

Waverton Community Primary School



Attendance Policy

About the School, ethos and Goals

Waverton C P School's attendance target is 100%. The expectation of the school is that all pupils attend 100% unless there is a genuine reason for the absence approved by the Head Teacher.

The school firmly believes that regular school attendance and arriving punctually is highly important and benefits all pupils. As children grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and employers. The school will do all that it can to encourage Parents/carers to ensure that those children in their care achieve the best possible attendance and any issues impacting a child's attendance can be identified and acted on promptly. Where children are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality, we will put in place effective strategies to bring about improvement.

Timings of Waverton C P School day for KS1 & KS2:

School gates open from:	:	8.40am
Doors will be open at	:	8.45am
Register taken at	:	8.50am
Children arriving between 8.55am – 9.05am	:	will be marked as "Late" (L) in the register
Children arriving after 9.05am	:	will be marked as "Unauthorised Absence" (U) if no prior notice of absence given/received
Morning registers formally close at	:	09.05am
Afternoon registers formally close at	:	13.10pm

School day ends	:	3.20pm
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Timings of Waverton C P School day for RECEPTION:

School gates open from:	:	8.45am
Doors will be open at	:	8.50am
Register taken at	:	8.55am
Children arriving between 9am – 9.10am	:	will be marked as "Late" (L) in the register
Children arriving after 9.10am	:	will be marked as "Unauthorised Absence" (U) if no prior notice of absence given/received
Morning registers formally close at	:	09.05am
Afternoon registers formally close at	:	13.10pm
School day ends	:	3.05pm

Registers

Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all pupils. They are legal documents and the register may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance in school.

'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006' (section 6)

Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day, morning (a.m.) and once during the second session, afternoon (p.m.).

On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system as a priority and returned to the school office in a timely manner. This is used to download data to the School Census.
- Consider early identification, assessment, intervention and support processes that may need to be implemented.

The register should be marked using the codes as advised by the Department for Education (DfE) 'Working together to improve School Attendance Guidance' (for maintained schools, academies, independent school and local authorities)

In accordance with the 'Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006', if your child arrives after the registers close, they will receive a mark, code U, 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 you could face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action if the problem persists.

Children who are consistently late for school are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of other children. Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, you will be invited to a meeting to resolve the issues. If there is no improvement following this meeting, further action will be taken which may include referral to external agencies.

You may approach the school at any time for support and advice if you are having difficulty getting your child to school on time or maintaining regular attendance.

Procedure

Children are expected to attend school regularly, unless there is good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves a pupil absence)
- Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)

The school has a duty to safeguard all its pupils. If a child is absent, the parents/carers should inform the school on the **first day of absence** and each following day of absence, stating the reason.

We expect that all parents/carers/persons who have day-to-day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that any child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child is unable to attend school;
- contact the school each day their child is absent by using the school telephone number or email by 8.30am, providing the information below:

Please ensure that you telephone the school on 01244 268985 – Option 2 or via email admin@waverton.cheshire.sch.uk prior **to 8.30am** to inform them of your child's absence stating clearly the following information:

- **Child's first name and surname,**
- **the date that they will be absent from school**
- **the reason for absence**
- **please remember to sign off with your own name and surname too as well as your relationship to the child.**
e.g. Lily Brown, 05.10.17, tonsillitis – seen GP and has antibiotics. John Brown (dad);
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.

We would encourage discussion where there are any issues arising that the school could support in school to avoid absenteeism e.g. management of an on-going health issue. We can be flexible on daily arrangements to facilitate this.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.10am the school will endeavour to contact them that day. If the family is not reachable by telephone an email will be sent.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact the school will complete a home visit if appropriate or send a letter of concern to parents/carers to invite them into school to discuss their concerns with the Head Teacher. This may be discussed with the school's Family Support Worker if applicable.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by this policy may result in further action, an application for a Fixed Penalty, Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution.
- While it is understood that a child may have specific medical needs, school reserves the right to seek evidence to support such absences. **The school will always ask for medical evidence where a child's attendance falls below 90%, this evidence could include hospital admission or discharge reports or GP notes printouts following an appointment.**

Legislation

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement. Regular attendance is essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainment, opportunities and further development.

- Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that "The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise".
- Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that "if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence".
- Section 576 Education Act 1996 - Meaning of "parent"

For the purposes of Education Law, the definition of a 'parent' and who is responsible for ensuring regular attendance to school is:

- all biological parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who, although not a biological parent and does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person. This could be one parent, both parents and/or carer/s.

Expectations

Attendance %	Level of concern	Action by the School
96% and above	None - on track attendance	None
90% to 95%	Concern as below school target	Letter sent to parents (termly basis)
Below 90%	Persistence Absence	Meeting with parents/guardians and Head Teacher

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day; and
- discuss promptly with their form tutor/class teacher any problems that discourage them from attending school.

We expect that school staff will:

School Organisation

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

Head teacher, governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- adopt the whole policy;
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided;
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence;
- consult and liaise with the EWS and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified without delay;
- work in close collaboration with the EWS reviewing register analysis during register inspections.
- monitor and evaluate attendance concerns with the Education Welfare Service.

Class Teachers to:

- complete registers accurately and punctually twice daily;
- follow up any unexplained non-attendance; inform the school office of all reasons for absences so they can be recorded in the School Information Management System (SIMS);
- inform the designated person in charge of overall attendance of concerns; be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and report these concerns as soon as possible to the Senior Leadership Team.

