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Attendance Policy

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Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

• Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence

• Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

• Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE’s statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996 Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE’s guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Responsibilities

The headteacher is responsible for:

• Implementation of this policy at the school

• Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to directors

• Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

All staff are responsible for:

* Keeping registers up to date
* Completing registers in a timely manner within 10 minutes of the start of the day.
* Investigate a childs absence on day 1
* Home visits if necessary
* Alerting agencies when necessary and the Local authority

Leadership and Management

We will:

• Adopt an effective whole school strategy for attendance, which requires commitment from every member of the school community.

• Place the improvement of attendance on the school improvement plan when necessary

• Make sure staff, learners and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.

• Expect good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and make sure that learners understand its importance.

• Empower staff to take responsibility for attendance.

• Discuss attendance at relevant meetings

Relationships and Communication

We will:

• treat learners with dignity, build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries

• take into consideration the vulnerability of some learners and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively

• understand the importance of school as a place of safety where learners can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and learners.

• communicate effectively with families regarding learners’ attendance and well-being

This will include:

* Working with each learner as an individual and improve their attendance by removing barriers to learning.
* On induction, discussing individual plans which will improve attendance when necessary
* Monitor attendance on a weekly basis and put interventions in place if patterns are beginning to emerge.
* Offer Early Help support to overcome barriers to attendance.
* Adapt the curriculum to meet an individual learner’s need and improve attendance.

Parents/Carers should:

• treat School staff with respect

• actively support the work of the school

• call on School staff for help when they need it

• communicate as early as possible circumstances which may affect absence or require support

Making the improvement of individual attendance a priority for all learners, parents/carers, staff and other stakeholders.

• By making sure that parents/carers are aware of the link between good attendance and good achievement.

• By conveying clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.

• By placing attendance information around the school.

• Promote a positive working relationship right from induction.

• Identify potential issues as early as possible, work in partnership with parents/carers to solve them.

To recognise the needs of the individual learner when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence or an ingrained habit of low attendance at school.

• Be sensitive and show understanding of the circumstances of individual learners.

• Work in partnership with parents/carers involving them in decisions.

• Set up regular meetings either at the school, home or via telephone to evaluate the learner reintegration plan

• Consider use of designated member of staff.

• Celebrate improvements and build confidence and self-esteem of the learner.

Procedures

We have a commitment to actively pursue each learner’s attendance by a system of daily phone calls at close of register. Each learner is an individual and our response to non-attendance depends on their own circumstances Learners are sometimes reluctant to attend school for a variety of reasons – many of these reasons have little to do with school itself, but are often symptomatic of deeper barriers to learning e.g. mental health issues, substance misuse and addiction. Any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents/carers and the learner. If a learner is reluctant to attend, we advise parents/carers not to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. A culture of openness about our thoughts and intentions will encourage good attendance.

Registration

The school is statutorily required to take an attendance register twice daily. Willow Park School will take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. On each occasion we will record whether every learner is:

• Present;

• Attending an approved educational activity;

• Absent;

• Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances;

This will be managed manually on arrival then recorded electronically.

First Day Absence

If a child is absent for any reason, parents/carers must let the school know ASAP. This information will be placed on the register when it has been received. If the learner is on a CP or CIN plan or we have concerns about the welfare of the child then the visit will take place on day 1 of the absence. Every case of absence is examined and safeguarding is paramount. If a learner is absent and we have been unable to contact the parent/carer to establish the reason for absence then a member of staff may perform a home visit.

Authorised Absence

Every absence (am/pm) will be classified as authorised or unauthorised. Authorised absences include events such as:

• Illness

• Bereavement

• Interview

• Medical appointments (where every eventuality has been made to make this outside School hours)

• Approved sporting activities.

• Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Unauthorised Absence

'Unauthorised Absence' is a period of absence which the school does not consider reasonable and no leave of absence has been issued. This may include events such as:

• Family holidays

• Truancy

• Unexplained absences

A parent can offer an explanation for their child’s absence, but the law clearly states that it is the Head teacher’s decision as to whether it is felt the explanation offered by a parent for an absence is justified.

Holiday Absence

Holidays in term time are classified as unauthorised. This should not change unless it is at the discretion of the Head Teacher and only under exceptional circumstances can a holiday be authorised.

