

A decorative graphic featuring three blue circles of varying sizes and two thin blue lines. One large circle is at the top center, a smaller one is below it to the right, and a large light blue circle is at the bottom right. Two thin blue lines intersect to form a 'V' shape, with one line passing through the top circle and the other passing through the middle circle.

Whartons Primary School Attendance Policy

Date of Policy: **October 2022**
Member(s) of staff
Responsible: **Pupil Support Sub Committee**

Review Date: **October 2023**

INTRODUCTION

The Whartons Attendance Policy intends:-

- to raise attainment and achievement levels by having high expectations of attendance;
- to work effectively with parents and other partners to maintain high attendance levels
- maintain high expectations in relation to attendance; all children should be aware that every day counts and that their attendance is important;
- to encourage and celebrate good attendance through our reward systems.

We believe that a child's attainment and achievement depends on regular presence in school. Any absence leads to missed learning and may cause difficulties with social relationships. This in turn can encourage an increased pattern of non- attendance. Encouraging good attendance is the shared responsibility of the school including governors, the parent and Children Leeds.

- The school agrees an attendance policy and ensures parents are provided with the information they require to ensure their child attends school regularly,
- Parents have a responsibility to see that their children receive an appropriate education.
- The local authority is responsible, through its School Attendance Service, to ensure that pupils have access to an appropriate education and that the law is followed.

Any incidents of unexplained absence will be followed up to ensure any safeguarding concerns are explored and school will liaise with Children Missing in Education team (CME).

Safeguarding

A child may be at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses: Attendance; Behaviour Management; Health and Safety; Access to the Curriculum; Anti-bullying.

A pupil failing to attend Westgate on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

Child Missing Education

What is meant by Children Missing Education?

Children Missing Education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise (e.g. privately, electively home educated (EHE) or in alternative provision). CME is different to children missing or absent from home or care, however, in a small number of cases this may also apply.

We need to identify Children Missing Education to ensure that every child and young person has the opportunity to fulfil their potential and that they receive the universal services to which they are entitled to. We also need to make sure that they do not 'slip through the net' and stay safe from harm. Children Missing Education can be linked to (but not always) concerns about safeguarding, health, domestic violence, forced marriage, child sexual exploitation, child trafficking, female genital mutilation or behavioural issues. The law requires us to know where all children are and what school they attend even if they have left the country. Clause 4 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on the local authority to identify children missing education and a new section 436A of the Education Act 1996 (school attendance) requires all local authorities to make arrangements to establish (so far as is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are not receiving a 'suitable education'.

It is the responsibility of school to act when they are aware of or believe that a child is missing from education.

Actions Necessary:

1. Reasonable enquiries should be made in the first instance and as much basic information should be collated as possible including names, addresses, contact details, emails, details of other family members, friends etc. before the Children Missing Education Team in the local authority is notified.

2. Schools should act quickly to make all reasonable enquiries to try and ascertain the child's whereabouts to prevent the child becoming CME.
3. If the child's whereabouts are still unknown, the school should complete a Child Missing Education referral form and email to the CME Team within four weeks of being aware that the child is missing from school. Schools should include information about any specific concerns they might have about the child.
4. Parents must tell the school if they no longer need the child's school place (whether leaving the school, local area or the UK), even if leaving for a short period of the time.

Who are the key contacts?

Children Missing Education Officer mike.belford@leeds.gov.uk Tel: 07891 272301

Children Missing Education Officer tina.sinclair@leeds.gov.uk Tel: 07891 270313

Notifications and referral forms should be sent by email to: cme@leeds.gov.uk

Enquiries to the email address or the CME helpline Tel: 0113 3789686

Appendices:

- Pupil Movement Form
- CME Referral Form
- CME referral form guidance

REGISTRATION AND PUNCTUALITY

- Registration takes place between 8.55 and 9:05. Registers are completed on SIMS in the classroom on a PC.
- Parents of any child absent without a reason will receive a standard absence text by 09:30 sent by school office staff. Y6 and Y5 will be texted first as they are allowed to walk to school unaccompanied, and this will usually be by 09:15.
- Children arriving after registration will need to come in at the school office a late mark placed in the register in SIMS, along with a reason for their lateness. Time of arrival of children who arrive late persistently (more than three sessions in a week) will be monitored and their parents contacted, initially by the Learning Mentor or class teacher.
- If there is no improvement in punctuality, parents will then be contacted by the Head teacher
- Registers close at 09:30 and any child arriving after this time will be marked as late after the registers closed and this is classed as an unauthorised absence.

USE OF DATA

- We believe that the efficient and speedy collection of the data is essential to the development of effective strategies for action. Class teachers and office staff ensure that individual absence and lateness at school is logged electronically in a timely fashion.
- The learning mentor monitors the registers on a weekly basis. Concerns are then shared with the head teacher who will take appropriate action, including phoning or writing to the family. The accurate collection means that data can be interrogated and patterns of lateness and absence and trends by Year Groups, seasonal patterns and the pattern and nature of unauthorised absence identified, supporting school and families to tackle underlying issues.
- Letters home for children falling below the nationally defined attendance threshold for persistent absenteeism are used to inform parents and raise awareness of issues with attendance, in the Spring term and Summer term (see appendix 1). The threshold is currently 90% ('Persistent absenteeism') Follow up letters are sent when an improvement is achieved (see appendix 2).

- Governors receive an update on overall school attendance data at each full governing body meeting as part of the head teacher's report.
- Parents receive a full attendance summary for their child as part of their annual report at the end of the Summer term. This includes information about punctuality, authorised and unauthorised.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

- Authorised absence is where the school accepts there is good reason for absence. An authorised absence requires a written or telephone communication from the parent/carer. A child's own word cannot be taken as reason for absence. Virtually all parents telephone the school and inform staff of reasons for pupil absence. Email should not be used to communicate absence as these messages may not be picked up at the start of the day.
- If this is not the case, the school office will send a text on the first day of absence asking parents to provide a reason for absence and request that parents keep school informed should the absence continue. It is important that parents/ carers are aware of absences and lateness and of their responsibility to account for all such events.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Unauthorised absence is any absence which does not fall into the following categories:

- a) Absence caused by illness or other unavoidable cause. If a child has higher than average absence rate parents should be asked to provide medical information.
- b) An approved absence for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs.
- c) Special circumstances approved by the Head teacher.
- d) For information concerning extended leave see section below.

EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

- Each school expects that parents will take their holidays during the approved school breaks. It should be noted that there are 175 days each year when a child is on holiday from school.
It is not a parental right for a child to be absent from school on holiday during term-time.
- There are very few circumstances in which leave of absence can be granted, according to DfE and local policy. If a parent/ carer takes their child out of school when leave of absence has NOT been granted, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- If a child has 10 or more consecutive or non-consecutive sessions (or 5 days) which have been recorded as unauthorised absence, this will be referred to the attendance team for a fixed penalty notice, in line with local authority guidance. This has been agreed by governors and is reflected in all documentation provided for new and existing children. The expectations are regularly publicised to parents through the school newsletter. (See appendix 3 for the absence request form.)
- When a child has been reported as absent due to illness but the school has reasonable grounds to suspect that they were in fact on holiday, the head teacher will first approach the parent/ carer about the issue. If the matter is not resolved, school will ask for proof of absence due to illness and the case will be referred for a penalty notice if none is forthcoming.

6 PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM DEFINITION

- The school follows the Department for Education definition for Persistent Absenteeism which is an attendance rate of 90% or less.

7 ACTION

The following procedures will be followed:

1. Child's unexplained absence: First day text by 09:30 (09:15 for Y5/6)
2. Continued absence of three days or more: Follow-up call
3. A pattern of absence or absence falling below 90% over a term: Letter to parent/ carer (appendix 1).
4. Failure to improve attendance over a period of weeks: Parental Agreement, which can lead to the involvement of the Attendance Adviser
5. Persistent lateness: letter to family, followed by meeting then referral to Attendance Adviser when meeting with the family has proved ineffective
6. Persistent infringements: referral to the Attendance Adviser which could lead to fixed penalty notices or ultimately court proceedings which could lead to fines or parenting orders.

The key leaders in the implementation of this policy are:

- The **Head teacher** who will set school attendance target, monitor data contact parents formally in writing or by telephone to raise concerns over attendance or punctuality
- The **Learning Mentor** who will monitor attendance on a daily basis, support individual children to improve their punctuality and attendance, make initial contact with a family for any unexplained absence and share concerns with the Head Teacher.
- The **Class Teacher** will ensure the register is completed promptly and accurately, and that the Learning Mentor/ Head Teacher are alerted promptly of any concerns.
- The **admin assistant** who will collate all data accurately and promote consistency throughout the school.
- The **Office Manager** and **admin assistant** who manage absence texts.

8 REWARDS

□ The importance of good attendance is regularly promoted during lessons and assemblies. The whole school initiative 'Otleypoly' encourages positive reinforcement of good attendance and children working together with their peers to promote class 'good overall attendance' and secure class rewards.

10 SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents have a responsibility for ensuring their child attends school regularly and punctually. School therefore ensures that parents are provided in advance of a child starting with the necessary information from the school which would enable them to meet their obligations. This includes:

- the times of the school day;
- school dates and holidays;
- school procedures relating to attendance and punctuality;
- school expectations regarding lateness;
- prompt communication of matters causing concern;
- making the leave of absence policy clear.
- This policy was updated in Autumn 2022 and will be reviewed in Autumn 2024, or earlier if legislation or government policy changes.

Signed : Head teacher

Signed: (on behalf of the governing body)

Date: 4/10/2022