



## Whitley Park Primary and Nursery School

### ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Whitley Park we take attendance seriously as it is the cornerstone of achievement. We expect regular and prompt attendance and we work in partnership with parents and pupils to ensure this is achieved. As outlined in [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#) (DfE, April 2023), we recognise that that being absent, as well as missing, from education can be a warning sign of a range of safeguarding concerns, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or child criminal exploitation. Therefore, monitoring attendance and punctuality is given high priority as one of our safeguarding responsibilities.

#### Our attendance policy:

The School will:

- **Expect** every child to attend on time, every day throughout the school year.
- **Ensure** parents understand the positive impact good attendance has on a child's achievements and well-being.
- **Support children and families** to overcome barriers affecting pupil attendance
- **Challenge** poor attendance and lateness taking legal action where appropriate.
- **NOT** authorise any holidays taken during term time except in exceptional circumstances.

#### AIMS OF THE POLICY

- To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning.
- To complement effective safeguarding practice, including:
  - Protect children from maltreatment;
  - Prevent impairment of children's health or development;
  - Ensure children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
  - Take action to enable all children to have the best outcomes

#### OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- For attendance to be at least in line with national figures
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers
- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days

#### SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school
- Support families who require targeted intervention
- Maintain appropriate attendance data

- Have appropriate registration processes in place
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences
- Complete systematic daily records which chart absence, lateness and attendance at alternative provision
- Collaborate with the ASW (Attendance Support Worker) and other external professionals, including social workers, to support their work with pupils as necessary
- Submit termly attendance reports to the LOCAL AUTHORITY
- Ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- Promote good attendance through rewards and recognition

See **Appendix 1** for attendance monitoring activities

## **PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Prepare children to be in class ready for learning by the start of each school day at 8:45 a.m.
- Inform school on every day of any absence
- Make applications for leave in writing on the school's 'Leave of Absence Form', giving the reason for the request
- Work with the school and ASW to improve lateness and attendance
- Avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day

## **THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

Daily register checking and follow up by the Attendance Officer will support the monitoring of pupil attendance.

### **School procedure for following up absences:**

- **First day absence:** *If parents/carers have not communicated with the school a first-day absence text will be sent*
- **Second day absence:** *A further attempt to contact parents by text will be made requesting parents contact the school immediately.*
- **Third day absence:** *A further attempt to contact parents by phone will be made. If the school is again unable to contact parents and if school staff are becoming concerned for the welfare of the child/children absent from school without a reason, the school may contact the police to arrange for a welfare check to be carried out at the home address or a home visit maybe made by the Attendance Officer and Welfare Officer*

The school Attendance Officer will log instances of absence and lateness and raise these weekly at the school Safeguarding Team meeting. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

**Stage 1:** Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will contact home.

**Stage 2:** If the concerns persist and/or attendance falls below 95% the Attendance Support Worker Service will write to the parents/carers and invite them to school for a meeting.

**Stage 3:** If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, school representative and the EWO.

**Stage 4:** If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local authority Educational Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues.

**Stage 5:** Where concerns meet threshold, the school will contact Children's Single Point of Access to complete a referral to Children's Social Care.

Please note that ultimately the Local authority can take legal action, including parenting orders, Education Supervision Orders and prosecution/fines.

See **Appendix 3** for Model of Challenge/Support

## **ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME**

- When a child starts Whitley Park Primary and Nursery, parents are given the following clear message: 'There are 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.'
- Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Request for leave of absence from school during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office.
- Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. We endeavour to meet with parents requesting leave of absence. Parent will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

## **LATENESS**

**Punctuality is an important life skill.**

- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils.
- Children must be in class by 8:45 each day. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken. Registers are closed at 9.00am. Children who arrive late must come into the building via the main office, where they will be entered into the late book after 9.00.
- Pupils who arrive after 9.30 will be marked with a 'U'. This equates to an absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- Lateness will be monitored by the Attendance Officer. Lateness is considered to be an equally serious absence. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to a meeting in school with the Attendance Officer to identify how this can be addressed and a plan will be agreed.

## **SICKNESS**

- Parents must notify the school on each day of the absence.
- Parents understand that the school - reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.

## **PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

We celebrate good attendance throughout our School by:

- Awarding an attendance bear in the Headteacher's weekly assembly to the KS1 and KS2 classes with the highest attendance for the previous week.
- By awarding individual certificates
- Entering the draw

- Offering seasonal incentives including raffle prizes for 100% attendance in a week. Names of children who have 100% attendance each week will be put into a termly prize draw. Each term, tickets will be drawn and the winners announced in assembly. This is designed to promote and encourage excellent attendance across the school.

## **THE ROLE OF THE Attendance Support Worker**

The Attendance support worker is an external partner service brokered through Brighter Futures for Children. Attendance Support Workers strive to support schools, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. The Education Welfare Service also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness. **Our Attendance support worker is Sylvia Hamilton.**

### **Persistent and Severe Absence**

Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), the school will work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils. Primarily, this focus will be on supporting children and families to overcome barriers that might be negatively affecting a child's ability to regularly attend school.

Focus will be given to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

This may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration reasonable adjustments to meet medical or SEND needs. In exceptional circumstances this might include the offer of an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

In all cases, the school will carefully analyse patterns of both persistent and severe absence and make these a focus of regular data monitoring. In this way, the school will identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Challenging both persistent and severe absence is a recognised strategic priority of the school

## **CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION**

A child going missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect. Where a child is repeatedly absent from school, especially for long periods, it could indicate potential safeguarding issues such as travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage.

We monitor children that go missing, particularly on repeat occasions, and report them to the Designated Safeguarding Officer – following our normal safeguarding procedures.<sup>1</sup> If a child is missing for 21 days or more the school will notify the local authority ([CME@brighterfuturesforchildren.org](mailto:CME@brighterfuturesforchildren.org)).

We have both admission and attendance registers which all pupils are placed on.

We will inform the local authority of any pupil who has been deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system, e.g. home education.

- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within a reasonable distance of the school.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the school does not reasonably believe they will be returning at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.

We will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, as outlined in: [Keeping children safe in education 2023: statutory guidance for schools and colleges \(PDF\)](#).

## Suspensions and Exclusions

The school is committed to keeping children in school. However, there are occasions where suspension/exclusion is necessary to keep pupils/staff safe. If a child is suspended, the school will provide work for them to complete at home. If a child is excluded, the school will provide work for the first 5 days/until the child is offered a placement by the local authority.

## GDPR

This policy has been generated in line with the Data Protection Act 2018 and retention guidelines and is compliant with GDPR 2018.

## GOVERNORS MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The schools attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis. This policy will be reviewed by the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer and approved by Governors annually.

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Office use only:

### Appendix 1 - Attendance Monitoring

<u>Daily</u>	<u>Fortnightly</u>	<u>Termly</u>
<p>Registering children who are late after 9.00am</p> <p>Check registers at 9.30 (AM) and Nursery pm by 1pm.</p> <p>Text parents of missing children who have not contacted school to give a reason for absence (AM)</p> <p>After Day 3 with no contact consider making home visit (AM). A welfare call to 101 if no contact made.</p> <p>Discuss safeguarding concerns linked to attendance at weekly safeguarding meeting.</p> <p>Vulnerable pupils known to Children's Services -alert Social worker or family worker by email</p> <p>20 days post as missing on S2S</p>	<p>AM meet with ASW then HT to discuss target pupils and those causing concern and actions agreed</p> <p>Meet with parents of those children causing concern (under 90%). Set targets, review dates. Text reminder to attend.</p> <p>Feedback to teachers re medical threshold for child</p> <p>Trends report (AM) to be discussed at review meetings</p>	<p>Text to all parents/carers to remind them of first day of term</p> <p>Complete at a glance overview of the whole year group to pick up any pupils causing concern or where attendance has dropped. Communicate this to teaching staff for follow up calls/conversations</p> <p>Submit returns to Local Authority. Including details of children on part time timetables (AM)</p> <p>Review Termly Attendance Report to Govs (AM)</p> <p>Audit of registers (LOCAL AUTHORITY)</p>
<u>Governors</u>	<u>Local Authority involvement statutory responsibilities</u>	<u>Other aspects to check (AM)</u>
<p>Governors are responsible for monitoring updates on the progress of attendance percentages and any prosecutions/fines/ persistent absences</p>	<p>Liaison with Education Welfare Service re statutory involvement re attendance panels, parenting orders, Education Supervision Orders, fines, fixed penalty notices, prosecutions, missing children</p>	<p>Extended holidays when to take children off role</p> <p>Children missing in education</p>



## Appendix 2

### REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

**Please read notes below and complete all sections of the form**

This form is to be completed and forwarded to the Attendance Officer of the school. Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child/ren's regular attendance at school. The Head Teacher **may** authorise leave of absence but will consider the reasons for the request, the effect on the continuity of the child/ren's learning and overall attendance.

**Requests for leave of absence for family holidays are not authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances. Such cases must be discussed with the school prior to the leave being taken.**

Any application should be made **well in advance** and parents are strongly advised to apply for leave of absence **before** they confirm their holiday arrangements.

**Please be aware that if you take your child out of school for an unauthorised holiday during term time the Local authority is likely to issue you with a Fixed Penalty Notice.**

**A Fixed penalty Notice is issued per parent per child.**

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I request that leave of absence be granted to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher's Name \_\_\_\_\_

From (first day of absence) \_\_\_\_\_ to (last day of absence) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Have you already had leave in this school year? Yes/No

My child's punctuality and attendance are both good? Yes/No

Reasons why this leave of absence is being requested during term time: (Please complete this section)

.....

.....

**Decision:** Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Reason: .....

.....

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**Reply slip to be given to parent** Pupil Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The absence will be recorded as Authorised absence/Unauthorised Absence

Reason:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

