



WENSLEY FOLD CE PRIMARY ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE & PUPIL DISCRETIONARY LEAVE POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

The school values and recognises the uniqueness of each individual child and acknowledge their fundamental right to be educated to their full potential in a safe, secure and caring environment. The school, which has a Christian heritage, will, in partnership with parents and the extended community, aim to make each day count for all.

Rationale

Wensley Fold CE Primary Academy promotes the view that regular attendance is important to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our children.

Aims:

- To promote excellent attendance.
- To ensure punctuality.
- To raise the level of achievement.
- To provide an effective but manageable means of monitoring attendance for both groups and individuals.
- To be able to seek for school and/or provide for parents effective and prompt support for families experiencing difficulties over attendance.
- To raise awareness that unauthorised attendance and poor punctuality is not acceptable.

Guidelines:

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year unless there is a good reason for absence. There are 2 types of absence: -

- Authorised – where the school approves pupil absence. These absences may include sickness, hospital and emergency dentist appointments and religious holidays. Medical appointments should be arranged if possible out of school hours. Where this is not possible it is expected that the pupil will only miss part of the day and proof of appointment by letter or text will be required.
- Unauthorised – where the school will not approve pupil absence. These absences include shopping, going to the airport, visiting relatives, parent(s)/carer unwell, excessive appointments without notification.

Absence Procedures:

If a child is absent, parent/carer should call the school on the first day and leave a message on the absence line before 9:30am stating the reason and each subsequent day of absence. The school will then decide whether to authorise the absence. If authorisation were to be refused, for instance if the child was kept off school to celebrate a birthday, then the parent/carer would be informed.

If children are too ill to come to school during the day, they are also too ill to fulfil any evening commitments. If children are absent from school due to illness, they should not be playing out, going to the shops etc.

Response to absence:

- If any child has not been registered or the school has not been notified about a child's absence by 10:30am, the office staff will contact the parent/carer on the first morning.
- Any absence considered not to be a justified reason will remain unauthorised. A series of unauthorised absences will trigger a meeting with the Headteacher / Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator with penalty notices being issued after 5 unauthorised days absence.
- If a child has poor attendance then details will be passed to the Headteacher/Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator who will invite the parent in for a discussion. If this continues further the Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator will carry out an unannounced home visit.
- Children with 100% attendance for the term/year will be rewarded with a certificate
- Any child with an absence rate of under 90% are classed as persistent absentees and will have their records closely examined and drawn to the attention of the Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator. Children with an absence rate of between 90% and 95% will have their reasons for absence monitored by school.
- Letters will be sent to parents termly, making them aware that their child is classed as a persistent absentee. This will be monitored by the Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator.

Lateness:

- Children who are late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others.
- School starts at 8.45 am and all children should be **in the line ready for their class teacher to lead them into their classroom**. Any child arriving later than 8.45am should report to the main office where they will receive a late mark. Registers close at 9 am, after which the absence is marked as unauthorised. If they are accompanied by a parent/carer they should give the reason for the lateness which will be added to the register. The child will then join their class.
- After 2 episodes of lateness in a half term a letter will be sent to the parent(s)/carer with the aim of addressing the situation. If the situation does not improve the parent(s)/carer will be invited to a formal meeting with the headteacher/Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Attendance figures are analysed half termly by class, year group and whole school. Individuals are monitored if less than 95%.
- Attendance figures are shared with The Governing Body each term.
- All practices will be reviewed annually.

Weekly:

- The headteacher presents a 'Class of the Week' award to the best class in the weekly achievement assembly.
- Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator monitors those below 95%

Termly:

- Attendance statistics published in the newsletter.
- Each child with 100% attendance, including religious holidays, will be presented with a certificate at the start of the following term.
- Golden tickets are given to children whose attendance is 96% & punctuality is 100%. This would allow them early access to the club fair.

Procedures:

- Teachers complete the class register sheets using the codes in Appendix A. These codes can be filled in when the child returns from absence.
- The office staff enter into the system the register codes from the daily sheets and change any instances where children have left early for appointments.
- A log is kept by the Office staff of all children who arrive late, information is passed on to the Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator and a meeting is arranged with parents whose children are frequently late.

