



WILLIAM SHREWSBURY PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY 2019



Principles:

- Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.
- This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the wellbeing of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs.
- All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable

School Responsibilities:

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately.
- We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.
- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

Parents or Carers Responsibilities:

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day.
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance.
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep.
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness.
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment:

The Department of Education has published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams. (**February 22nd 2015 Department of Education**). The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years.

The results are very clear – missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement.

For example, at the end of the 2012/13 Academic year 94% of pupils who were present all the time achieved 5+ GCSE A* - C or equivalent. Where attendance dropped to between 85 and 90% only 75% of pupils achieved these results. This equates to an absence of around 1 week per year during Years 10 and 11 and clearly illustrates the impact of attendance on attainment.

The same pattern is also seen at primary school level, where pupils missing up to just 14 days of school in key stage 2 (normally age 11) are a quarter less likely to achieve level 5 or above in reading, writing or maths tests than those with no absence

Admissions Register:

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school.

The school keeps a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and informs the local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children)
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

Elective Home Education:

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Attendance data and targets:

The Local Authority does not prescribe individual school targets for attendance or persistent absence. We have set a realistic but ambitious target for whole school attendance and persistent absence.

This data included for two terms is available annually for the previous year in October whilst full year data is not available until March of the next year. This two terms data appears in school Raise online reports. Full year data is important and provides the full picture of attendance patterns for the school.

State Funded Primary Schools 2014-15

	England	2016-17 School Actual	2017-18 School Actual	2018-19 School Actual
Overall attendance %	96.	96.97%	96.9%	97.12%
Persistent Absence %	4.0	Target 96.5%	Target 97.00%	Target 97.2%

Definition of persistent absence:

From September 2015 this definition will change to include pupils missing 10% or more of possible sessions.

School Specific Procedures:

Absence and Authorisation Procedures

Parents should inform the school on the morning of absence, by telephone call, letter or in person. Phone calls are logged in a record book by the office staff. School office staff will attempt to contact the parents of any child who is absent on the morning of the same day if no explanation has been received. Any unauthorised absence will be followed up at the end of the week or with a note requesting an explanation and authorisation for the absence.

Registration times and lateness

Registration is at 8.55am in the morning for the whole school and 1.10pm for the Infants and 1.25pm for the Juniors in the afternoon. Registers close no more than 30 minutes after the start of sessions. A list of late arrivals is kept and punctuality is monitored by the attendance officer and the Headteacher on a regular basis.

Monitoring attendance

Attendance percentages are monitored each term by the Headteacher. Class teachers should report any unusual or poor attendance patterns to the Headteacher for investigation. When a child's absence falls below **90%** for no valid reason, the parents will be contacted, **When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% in any term without good reason or a pupil has 10 U codes, 20 O codes or 11 G codes or a combination of all 3 a referral to the EWW will be made by the school.** Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

Penalty notices can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and fines imposed on parents. If a Penalty Notice is served, parents must, from 1 September 2013, pay £60 per child per parent within 21 days or £120 per child per parent within 28 days. This brings attendance penalty notices into line with other types of penalty notices and allows local authorities to act faster on prosecutions.

Communication with parents

If a child is absent from school in the morning and no reason has been supplied, the school office will contact the parents as soon as possible. (First day contact). Parents are reminded regularly of the importance of letting the school know by email or phone message if their child is absent for any reason. When a child's absence falls below 90% for no valid reason, the parents will be contacted to alert them to the attendance levels. All parents receive a letter once a year, in February, showing them the attendance levels for their children. These letters are sent by all schools in the Trust and are colour coded with acceptable/not acceptable levels of attendance.

Home school agreements

The home school agreement emphasises the critical importance of regular attendance and good punctuality and outlines the responsibilities of all parties in this.

Encouraging and recognising good attendance and punctuality

Parents receive a letter once a year recognising good attendance. Certificates are awarded at the end of the year celebrating 100% attendance and excellent attendance.

Leave of absence during term time

Schools are no longer allowed to authorise holidays, following the introduction of new regulations from 1st September 2014. Leave of absence is only granted in 'exceptional circumstances'. This may include death or funeral of a close family member, appointments or break for a sick sibling, holiday for service personnel returning from active duty. Further guidance is available from the NAHT document in the appendix. Updated guidance following the Isle of White ruling is at the end of the policy.

Late arrivals

Children who arrive late must report to the school office. In accordance with DFE guidance, school registers close at 9.25, 30 minutes after the start of the school day. The school has an electronic registration system. The school follows the LA EWW guidance on the administration of SIMS registration codes.