Attendance Task	Member of Staff Responsible
keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily - (pupils arriving late due to transport issues will not be penalised)	Office Manager All teaching staff
monitor every pupil's attendance and by publishing attendance statistics	Office Manager
contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence	Office Manager
follow up all unexplained absences to obtain notes authorising the absence	Office Manager
provide a welcoming atmosphere for children; provide a safe learning environment; and provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns	ALL staff
respond promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils	Head Teacher
inform parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arrange meetings with them if necessary and follow attendance procedure if the irregular attendance continues	Head Teacher/Office Manager

Holidays

It is Waverton C P school's policy not to authorise holiday in term time. However, in exceptional circumstances the Head Teacher may consider a request, but the normality will be that any request for holidays during term time will be refused. **(Please see Penalty Section below).**

Application for Exceptional Circumstances

In September 2013, amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any Leave of Absence (holiday) during term time unless there are '**exceptional circumstances**'

The Head Teacher and the Governing Body will determine what constitutes an exceptional circumstance on an individual basis. If parents/carers need to request Exceptional Leave of Absence, they must complete an 'Exceptional Leave of Absence' form available from the school office. It should be noted that if any application is declined and absence occurs of a consecutive 5 or more unauthorised days, then school may apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued to each parent/carer.

The following is an example of requests that will not be deemed to be exceptional circumstances:

- Family holiday
- Availability of less expensive holiday
- Availability of holiday accommodation
- Parent/carer's working commitments
- Holiday pre-booked by another family member

A child's absence during term time seriously disrupts their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching on the days they are away but are less prepared for the lessons building on that teaching when they return to school. There is a consequent risk of under achievement, which we must seek to avoid.

The Governing Body is responsible for ensuring any attendance issues are dealt with in line with school policy.

Penalty Notices

Unauthorised Absence and Fixed Penalty Notice

An absence may be coded as 'unauthorised' if:

- i. no reason for absence has been given
- ii. medical evidence is not received when requested
- iii. a request for a leave of absence has been unauthorised
- iv. a pupil arrives at school after registration has closed at 9.10am

Parents/carers should be aware that Waverton C P School may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in the current term with a view to issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice or other legal action. The Fixed Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their child's regular attendance at school. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Fixed Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court.

The Education Welfare Service, acting on behalf of Cheshire West and Chester Council will issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority

must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued:

- Pupils identified by police and education welfare officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who-have incurred Unauthorised absences or have been excluded from school.
- **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 states that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.**
- Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'unauthorised leave of absence' is without the authority of the Head Teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

Medical Absence

Absence due to illness should be reported to the school by phone or by email admin@waverton.cheshire.sch.uk on the first day of absence and any subsequent days. School will contact parents during the first day if no satisfactory reason for absence has been received.

In the majority of cases a parent's notification that their child is ill can be accepted without question or concern. Schools should not routinely request that parents provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily as it places additional pressure on health professionals.

Only where the school has a **genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity** of the illness should medical evidence be requested to support the absence. In instances of **long-term or repeated absences for the same reason**, however, seeking medical evidence may be appropriate to assist in assessing whether the child requires additional support to help them to attend more regularly, and whether the illness is likely to prevent the child from attending for extended periods. If a parent proactively seeks out a note from a GP, it does not imply a need for absence unless this is explicit in their letter.

If a medical absence is likely to be ongoing or long term, then we will offer support in accordance with the school's policies and statutory guidance relating to Children with health needs.

As a school we need to plan how children can access Education and how and when the child will return to school. In accordance with the Equality Act 2010 the school must also demonstrate that reasonable adjustments are made to meet child's Educational Needs.

For children who have a medical condition and cannot attend school, the school will refer to the Cheshire West and Chester Council's Medical Needs Team. <https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/documents/education-and-learning/medical-needs-service/medical-needs-policy-latest.pdf>

Their policy states that referrals must come directly from the child's school and must be supported by medical evidence from one of the following health professionals:

- consultant paediatrician or adolescent psychiatrist
- consultant child psychiatrist
- hospital consultant

Supporting evidence from a General Practitioner alone cannot be accepted.

Medical Appointments

It is appreciated that there can be difficulties obtaining appointments but "routine" dental checks, optician appointments and Drs appointments should be made out of school hours. The school does not have to mark these as medical in the register unless confirmation of the appointment is provided.

Medical leave

If your child requires an operation or recuperation after an operation during term time, please contact the school office for the leave form. This form needs to be completed and returned to school at least two weeks prior to the date of the first requested leave day (unless it's an emergency operation). A member of staff will make contact with parents to discuss any additional support that maybe required to ensure a quick and safe return for children after an operation or recuperation period.

Changing schools

It is important that if families decide to send a child in their care to a different school they inform Waverton C P School office staff and their case worker for EHCP if appropriate as soon as possible. The information is required in written form and must contain the following information:

- Name of Child
- Year Group of child
- Date of leaving school
- New school address and contact details
- Date due to start new school
- New home address and contact numbers – if applicable

A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until all are satisfied that the child is accepted on to the roll of an alternative, appropriate school.

Religious Observance

We recognise that some pupils may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance.

- falls during school time and
- has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs

We ask that parents/carers notify Waverton C P School in writing in advance where absence is required due to a religious observance.

Enforced School Closure

If Waverton C P School was forced to close for a period of time, we have the facility to operate an online virtual school. The expectation is children will still engage with ALL activities when work is set. Procedures for online learning will be sent to parents as and when required.

All pupils will achieve well by developing knowledge and skills on their journey through school. Due to robust monitoring of attendance, all pupils, including vulnerable children and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), will have fair and equitable access to school in order to achieve the best possible outcomes. Pupils will leave Waverton C P School ready for a successful transition to secondary education.

Policy written by School Admin Officer

Reviewed by Head Teacher Autumn 1 – 2023

Approved by Governors Autumn 1 - 2023

Next review Autumn 1- 2024