Completing the register:

The marking of registers can sometimes become so routine that its importance is lost. However incomplete or inaccurate registers are unacceptable for several reasons. Registers provide the daily record of the attendance of all children: they are documents that may be required in a court of law. They also contribute to the child's end of term report and to records of achievement. For these reasons all alterations should be accountable. See Appendix A.

What can parents/carer do to help?

- Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is away.
- Send a note when your child returns to school.
- Make appointments out of school hours.
- Do not allow your child to take time off school unless it is really necessary.

If you are worried about your child's attendance what can you do?

- Talk to your child, it may be something simple that can be cleared up easily.
- Talk to the staff at school.
- Send your child to school; we will let you know if they are really not well.

If it continues...

- The school will refer you to the Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator.
- You may contact the Pupil Wellbeing Coordinator who will work with you to resolve the situation.
- If attendance doesn't improve it could lead to a penalty notice being issued and/ or prosecution in the magistrates court.

Penalty Notices

A penalty notice may be issued for:

- Persistent late arrivals after the register has closed
- Parentally condoned absence
- Unauthorised leave 5 days in one term and/or 7 days over two consecutive terms.
- Unwarranted delayed return from authorised leave

The fine is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, if not paid it is £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If this is not paid within this time it may lead to prosecution in the Magistrates court.

Prior to issuing a penalty notice a warning letter will be issued and attendance will be closely monitored for a period of 15 school days.

All authorised absences are at the Headteacher's discretion and this decision is final.

Please encourage your child to have excellent attendance and a positive punctuality record as every day in school matters and the aim is to 'Make Each Day Count'.

Leave of Absence:

Parents should not book holidays in term time. Parents are not allowed to take their child out of school for a holiday.

Extended leave panel is held monthly, all unauthorised, fined and/or removed.

The governing body recognises that some parents will occasionally need to take their children away when school is in session. However, it believes these occasions should only be in extenuating circumstances.

Following new Government legislation only in **VERY EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES** for an emergency will discretionary leave of absence in term time be approved.

Examples of exceptional circumstances which could justify approval are:

- members of the armed forces who are returning home from active duties
- emergency services personnel (Police, Ambulance, Fire and Rescue) who are unable to take leave at certain times of the year
- other employees who are prevented from taking family holidays outside term-time, e.g. a parent working abroad on a fixed time-period contract
- the death of an immediate family member, e.g. parent or sibling
- a child or parent/carer receiving medical treatment abroad
- families who can evidence that they have experienced genuine disruption to their originally agreed return travel plans, e.g. severe weather conditions or civil unrest.

Evidence of a genuine emergency will be required by school. If your request is not approved and you take your child/ren out of school you will receive a penalty notice £60 per parent per child. There is also the possibility that your child/ren may be taken off the school roll and you will have to re-apply for admission.

Parents do not have an entitlement to take children out of school for a family holiday for up to 10 days. Requests for leave of absence will be considered by the Headteacher who recognises that discretion will need to be applied to each leave request according to individual circumstances.

Things to consider

- **Having time off school for family holidays is not allowed**; parents do not have an entitlement to take children out of school for a family holiday for up to 10 days.
- It is highly unlikely **ANY** leave of absence will be authorised for : children in Year 6 or Year 2;

children in other year groups during assessment periods; children in their first term of Reception (September – December)

- Long absences result in children falling behind with their school work which can impact on their overall progress.
- Some children have social difficulties when they return.
- Damaging effects can be minimised by:
 - *using existing school holidays.*
 - ***only taking your child out of school in an emergency for a short period of time***
 - *parents keeping any other absences to a minimum.*

What to do if you still need to take your child out of school during term time

1. Discuss the need for a request for leave of absence with the Headteacher at the earliest opportunity.
2. **Do not book any tickets until your leave of absence has been agreed by the Headteacher.**
3. Complete a leave of absence form (available from the main office) and return to school with a copy of flight tickets if going abroad.

