

Wellesley Primary School

Attendance Policy

INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the education of all pupils. There is a strong link between attendance and achievement. The school is required to set an annual target for attendance which is monitored by Education Welfare and also the local authority. At Wellesley Primary School we provide an environment in which all pupils can feel safe, supported and valued for their individuality. We strive to enable all pupils to achieve at the best of their ability. To this end we work in partnership with staff, pupils, parents, governors and other relevant agencies in order to promote the aims of the policy.

AIMS

- To maximise attendance of all children.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated at the school.
- To monitor and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice.
- To work closely and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Service and multi-agency teams.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality :

- **Governors**
 - To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
 - To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.
- **Headteacher**
 - To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil and group and whole school attendance patterns.
 - To make a judgement in conjunction with the office staff as to whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
 - To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
 - To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and / or punctuality is an issue.
 - To provide governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
 - To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
 - To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.

- To coordinate with the Educational Welfare Office regarding providing work/education for children who are absent for sustained periods of time.
- **Class Teacher**
 - To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
 - To record the reasons for absence given to them on the appropriate recording sheet.
 - To respond promptly to any issue raised in the weekly analysis of registers by office staff.
 - To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.
- **Office Staff**
 - To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the SIMS Attendance Manager System.
 - To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
 - To contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish the reason.
 - To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child.
 - To make a judgement in conjunction with the Headteacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- **Education Welfare Officer**
 - To enforce the law regarding school attendance.
 - To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and monitoring individual children's attendance.

ADMINISTRATION

- The School uses Attendance Manager provided by SIMS to store and monitor it's legal responsibilities in relationship to attendance.
- Registers are a vital legal document and teachers are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers are returned to the school office after the closure of the registration period.
- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

ABSENCE

Lateness

- Pupils arriving after 8.50 am must report to the School Office so that their attendance can be recorded.
- Pupils arriving after the register has been closed at 9.00 am, will be considered as late.

- Pupils arriving after 9.30 am will be officially absent for the morning session. This will be considered an un-authorised absence unless a satisfactory reason is given, for example a doctors appointment.
- Action to address lateness will be taken. A letter will be sent to carers and parents of children who are late on a regular basis

Illness

- Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence to provide the reason for the absence and where possible on each subsequent day of absence. Parents/carers should provide a written explanation on their child's return to school.
- Where office staff are not made aware of the reason for a child's absence they will, wherever possible, contact parents/carers by telephone on the first day of absence.
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Headteacher should be informed.

Medical or Dental Appointments

- Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.

Holidays During Term Time

Holidays during term time are discouraged and where possible holidays should be taken during the school holiday periods.

The school may consider approving a request for pupils provided the following conditions are met:

- The child's attendance maintains 90% and above throughout the school year.
- The period of absence is not in Terms 1 and 5 (Due to the importance of settling into a new school year in Term 1 and school examinations in Term 5).
- That no more than 10 days holiday has been requested in one academic year.
- The child does not have more than 4 broken weeks in any one term.

If the holiday absence is not authorised because it exceeds the 10 day limit and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice for £100 (or £50 if paid within 28 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Applications to take a holiday or an occasional special day during term time will be considered on an individual basis and should be applied for using the holiday application form obtained from the school office.

Other Absence

Other absence from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made to authorise or un-authorise the absence.

REPORTING TO PARENTS AND CARERS

All absences both authorised, unauthorised absence and lateness will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of the academic year within their child's report.

REWARDS

- Children who achieve 100% attendance are presented with a certificate and sticker at the end of each term.
- Children who achieve 100% attendance at the end of the year are presented with an attendance prize.

ATTENDANCE CODES

The following codes will be used to indicate the reason for absence :

L	-	Late (between 9.00 and 9.30 or after 9.30 if authorised)
U	-	Late (after 9.30 – unauthorised absence)
M	-	Medical – hospital admission, dental, optician, hospital, doctors.
C	-	Other authorised absence – general illness, bereavement, family reasons
I	-	Illness
H	-	Authorised holiday absence
G	-	Unauthorised holiday – over 10 days
O	-	Unauthorised

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- Attendance data will be collected half termly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include children with : incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; lateness; periods of extended absence; periods of un-authorised ; and all children with attendance below 85%. This data will be discussed with the EWO as part of the regular termly meetings.
- The Headteacher and EWO will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance annually and the Headteacher will recommend an attendance target to the Governors.
- The Governors will set an annual target of attendance and unauthorised absence and review this annually at its first meeting.

Attendance Which is Cause for Concern

Parents /carers of children who have more than 4 broken weeks each term will be sent a standard letter informing them of the amount of time their child has been absent from school and the impact this may have had on their education (Appendix A).

Parents/carers of children who have had more than 5 broken weeks for two or more terms each year or whose attendance drops below 80% each year without good reason will be asked to attend an Attendance meeting with the Headteacher and Education Welfare Officer. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss support strategies which can be implemented to improve the attendance of the individual pupil.

If following the meeting, attendance does not improve The Headteacher with the support of the Education Welfare Officer may call the parents to attend an Attendance Panel meeting and Educational Welfare Support procedures may be implemented (See flow chart Appendix B).

Policy Reviewed: Spring 2011

Review date: Spring 2012

Appendix A: Letter to parents re Broken Weeks

Dear XXX

We recently carried out our termly attendance audit and we notice from our records that XXX had X 'broken weeks' (weeks with 1 or more absence) out of the XXX weeks last term. Our figures show that his overall attendance is XX%.

Research shows that above all else, broken weeks have the largest impact on children's attainment as they often miss a key lesson during the week. These absences may quite easily be the result of illness and authorised absences which will not be repeated next term.

However, the school will be monitoring all children whose attendance either falls below 85% or who have 4 or more broken weeks in a term.

The intention of this letter is not to alarm you'; it is likely that the absences have entirely genuine explanations. However, every child's education is important to us and as such we take a very robust line on monitoring any area which could potentially jeopardise the progress that they deserve to make.

Please feel free to contact the school should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Mr A J Lynham
Headteacher

Appendix B: Educational Support Welfare Procedures