Long Term Absence

If there is a long term absence for medical reasons where external tuition has been put in place, for example hospital schooling, this should be recorded on the register. If a child has been in hospital and discharged under medical supervision work packs should be provided for the learner for up to two weeks. If the learner has not returned to school a member of staff should complete a home visit and discuss the appropriate intervention which needs to take place.

Children Missing from Education

A learner going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse or sexual exploitation. The Designated Safeguarding Lead will monitor unauthorised absence, particularly where learners go missing on repeated occasions.

The school follows DfE legal requirements for schools in respect of recording and reporting of children who leave school without any known destination and work closely with local authorities when necessary.

Where a learner has 10 consecutive school days of unauthorised absence and reasonable steps have been taken by the School to establish the whereabouts without success, the school will make an immediate referral to the Early Help Team.

Reasonable steps include:

• Telephone calls to all known contacts

• Letters home (including recorded delivery)

• Contact with other schools where siblings may be registered

• Possible home visit where safe to do so

• Enquires through friends, neighbours etc. through school contacts

• Enquiries with any other service known to be involved with the family

• Request a Police Welfare Check (after 5 days)

• All contacts and outcomes should be recorded on

If the child is not found, the school will complete a Child Missing From Education form (CME) contact [cme@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:cme@warwickshire.gov.uk). For urgent concerns About a child’s safety or well-being which requires immediate action, call the Warwickshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) (and police if appropriate) without delay on 01926 414144.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Those learners whose attendance starts to decline due to regular unexplained absence, will be subject to discussion at the weekly attendance meetings. Strategies to improve attendance will be discussed and interventions recorded. For those learners who fall below 90% and are classified as a persistent absentee (PA) and where unauthorised absence exists school may apply a staged intervention toward formal proceedings:

Stage 1 All learners will have their attendance monitored on a weekly basis. Where a concern is raised over an individual’s attendance, a home visit will be made and parents/carers will be issued with a letter, setting out our concerns, and a certificate of attendance. This is followed by a monitoring period of up to 4 weeks which can include phone calls, text messages and home visits by school staff– all contact will be recorded.

Stage 2 Following an attendance review over a period of 4 weeks and, if there is no significant improvement, a further home visit will be completed and a second letter will be issued informing parents/carers that if any further absences are to be authorised, then there needs to be medical evidence explaining the absence. A learner re-engagement plan may be issued to re-engage learners or create a more suitable personalised timetable.

Stage 3 Learners who have reached stage 3 of the Attendance Procedures will be closely monitored. A formal meeting will take place and weekly targets will be set – these will be monitored on a weekly basis. A learner re-engagement plan will be issued to re-engage learners or create a more suitable personalised timetable. Parents/carers will be issued with a ‘final notice’ letter informing them that failure to comply will result in possible prosecution by the Local Authority.

Stage 4 If all previous interventions have failed and following a final attendance review a letter will be sent out to notify parents/carers that an attendance referral will be sent to the Local Authority for a prosecution to be pursued.

Attendance Rewards

It is essential that we celebrate good attendance, and we do this in a number of different ways:

• Attendance displays

• Positive phone calls home

• Positive attendance texts

• Attendance post cards

• Certificates

Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DFE’s guidance on school attendance.

**ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **CODE** | **DESCRIPTION** | **MEANING** |
| **/** | Present (AM) | Present |
| **\** | Present (PM) | Present |
| **B** | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity |
| **C** | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| **E** | Excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| **G** | Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| **H** | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| **I** | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| **J** | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| **L** | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| **M** | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| **N** | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorised absence |
| **P** | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| **R** | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| **S** | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| **T** | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| **U** | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| **V** | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| **W** | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |
| **D** | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **X** | Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Y** | Enforced and partial enforced closure | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Z** | Pupil not yet on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **#** | School closed to pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |

|  |
| --- |
| Present |
| Authorised absence |
| Unauthorised absence |
| Approved Education Activity (Present) |
| Not counted in possible attendances |

Exclusions from Willow Park School

At times it may be necessary to exclude children at Willow Park school. If this is the case we will ensure the following:

* Exclusions of 1-5 days we will notify the parents of the child.
* Exclusions more than 5 days we will notify parents and the local authority.

Exclusions will always be reviewed by the directors, and on the child’s return we will endeavour to have provisions in place to support the child back into school life.