practice and will:

- Keep and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintain a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regularly analysing attendance data
- Ensure prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance
- Liaise closely with the school's NAP/EWO, if appropriate
- Recording (and retaining) carefully, all telephone messages
- A signed copy of any correspondence to parents is retained by the school
- A referral is made to AST (the Attendance Support Team) for intervention using the electronic ASTR form

For some vulnerable children and young people, more individualised approaches are required and support will be provided from a wider network of agencies.

Children who are more likely to require access to such support include, Travellers, Children In Care, and young carers.

## 15. 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.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Signed:

Chair ..... *Lucy Sobey* ..... 14.12.18

Headteacher ..... *A. Holt* ..... 14.12.18

Date: Sum 2018

Review Date: Sum 2019

## Appendix 1. Staff Information.

### **A1.1 Marking the Register**

(See also DfE guidance 'School Attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities' and DfE guidance 'School attendance parental responsibility measures')

- a) **No pupil should be marked present unless actually in the room when the register is taken** or unless he or she has been given permission to be absent by the registering teacher.
- b) Spaces must not be left in the register.
- c) Registers should be closed at an agreed time each day. AST have circulated LA guidance in line with DfE guidelines. These suggest that registers are closed 30 minutes after the start of the morning session.
- d) Where a pupil arrives late but the register is still open, the pupil should be marked as late 'L' – code, but counted as present for that session.
- e) Where a pupil misses registration (arrives after registration has closed) absence must be marked as an unauthorised absence – 'U' code.
- f) Where a pupil misses registration but provides an adequate explanation, s/he should be recorded as late if arriving before the register closes, but coded as an authorised absence for the session e.g. M for dental or medical appointment if arriving after the register closes..
- g) Pupils must not mark the register under any circumstances.
- h) Attendance data from registers should be monitored as appropriate.
- i) The decision to authorise an absence should be made within a maximum of ten school days from the date of the absence. If no reason has been provided during this time the absence should be recorded as unauthorised.

### **A1.2 Computerised Registration:**

Schools use a variety of management Information systems (MIS) to record attendance. Using an MIS system will not, by itself, improve attendance. It does, however, provide an accessible, accurate and easy to use record of information relating to the individual pupil or whole school attendance in the form of data reports, these may include:

- a daily report of all absentees
- an official monthly register which codes all absences allowing the reader to quickly identify patterns and trends in authorised and unauthorised absences,
- an individual registration certificate which can be produced at any time in the school year and includes information on total percentage attendance and absence,

- an absence-mapping facility which can be used to check a pupil's attendance against another pupil, or a group of pupils' attendance if there is a suspicion of multiple truancy,
- a record of attendance for each class over any given period of time which will provide a percentage attendance figure for each session and data which could identify patterns of absence for individuals as well as the whole class.
- Individual reports for vulnerable pupils

### A1.3 Removal from Roll

(See also DfE guidance 'School Attendance - Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (November 2016) and 'Children Missing Education – Statutory Guidance for local authorities (September 2016)

Schools should inform their LA of any intended deletion from roll using the A/D 1 form. Pupils should only be removed from the school roll and class registers under the following circumstances:

- a) Where a parent informs the school that they are moving out of the area and give a new address and school where they intend to register the child. Following the date given for the move the Admissions Team or Attendance & Pupil Tracking Officer will contact the new LA to ascertain that the child is, in fact, living in the area and has been registered at a school. If confirmed, the LA will then advise the headteacher that the pupil can be removed from school roll and registers, retrospectively from the date given for the move.
- b) Where a parent informs the school that they will be pursuing a place in another school in the area the parent should complete the in-year transfer form (available from the host school) and this should then be forwarded to the Admissions Team at Telford & Wrekin Council. A date for the transfer should be requested and the subsequent transfer must be made via the Admissions Team who will inform the parent that a place is available to them at the new school. Once contacted by the new school and admission confirmed, the pupil can then be removed from the host school roll.
- c) Where a parent informs the school **in writing** that they intend to teach the child **otherwise than at school**, the school must inform the LA who will arrange for the educational provision to be checked by the LA Advisory Teacher for Elective Home Education.
- d) Where a pupil has been continuously absent for not less than 4 weeks and the school has made extensive enquiries which have failed to locate the pupil. In such cases a school representative or an attendance & pupil tracking officer will make home visits and other enquiries to ascertain that the family are no longer living at their last known address. Removal of a pupil from the class register should only be undertaken when authorised by the head teacher after these enquiries have taken place. **The school must notify the LA in all cases of a pupil being removed from the school roll where a family has moved and cannot be traced in line with DfE guidance 'Children Missing Education' – September 2016'. This information should be uploaded by the school onto the S2S system and the Attendance & Pupil Tracking Officer notified to ensure the pupil is tracked.**

- e) Where a pupil is registered in accordance with a school attendance order and the LA substitutes another school.
- f) Where a pupil has been granted leave of absence e.g. for the purpose of a holiday but has failed to attend school within the twenty school days immediately following the expiry of the leave (except by reason of sickness or other unavoidable cause). Extensive enquiries by the school must be made in these circumstances to trace the pupil, prior to removal from the school roll. **The school must notify the LA in all cases of a pupil being removed from the school roll owing to non-return from leave of absence e.g. for a holiday.**
- g) Where a pupil is certified by the School Medical Officer as unlikely to be in a state of health to attend before ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- h) Where the pupil has died.
- i) Where the pupil has been permanently excluded. The Pupil Discipline Committee must have met. 15 school days will then be allowed for a possible independent appeal panel hearing before the pupil is removed from the school roll.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 currently do not provide for a school to delete a pupil from the admission register where the pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age and has failed to meet the academic requirements for entry to their sixth-form.

Amendments to the 2006 Regulations will allow this, bringing the regulations into line with the new School Admissions Code 2012, which allows schools to set academic requirements for entry into sixth-form.

**It is not lawful to remove a pupil from a school roll simply because the pupil has a poor behaviour or poor attendance record.**