Medical or dental appointments

Parents are encouraged not to take their children out for medical appointments. Where this is unavoidable, the absence is still authorised. If a pupil's attendance is of concern, parents may be asked to present appointment cards as proof of absence. If not received within a two week timescale, the absence will be considered unauthorised.

Involving other agencies

The Local Authority must be informed of the absence of any child for a continuous period of 10 days or more without school's permission but school should involve the Local Support Team and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child is less than 10 days but presents a cause for concern.

Attendance clinics.

The Burton Co-operative Learning Trust schools, in conjunction with de Ferrers Academy and other external agencies, may invite the families of poor attenders to an attendance clinic to discuss how to improve their child's attendance. See appendix for sample letter.

Procedures for reporting to Governors

The Governors' Personnel and Pupils committee has delegated responsibility for monitoring pupil attendance and receives reports on a regular basis.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The target attendance figure for 2016/17 is 96.5% The actual was 96.97%

The target attendance figure for 2017/18 is 97.0% The actual was 96.9%

The target attendance figure for 2018/19 is 97.2% The actual was 97.12%

The target attendance figure for 2019/20 is 97.2%

Roles of key staff in school

1. Mrs. S. Bassett Clerical Officer, Attendance and Registration.

Responsible for:

- Maintaining all attendance records
- Contacting parents with decisions about leave of absence
- First day contact
- Providing reports to SLT, governors, EWO and other agencies
- Alerting staff to unusual patterns of attendance/punctuality
- Producing letters and reports to parents twice a year

2. Mrs. E Curtis Headteacher.

Responsible for:

- Attendance Policy and procedures
- Completing leave of absence forms
- Monitoring and analysis of attendance data to ensure appropriate action is in place to encourage good punctuality and attendance for all pupils
- Liaising with EWO about persistent absence
- Reporting to Governors
- Arranging attendance clinics and other meetings with parents

3. Mrs H Elsmore SENCo . (Mrs Louise Salt Assistant SENCO September 17-May 18)

Responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysis of attendance data to ensure appropriate action is in place to encourage good punctuality and attendance for vulnerable groups.
- Providing attendance information about vulnerable groups to other agencies

Useful Contact Details

Use of Local Authority Fixed Penalty Protocol as a parental measure to improve pupil attendance in accordance with the Department of Education **School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures Statutory Guidance January 2015**

This policy is based on the Department for Education document

'School Attendance : statutory guidance and departmental advice' October 2014

Legal Framework:

The Education Act 1996 ;

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;

The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011. ;

Crime and Disorder Act 1998;

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003; The Education Act 2005;

The Education and Inspections Act 2006;

The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments; and

The Education and Skills Act 2008. The Equality Act 2010

Appendices :

Staffordshire Code of Conduct for Issuing Fixed penalty notices

Department for Education **Guidance –Pupil Attendance** including use of national codes to record attendance or reasons for absence in registers

School Leave of Absence' request form

Colour coded letters to parents related to levels of attendance

NAHT guidance on 'exceptional circumstances'.

EWW referral letters

Signatures and Date of Review:

Policy Approved by Governing Body on: 21st September 2015

Policy Reviewed 23rd September 2019

Review date: September 2020

Signed:

Linda Perry Chair of Governors

Elaine Curtis Headteacher

NAHT Guidance on 'Exceptional Circumstances'

There is some debate about what 'exceptional circumstances' means when deciding whether to grant absence for students during term time. We believe it is valuable to have some guiding principles to back schools in their decisions and provide consistency. This guidance has no statutory authority and is not imposed upon schools.

1. The decision to authorise absence is at the Headteacher's discretion based on their assessment of the situation. Circumstances vary from school to school and so there can be no absolute rules on this subject.
2. Term times are for education. This is the priority. Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together, including weekends and school holidays. Heads will rightly prioritise attendance. The default school policy should be that absences will not be granted during term time and will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
3. If an event can reasonably be scheduled outside of term time then it would not be normal to authorise absence.
4. Absence during term time for holidays/vacations is therefore not considered an exceptional circumstance.
5. Absences to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Children may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives.
6. Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.
7. Absences for important religious observances are often taken into account but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
8. Schools may wish to take the needs of the families of service personnel into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
9. Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for students with special educational needs or disabilities.
10. Families may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.
11. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when making decisions.
12. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Attendance flow chart – review lists weekly

Step 1: School to contact parent / carer by phone or text if a reason for absence is not known or you are concerned about patterns of absences or persistent lates.

