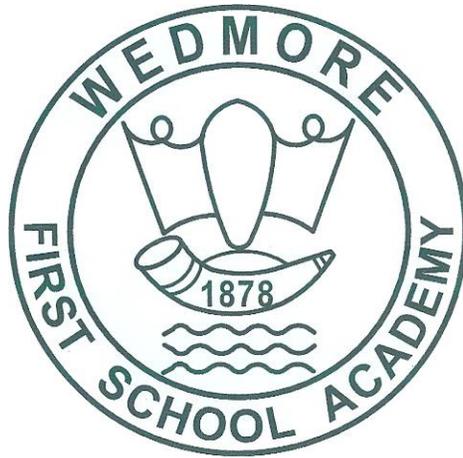


Wedmore First School Academy



Attendance Policy

Date: November 2017

Review Date: November 2019

Wedmore First School Academy

Attendance Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out how Wedmore First School Academy monitors and promotes the attendance and punctuality of its pupils.

Wedmore First School Academy is committed to maximising the potential of every child and excellent attendance and punctuality are essential to this aim. We feel this will be achieved, with the support of parent/carers, by ensuring that leaves of absence will not be routinely taken in term time. Absence during term time, for any reason, interrupts the continuity of teaching and learning and disrupts the educational progress of pupils.

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive efficient full time education. The amended Education Regulations 2013, make clear that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The information below highlights how attendance can affect your child's future.

Above 97%: Less than 11 sessions of absence over the year
Excellent attendance! These pupils will almost certainly get the best grades they can, leading to better prospects for the future.
96-97%: 11-19 sessions of absence over the year
These pupils are likely to achieve good grades and form a habit of attending school regularly. Getting it right now will make the transition to Middle School easier.
93-95%: 20-26 sessions of absence over the year
These pupils may make expected progress, but the missing sessions will have a negative impact on their education.
89-92%: 27-41 sessions of absence over the year
Pupils in this group are missing a month of a school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.

85-88%: 42-56 sessions of absence over the year

Pupils in this group are missing six weeks of school per year. The government classifies pupils in this group as “Persistent Absentees”, and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of pupils in this group could also face the possibility of legal action by the Local Authority.

All parents must actively encourage 100% attendance across a school year and should be aware that attendance is closely monitored.

Aims and Objectives of Wedmore First School Academy’s Attendance Policy:

Aims

- To create a school ethos where pupils are happy to attend school, in order to produce their best and maximise their potential.
- To promote pupils’ welfare and safeguarding.
- To establish a safe physical environment that values pupils’ emotional security.
- To establish positive working habits in relation to attendance and punctuality which will prepare pupils for the rigour of the world of work and life-long learning.
- To ensure that attendance figures are of the highest possible standards with excellent attendance being celebrated by the school.

Objectives

- To ensure that accurate attendance records are established and maintained.
- To establish clear systems and procedures for dealing with pupil attendance.
- To make clear to pupils, parents and staff their respective responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To enhance the learning partnership between pupils, parents and the school.
- To raise the profile of attendance as an issue relating to performance and achievement.
- To reward excellent attendance.
- To support those pupils and families who, for genuine reasons, may experience attendance problems.
- To interview where there is unexplained or persistence absenteeism to protect educational outcomes.

Parental and Academy responsibilities

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that a child is only off school through illness or in exceptional circumstances.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school daily of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school.
- If a child is taken out of school during the school day following the signing in and out procedures.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.
- Avoid family holidays during term time.

The school will:

- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- Annually inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils.
- Identify vulnerable pupils and work in partnership with families and other agencies to ensure that they are sufficiently supported.
- Be vigilant about possible Safeguarding issues associated with poor attendance.
- Ensure that vulnerable pupils including Pupil Premium children are monitored carefully to effect positive evaluation outcomes.
- Looked After Children (LAC) will be monitored carefully in line with their Personal Education Plan.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO). Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the EWO may result in further actions.

Reward for Excellent Attendance

Excellent Attendance will be promoted and celebrated in assembly.