Where appropriate a meeting will be arranged for you with the Headteacher and a Governing Body panel.

4. The factors taken into consideration are:
 - the purpose and circumstances of the visit;
 - the length of leave requested;
 - the overall attendance record of the child (this should be 95% or above);
 - if children are in Year 6 or Year 2 (year groups for statutory tests)
 - the age of the child;
 - the proximity of tests and assessments to the requested leave;
 - the child's educational needs and general welfare;
 - the child's ability to catch up on their education;
 - frequency and length of any previous requests.
 - if children are in other year groups during assessment periods.
 - if it is the first term of Reception (September – December)
5. The Headteacher confirms at the meeting whether your request will be authorised or not.

Outcome of the meeting with the parent/carers:

6. Where the request is approved, then school should notify the parents/carers in writing of the decision and confirm the agreed date by which the child will be expected to return to school. This letter should also inform the parents/carers of the actions which could be taken if they fail to return on time, e.g. issued with a penalty notice for unauthorised absence.
7. **Only at this stage, if your leave is authorised in writing, should tickets be purchased for the exact dates agreed with the Headteacher. Requests with open ended tickets will not be authorised.**
8. If the school does not grant permission, the Headteacher should write to the parents/carers explaining the reason why the request has been refused and warning

them of the potential consequences for failing to ensure their child's attendance at school, e.g. they may be issued with a penalty notice and/or their child might be removed from the school roll.

9. Tickets should be presented to the school for copying whether leave is authorised or not.
10. The application form is sent to the Inclusion Officer and a copy kept in school.

Procedure to be followed by the Headteacher when considering requests from parents/carers to authorise the absence of a pupil in order for them to receive medical treatment abroad:

- Seek clarification from parents/carers as to whether the child has been diagnosed with a long-term or recurrent illness;
- Discuss the most appropriate time to plan the treatment in order to help minimise disruption to the child's educational career, e.g. avoiding SATS and examination times;
- request the pupil's parents/carers to provide medical evidence from the child's UK hospital **consultant/paediatrician** to support approval of absence;
- ask parents for their consent to seek further advice from UK health professionals (e.g. school's health service) around potential further detriment to the child's health if the requested period of absence was not agreed and/or treatment is delayed because of concerns over the need to maintain continuity of education;
- request the pupil's parents/carers to provide a letter from the hospital consultant/paediatrician in the country where the child will be receiving treatment, specifying:
 - a. the nature of the medical problem;
 - b. the type of treatment to be undertaken, and
 - c. the estimated recuperation period needed before the child can be declared fit enough to safely return to the UK;
- secure agreement from the parents/carers that they will contact the school if anything delays their expected return;
- give due consideration as to whether the child or young person is likely to be placed at more risk by being out of the country and not receiving a suitable education.

In the majority of cases, after securing parental consent, the first point of contact should be the school nurse, who will liaise with community paediatricians and/or refer on as they see fit.

During and after your visit

- Agreed leave of absence is recorded as an **authorised** absence.
- Absence without permission from the Headteacher is **unauthorised**. After 5 days unauthorised absence a referral is made to the Inclusion Officer and a penalty notice will be issued by the Local Authority. The fine is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, if not paid it is £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If this is not paid within this time it may lead to prosecution in the Magistrates court.
- If the pupil does not return within 10 days of the agreed return date, this is regarded as unauthorised and the child's name may be removed from the school roll, with no guarantee of readmission.
- You are asked to contact school if anything delays your child's expected return; evidence of the delay will be required. This may or may not be accepted as a genuine reason for non / late return.
- Retrospective applications will not normally be considered for authorisation and could trigger a

penalty notice or child being taken off roll UNLESS genuine evidence of an emergency can be supplied on your return. In such a situation we would expect parents to contact school to communicate the reason for a child's absence.

All Leave of Absence is at the Headteacher's discretion and this decision is final.

Reviewed by the Governing Body November 2020

Signed..... Chair of Governors