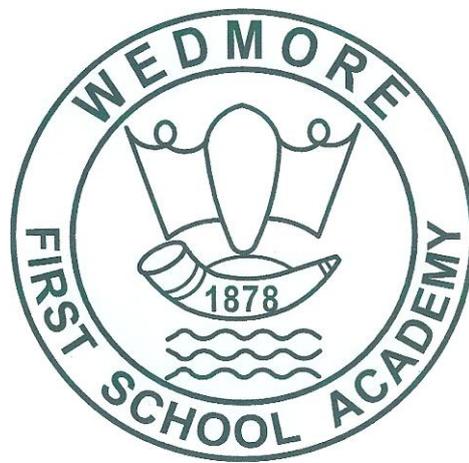


# Wedmore First School Academy



2014/15

## **Attendance Policy**

## **Aims**

Our attendance policy aims to:

- create a school ethos where pupils are happy to attend;
- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

This policy has been devised in consultation with Staff, Governors, Children and Parents.

## **Being at school**

The Department of Education expects all schools to achieve 96% attendance rate. School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

## **Expectations**

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school every day;
- attend school punctually;
- attend appropriately prepared for the day.

**We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- 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;

Examples	Authorised absences	Unauthorised absences
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• genuine illness of the pupil;</li> <li>• hospital/dental/doctors appointment for the pupil;</li> <li>• major religious observances;</li> <li>• visits to prospective new schools;</li> <li>• external exams or educational assessments;</li> <li>• family bereavement;</li> <li>• exceptional circumstances;</li> <li>• fixed term or permanent exclusion;</li> <li>• dual registration;</li> <li>• travellers when travelling;</li> <li>• approved sporting activity;</li> <li>• alternative provision off-site, organised by the school;</li> <li>• medical tuition.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park;</li> <li>• a birthday treat;</li> <li>• oversleeping due to a late night;</li> <li>• looking after other children / other family member;</li> <li>• appointments for other family members;</li> <li>• missing lessons;</li> <li>• school refusal;</li> <li>• post registration absence;</li> <li>• lateness (except where LA transport cause the lateness);</li> <li>• holidays in term time;</li> <li>• parentally condoned absence;</li> <li>• truancy;</li> <li>• inappropriate medical absence or no medical evidence provided;</li> <li>• insufficient explanation given where the pupil is a persistent absentee or the school has made reasonable attempts to clarify the reason for absence;</li> <li>• persistent and unexplained absence.</li> </ul>

- contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school;
- 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.

**We expect that the school will:**

- provide a welcoming atmosphere;
- provide a safe learning environment;
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns;
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality;

- contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. 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;
- regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils;
- make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly;
- meet regularly with the Education Attendance Officer (EAO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality;
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the EAO. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the EAO may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order;
- to ensure that vulnerable pupils including Pupil Premium children are monitored carefully to effect positive evaluation outcomes;
- be vigilant about possible Safe Guarding issues associated with poor attendance;
- Children Looked After will be monitored carefully in line with their Personal Education Plan;
- will notify EAO after 10 days unexplained absence.

### **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 8.50 am.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- Registration takes place at 8.55 am and pupils who arrive after 9.05 am will be recorded as late to school.
- Registers close at 9.15 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 EAO.
- 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 during the school 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.

## **Leave of Absence**

The school holiday dates and end of Key Stage 1 Assessment dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence will not be authorised during these assessment periods. INSET days are published as soon as the school have agreed these, but may be subject to change.

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations (appendix 1), holidays during term time will NOT be authorised. The Headteacher and Governors have determined that:

- in exceptional circumstances permission may be granted for a maximum of five days of holiday providing your child has a good (95% or higher) attendance record over the previous three terms;
- where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher on behalf of the school governors, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the pupil's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year;
- if leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the EAO will be notified.

## **Penalty Notices**

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave and may also be issued if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

## **Penalty Notices for Holidays**

In accordance with guidance from Somerset County Council all holidays during SATS period will not be authorised by the school and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note the following:

- the Headteacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school for 5 or more days holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation;
- the amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days;
- if the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

Penalty notices are issued to each parent, for each child.

## **Local Authority (LA) Attendance Service**

The Local Authority has responsibility to deliver the LA's statutory duties to:

- ensure that parents/carers enable their children to receive a full-time education appropriate to their age, ability and any special educational needs, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise;
- undertake legal proceedings in respect of the LA's statutory responsibilities;
- regulate child employment;
- advise on child protection.

The Headteacher will liaise on a regular basis with the EAO. Attendance data will be examined and individual pupils targeted for improvement, support and through a fortnightly meeting.

## **Failure to ensure regular school attendance**

The Headteacher and Attendance Assistant of Wedmore First School Academy and Nursery hold regular attendance meetings to review attendance of all pupils. Any parents whose children are identified as a cause for concern will be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher. If there is no improvement in school attendance Wedmore First School Academy and Nursery will refer to EAO who works in partnership with school and parents in support of pupils who are failing to attend school on a regular basis.

The EAO may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their Child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or the EAO. Before a Penalty notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

### **Medical Issues**

Parents are requested to keep the school informed of any significant medical issues which are likely to affect attendance or progress at school. The school is willing to liaise with the family GP or medical services. Prolonged absences should be covered by a medical certificate (GP's charge for this service). In cases of prolonged absence through for medical reasons the SENCO will devise an education plan to reflect the individual pupil needs. This may also include a reintegration plan on return to school. Pupils with poor attendance will be required to certificate any absence from the school by a Medical Practitioner.

### **Rewards**

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.

### **Missing Children**

If a pupil or family seemingly disappears the school complies 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 EAO and take advice from them as to when it is appropriate to remove them from the role. Where a child is deemed missing the pupil's record should be passed to the LA via the EAO.

This policy is published on the school website with copies of the graduated letter response parents will receive then there are concerns about their child's attendance.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The effectiveness of this policy is monitored by the Attendance and Admissions Committee of the Governing Body.

The Attendance Policy will be reviewed on a two yearly cycle by the Attendance and Admissions Committee or in the light of new legislation pertaining to attendance.