A Platinum certificate will be awarded termly and annually to those pupils who have had achieved 97% attendance and Gold Certificates will be issued to those above 95%. Certificates are also issued to pupils who have significantly improved their attendance over a given period. Praise postcards are also sent home to recognise improved attendance.

Authorised Absence

The decision to authorise an absence and to record this in the register rests solely with the school as outlined in Department of Education Guidance10/99.

The reasons for absence must be clear and usually fall into one of the following categories:

- Illness
- Urgent medical or dental treatment
- Family bereavement
- Exceptional circumstances
- Fixed term or permanent exclusion
- Days set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's parent and the child belong
- Dual registration
- Travellers when travelling or engaged in a cultural activity
- Approved educational based activity
- Alternative provision off-site, organised by the school
- Medical tuition

Exceptional Circumstances

Although there is no absolute definition the Department of Education suggests Exceptional Circumstances may include:

- Forces staff returning from lengthy active service abroad.
- Police, Fire Service staff being told when they can or cannot take leave.
- If a close family member has a terminal illness and it may be a last chance to be together especially if the family member lived overseas.
- Parents having to work abroad for a fixed, minimum term period.

The Department of Education makes it clear that the Headteacher will use their discretion in determining the decision to authorise leave or not.

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is an unacceptable and unnecessary absence from

school. The school is responsible for authorising or unauthorising absences. The final decision for what is deemed unauthorised rests with the headteacher.

Examples of unauthorised absence are:-

- School refusal
- Post registration absence
- Lateness (except where LA transport cause the lateness);
- Holidays in term time
- Parentally condoned absence
- Truancy
- Inappropriate medical absence or no medical evidence provided
- Insufficient explanation given where the pupil is a persistent absentee or the school has made reasonable attempts to clarify the reason for absence.

Persistent and Unexplained Absence

Term Time Leave

Wedmore First School Academy does not permit term time leave, as to do so would be detrimental to our pupils' education. In line with Department of Education 2013 amendments:

- All requests to the head teacher for term time leave will be unauthorised, other than for exceptional circumstances. A letter will be sent explaining the reasons why the holiday is agreed or refused.
- All requests for holiday leave should be made at least 4 weeks in advance.
- In exceptional circumstances a holiday may be authorised by the head teacher, at their discretion. A letter will be sent confirming the authorisation.
- The school will not automatically grant term time leave, even for exceptional circumstances, if a child's attendance record is below 95%.
- Where parents remove their child for an unauthorised holiday, this will be recorded in the school attendance register as unauthorised absence. This matter and/or accrued other unauthorised absence will result in a warning notice being issued by the school. Parents will be warned that this and any further incidents may be referred to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

Local Authority (LA) Educational Welfare Officer Service

Intervention from the Education Welfare Officer may include:

- At a request from the school, the support of the LA's statutory legal duties.
- A warning Penalty Notice.
- A Penalty Notice (This may include unauthorised holidays.)

- The above may result in fines and parental prosecution.
- *Any Penalty Notice unpaid is taken to the Magistrates court as failure to secure the regular attendance of their child. If found guilty of such an offence, parents/carers might receive a criminal conviction and a potential fine of up to £1,000.*
- The LA cannot over turn a school's decision not to authorise term time leave. There is no right of appeal.

The Head teacher will liaise as necessary with the EWO. Attendance data will be examined and individual pupils targeted for improvement and support.

Repeated Absence

For Traffic Light Ladder of Consequence and Support (see Appendix 1).

Medical Absence

Parents are requested to:-

- Telephone or email the school on the morning of absence before 9.25 am if their son/daughter is ill.
- Endeavour to confine medical or dental appointments to out of school hours where possible.
- If their child has a medical appointment, supply the office with a copy of the card/letter.
- Collect their child, in the event of illness when the school office will call home. The pupil must be signed out of school.
- Return their child to school after their medical/dental appointment.
- Share relevant medical information with the school to ensure that pupils can access education and be fully supported.
- *A medical form, obtained from the office, must be completed in writing, before any medicine can be routinely administered by staff to pupils in school.*
- Keep the school informed of any significant medical issues which are likely to affect attendance or progress at school. In some cases of prolonged absence through medical reasons, the school will devise an educational plan to reflect the individual pupil's needs. This may also include a reintegration plan on return to school. For pupil's with poor attendance, medical evidence may be required to support absence and without this the school may not authorise absence. Evidence could be:- an appointment card or a copy of a prescription to satisfy our records. When no evidence can be presented, this may result in a referral to our EWO.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. For school the doors are open from 8.45 am.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- Registration takes place at 9.00 am and pupils who arrive after 9.05 am will be recorded as late to school.
- Registers close at 9.30 am and after this lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.15pm in Key Stage 1 and 1.40pm in Key Stage 2.
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with by the Headteacher and may be referred to EWO.
- Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

Pupil Leaving During the School Day

During school hours the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are throughout the day.

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to confirm in writing, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.

Attendance is automatically recorded electronically on the school database. Attendance records are sent home to parents with their child's annual report. Any other correspondence related to attendance will be copied to the students' individual file. A hard copy of the school's attendance record is printed and kept on file for a period of five years.

Pupils new to the academy can be placed on roll once information has been received from their previous school.

Pupils can only be taken off roll:-

- Once confirmation has been received from the pupil's new school or college.
- If they have been permanently excluded and their new provision has been confirmed by the LA.
- If the parent has informed you in writing that they are electing to educate at home. In this instance the LA should be informed and take an active part in monitoring the educational provision.

Missing Children

If a pupil or family seemingly disappears, the school will comply with the Government guidelines in that every attempt will be made to make contact with the family and ascertain a forwarding address/school. In such cases a 'Missing In Education' form is completed and forwarded to the LA. In such cases the school will liaise with the EWO and take advice from them as to when it is appropriate to remove them from the role. Where a child is deemed missing the students' record should be passed to the LA via the EWO.

Dissemination

The policy is published on the school website.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The effectiveness of this policy is monitored by the Headteacher who will seek evidence from:

- Fortnightly reviews/meetings with the school Attendance Assistant.
- Regular reviews where there is cause for concern over attendance with the Local Governing Body's Attendance and Admission Committee.
- The termly and annual report to Governors.
- The publication of annual attendance figures.
- Analysis of attendance data over time.

The Attendance Policy is reviewed on a two year cycle by the Governors or in the light of new legislation pertaining to attendance.

Approved by Governing Body on 22nd November 2017

Date for Review November 2019

PROMOTING EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE

% Attendance	Actions	Support
<p>96%+</p> <p>SAFE ZONE:- Attendance will be monitored and reviewed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage parents and pupils of the importance of good patterns of punctuality and attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent Attendance celebrated in school through individual pupil certificates • Praise postcards • School Report
<p>95- 91%</p> <p>SLIDING ZONE (this could include authorised and/or unauthorised absence).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage parents and pupils of the importance of good patterns of punctuality and attendance • Remind parents and pupils of attendance targets (96%+) • Parents inform school of any barriers to improving attendance and achieving excellent attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter may be sent to parent/carer to inform them that their child is not meeting the attendance target • May be a meeting/verbal communication with parent/carer where there are concerns or a pattern of non-attendance • May set and agree an action plan to support improvement in attendance • School Report
<p>90% and below</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Welfare Officer may contact parents/carers • Parents/carers may be requested to provide evidence they have sought medical advice before further absences due to illness will be authorised by school • Multi agency involvement • Records kept of interventions • Consideration of a referral to the Local Authority for possible legal action against parents/carers ie. Penalty Notice, Fast track to Attendance, 15 Day Notice to Improve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter sent to parents/carers from school and Education Welfare Officer, informing them their child's attendance is a cause for concern • May be a school meeting/verbal communication/home visit from Education Welfare Officer to discuss barriers to attendance and agree an action plan for improvement • May involve Education Welfare Officer in supporting parents/carers in regard to the legalities of regular school attendance.