

# WISBOROUGH GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved Spring 2011

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Reviewed September 2012, September 2013, September 2014, September 2015, September 2016 & September 2017, September 2018

**Review due September 2019**

## **Introduction**

Most parents want their children to get on in life. Children only get one chance at school, and their chance of a successful future may be affected by not attending school regularly. Poor attendees may not be able to keep up with school work or miss out on parts of the curriculum. This can affect their rate of progress and overall level of attainment. It is not only the academic work as missing out on the social side of school life can affect a child's ability to make and keep friendships. Setting good attendance patterns from an early age will also help children later on at secondary school. Arriving at school on time is also vital, as persistent lateness can be very disruptive for the child, the teacher and the other children in the class.

## **Expectations**

### **We expect that all pupils will:**

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Feel able to discuss with their class teacher or teaching assistant any problems preventing them from attending school

### **We expect all parents and carers to:**

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their children arrive punctually by 8.50am and prepared for the school day
- Contact the school whenever the child is unable to attend school
- Inform the school by 9.30am, at the very latest, on the first day of the child's absence and send a written note on their return to school, for absences of three or more days' duration
- Contact the school whenever any problems occur that may keep the child away from school
- Book family holidays during school holidays unless there is an exceptional circumstance
- Arrange wherever possible for medical appointments to be made outside school hours. If this is unavoidable, then the child should be taken out of school for the minimum amount of time possible.

### **We expect the school (staff and governors) to:**

- Encourage good school attendance and provide a safe and welcoming learning environment
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and monitor all pupils' attendance
- Contact the parents or carers as soon as possible when there is unexplained or irregular absence

- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) on one of their regular monitoring visits to the school, if not resolved with parents
- Work with the EWO if further action, such as court prosecution, is required. (Fine of up to £1,500 and/or three months imprisonment for each absent child)
- Keep parents informed about attendance issues and report annually to them on their children's attendance record
- Keep to Department of Education (DofE) and Local Authority (LA) guidelines.

The LA expects an **average of at least** 95% attendance of pupils. Our school target is set at 96.5% (Autumn Term 2017). This allows for an average of 6.5 days of authorised absence per child in each school year and should cover all absence including sickness, medical appointment and any other authorised absence. The LA is responsible for monitoring attendance through the EWOs. Ofsted will pay special attention to primary schools that have an overall attendance rate of less than 95%.

## **Holidays**

The school strongly advises parents and carers to book family holidays during the school holidays to minimise any disruption to their education. Absence will only be authorised in **exceptional** circumstances. Holidays should not be booked until the absence is authorised. The procedure for requesting holiday in school time is:

1. The parent or carer will make an appointment to meet the Headteacher to discuss proposed absence.
2. The parent or carer will obtain a "Request for Absence from Learning" form and information sheet from the school office.
3. The parent or carer will fill in and return the form, which should include a full explanation of why the request is exceptional. Parents may submit a separate letter if they wish.
4. The Headteacher will decide whether to authorise the absence in line with this policy and DofE guidelines. The Headteacher will consider:
  - The form and any letters from the parent or carer
  - The age of the pupil
  - The time of year proposed for the trip (and the impact on the planned curriculum and assessment)
  - The nature of the trip and the parental wishes.
  - The overall attendance pattern of the pupil (including sickness and medical appointments over the last 12 months).
  - The pupil's stage of education and progress (based on discussion with the class teacher and including consideration of any Special Educational Needs).
  - Any other specific guidelines as previously agreed with Governors, such as overall attendance to date.

Once the decision has been made, the Headteacher will return the form to the parent or carer, indicating whether authorisation is given and signed by the Headteacher.

The Headteacher has the authority to authorise absences that are unavoidable at short notice providing these circumstances are exceptional.

Holidays will only be authorised during term time except in unavoidable and exceptional circumstances.

### **Encouraging Attendance**

The school will ensure that parents are well informed about attendance issues through:

- The parent information booklets and DofE booklets
- Home-school agreement
- Letters to parents and general Newsletters
- Parent consultation evenings (as appropriate)
- School reports (more detail if concerns are evident)
- Prospectus
- The school website

### **School Organisation and Procedures**

#### **Class teachers will:**

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils twice a day, The register should be taken and returned to the office by 9:05am in the morning and by 1:05pm after lunch.
- Record in the registers any reasons for lateness or absence.
- Inform the office of any unexplained lateness or absence that needs further follow up.
- Be alert to the early signs of disaffection which could result in non-attendance and to report this to the Headteacher.
- Inform the Headteacher of any unexplained lateness or absence that warrants serious concern or requires further investigation within the school.

#### **The Office staff will:**

- Ensure class registers are completed to the office by 9:05am in the morning and 1:05pm after lunch and collect them if they are not.
- Record in the registers any reasons received by the office for lateness or absence.
- