

Attendance Policy



Wheatley Hill Community Primary School

Author: *Alan Scarr*

Head Teacher: *Alan Scarr*

Chair Of Governors: *Jayne Dinsdale*

Date Written: *Sept 2022*

Adopted by Governing Body: *Nov 2022*

Date for Review: *July 2023*

Attendance Policy

Document History Log:

Author of document:	Alan Scarr	Job role:	Headteacher
Date document created:	Sept 2022	Approval by Governing Body:	November 2022

Annual Review History:

Task	Date Reviewed	Reviewed by	Signatories
First document review			
2 nd Review			
3 rd Review			
4 th Review			

Revisions Log:

Revision	Date of revision	Reason for revision	Resulting version number	Signatories

Attendance key contact List

Name	Role	Contact details
Alan Scarr	Head Teacher Designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance	support@whprimary.com 01429 820594
Ann- Marie Roy	School Attendance Officer	support@whprimary.com 01429 820594
Joy Hodgkinson	Deputy Head & SENDCo	support@whprimary.com 01429 820594

Who in school can help if you are experiencing difficulty / require help and support:

Name	Role / type of help	Contact details
Alan Scarr	Head Teacher Designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance	support@whprimary.com 01429 820594
Ann-Marie Roy	School Attendance Officer	support@whprimary.com 01429 820594
Joy Hodgkinson	Deputy Head & SENDCo	support@whprimary.com 01429 820594
Leanne Wilkinson	Department Leader – Explorers	support@whprimary.com 01429 820594
Dan Palmer	Department Leader – Trailblazers	support@whprimary.com 01429 820594
Leanne Devine	Department Leader – Pathfinders	support@whprimary.com 01429 820594
Jessica Stanners	Department Leader – Pioneers	support@whprimary.com 01429 820594
Laura White	Office Manager	support@whprimary.com 01429 820594

Introduction to our School Attendance Vision and Ethos

Wheatley Hill Primary

School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Why is regular attendance so important?

Being in school every day that it is open, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. There is a renewed national focus on maximising pupils' time in the classroom, as evidence shows that the students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school gain the best GCSE and A Level results.

Here's what the data shows:

Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment.

Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7% over the key stage, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.

Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils

who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.

Generally, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the key stage at KS2 and KS4, the lower the level of attainment at the end of the key stage.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Wheatley Hill Primary school is a caring, inclusive at the heart of the local community. Our school works tirelessly to enable all children (regardless of need) to access a mainstream educational offer. In order to support children to access and attend our school, we offer a wide range of support strategies from a free-flow entry to our substantial school based transport service.

In school, we recognise the important links between school attendance, safeguarding and achievement. Our staff work hard to ensure children are safe at school as well as providing additional learning opportunities for those children whose poor attendance is having an impact on their learning including the use of tutors.

This policy is supported by our policies on:

- SEN Policy
- School Transport Policy & Agreement
- School Accessibility Plan
- School Behaviour Policy
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Policy

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.



MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.



LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.



FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.



FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.



ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

1. Expectations

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

We will ensure that:

- All students have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Attendance is a priority across the school.
- Aspire to high standards on attendance.
- Students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of students.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.
- All students regardless of need, will be able to attend Wheatley Hill Primary school.

2. Attendance data

The school will rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

3. Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance

The school endeavour to support and understand attendance barriers that may challenge our families, we will discuss this with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and make a plan / otherwise agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

4. Facilitate support

Wheatley Hill Primary School will facilitate a wide range of support for families in order to allow children to access and attend school. This includes regular attendance meetings and parental agreements.

5. Formalise support

When absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. School will explain that, depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

6. Enforce

When all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance will be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Prior to this phase, parents / carers would have been offered:

- Regular attendance review meetings
- Parental / child contracts
- Potential offer of school transport
- Breakfast Club
- SEND IASS / EHN Team

General / frequently asked questions

When can children be absent from school?

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance
- Your local authority is responsible for arranging your child's transport to school and it is not available on that day or has not been provided yet; or
- You are a gypsy/traveller family with no fixed abode, and you are required to travel for work that day meaning your child cannot attend their usual school. In most circumstances, however, your child is required to attend another school temporarily during such absences.

These are the only circumstances where schools can permit your child to be absent.

What do I need to do if my child needs to be absent from school for one of those reasons?

You should contact their school as early as possible to explain why. If not, your child's school will contact you on the first morning of their absence to find out why.

All parents can request a 'leave of absence' for their child which gives them permission to be absent from school. Leaves of absence must be applied for before your child will be absent and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

Your child's headteacher has the final say over whether to approve the request and how long your child can be absent.

Their decision will be made after considering the specific facts and circumstances behind your request.

Can I take my child on holiday during term time?

Parents should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid requesting leaves of absence for holidays unless it is unavoidable.

As leave of absence is only granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely that your child's headteacher will agree a leave of absence for a family holiday.

If permission is refused and you keep your child off school on the days requested, you are likely to be committing an offence and be issued a fixed penalty notice or be prosecuted by your local authority.

Attendance Procedures and Absence Processes

Attendance and absence management

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

Our school promotes good attendance through:

- Weekly attendance Prizes
- Termly attendance raffles
- School Displays

Communication

The school requests that all parents please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital, that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to, for example medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance then we may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.



Wheatley Hill Primary – Registration & Pupil Absence Process

<u>Time</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Comments</u>
8:00 – 9:10	All Admin	<p><u>Check Voicemail & Answer Calls</u> Write messages & absences into Lategate book (Front Desk). Staff to give a detailed message i.e. caller, reasons etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure page divided
9:10am	CT	<p><u>Initial Registers Complete</u> All initial registers must be completed by 9.10am, DO NOT add any codes for absent pupils' that you don't have a reason for at this point. Please ensure your register is save at this point. Note - If teacher /staff member has been informed via office / message on yard that a child is absent then this can be added to SIMs and a SIMS comment added.</p>	
10:00am	CT	<p><u>Classroom Final Register Update</u> From 10:00am, complete a final check and mark any late or transport pupil's present. Mark any unknown absence as "0" - office staff will correct if changes are needed. There shouldn't be any "n" or missing marks at this point. Again, ensure your register is saved.</p>	
10:10am	All Admin	<p><u>Office Register Updates</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update SIMS registers with information from Lategate book • Add comments to pupil records as to why they are absent. • Update SIMS registers with information from School App • Add comments to pupil records as to why they are absent. 	
10:10am	AR	<p><u>School Fire Register</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print out whole school register. • Visit / telephone each class and manually check if missing mark pupils are correct. • Make changes if needed on paper copy • Deliver Paper register to fire point in school office. • Add paper register to "Grab Box" 	
10:15am	AR	<p><u>Update Registers Following Manual Check</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amend SIMS records to reflect any changes from manual check. 	
10:30am	AR	<p><u>Attendance Checks</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone call all children on PA / ME / Attendance Watch – Use Call Script • APP Message all parents not on PA / ME / Attendance Watch then Telephone on-going absences if no response. • Add a comment into pupil SIMS register with details of the call with parent including requests for ME. 	

On the first day of absence

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctors and dentist's appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

Periods of extended absence

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received, the school will continue to telephone daily and will request for medical evidence to verify the absence and take any relevant action in relation to assuring itself of the child's welfare. The school may also initiate a home-visit to "check in" with the family and visual confirm the welfare of the pupil (especially if contact with parents has been difficult to make).

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

Punctuality:

Registration time is at **9am** at which point the pupil entry gates will be locked and all pupils must enter by the main entrance. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to more formal action being considered).

If your child is late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (SIMs).

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions then the monitoring letter will be issued and the pupil's attendance monitored closely.

If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason then parents / carers will be invited into school for a supportive meeting to identify barriers to school attendance.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality a school / parental attendance contract will be introduced.

Help & Support

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer.

Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are only able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time.

An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school website or in person from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.

Pupils with specific needs

Our Attendance Policy accounts for the specific needs of pupils/pupil cohorts and we ensure that all support mechanisms are applied fairly and consistently and consider the individual needs of pupils/ families who have specific barriers to attendance.

In development and implementation of the policy, we consider obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Children Missing from Education

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that if you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.