Step 2: Send persistent absence letter home to parents (first warning) and offer a meeting in school to discuss any concerns the parent may have and also make arrangements to home visit if the child has not been seen in school and no contact has been made by parents/carers.

If attendance is still a concern

Step 3: State in letter that medical evidence will be required to be seen by school if there are subsequent illnesses. If the child continues to be absent after this point and no medical evidence has been provided, this must be coded as unauthorised (O).

Step 4: send third letter with a copy of attendance certificate and invite parents into school for a meeting with head or deputy head teacher and Education Welfare Worker. Also, make arrangements to home visit if the child has not been seen in school and no contact has been made by parents/carers.

If attendance is still a concern

Step 5: Attendance Clinic meeting with parents, school and Education Welfare, Early Help Assessment to be completed at the meeting with action plan and refer to LST if required and with parental consent.

Step 6: If an LST referral has not already been made and the child's attendance has reached 20 unauthorised absences, (including absences where the child has arrived after registration has closed and these are recorded as U - these do not have to be consecutive), refer to EWW for statutory intervention

If you are concerned about the child's wellbeing and a reason has not been provided for absence then please contact LST duty for advice.

If you document when these letters were sent and save copies of attendance certificates then all evidence will be ready if statutory intervention is required.

Targeted Services

(District Office Address inc LST no)

(District Office Address)

(District Office Address)

(Post Code)

Telephone: (Tel no)

* Restricted*

Facsimile: (fax no)

E-mail: (EWO name) @staffordshire.gov.uk

Website: www.staffordshire.gov.uk

Please ask for: (EWO name)

Name

Address

Address

Address

Post Code

My ref: EWO18/

Your ref:

Date:

Dear Insert Parents/Guardians Name

Re: Name of Pupil Date of Birth School

Education Act 1996 and the Children Act 1989 – School Attendance

It is reported to me that your child, Insert Pupil's Name, who is a registered pupil at Insert Name of School School, has been in irregular attendance.

From time-to-time it is necessary for the Education Welfare Officer to investigate a child's absence from school. You are therefore requested to attend, personally, with Pupil's Name, to explain the reason for this irregularity at:-

- Venue
- Date
- Time

I am bound to inform you that this matter should be treated seriously, that if appearance is not made, or if the reasons given for this irregular attendance are unsatisfactory, it may become necessary for the Education Welfare Officer to take further steps to secure regular attendance at school. These steps would include legal proceedings, which if the case is proven, could mean a fine of £1000 or an Education Supervision Order being placed on the family. I trust that the Education Welfare Officer will not have to resort to such extreme measures.

Yours sincerely

EWO Name

Education Welfare Officer

Name of Parent
Address
Address
Address
Post Code

My ref: EWO1.7/

Your ref:

Date:

Dear Parent/s Name

Re: Name of Pupil Date of Birth School

Education Act 1996 and the Children Act 1989 – School Attendance

As you were unable to be present at the Attendance Clinic,

- at School Name
- on Date of meeting.

This meeting was your opportunity to discuss any issues that may have affected your child's attendance.

I enclose an information leaflet on penalty notices and must advise you that any future absences from school may not be authorised without a medical note.

We will continue to monitor the attendance of Name of pupil and will contact you at a later date, if we decide to take the matter further.

Yours sincerely,

Penalty notice update January 2018

Ensuring your child has access to a good education is very important to us.

A key part of this is for all children and young people to regularly attend school, as this gives each learner the best chance to achieve their full potential. In light of the recent Isle of Wight court case and the subsequent Supreme Court ruling on school absences, we wanted to clarify our position for parents where there may be the potential for any ambiguity and to also ensure we are fully compliant with legal requirements.

As a result, we have made a few changes to our previous guidance to schools, parents and carers regarding absence from school. The new guidance will come into force from **1 January 2018** and is detailed below:

Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time

From 1 January 2018 **any** period of unauthorised leave may result in you as a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. Your head teacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by your head teacher to the local authority.

Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. **This has now changed to 10 marks**, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. You are therefore encouraged where possible to ensure your child attends school on time. However, if your child is late you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

If your child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve week period, you may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

These changes have been agreed with local head teachers and have been implemented to help promote and support good attendance to school. Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the council's website www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education.

The vast majority of children and young people in Staffordshire have an excellent record of school attendance, and we recognise the efforts of so many parents to ensure their children attend school regularly.

The Local Authority will continue to take appropriate action for absences during term time when we are notified by head teachers, both to support them in their role and to ensure local children can continue to achieve the best possible outcomes from attending local schools.

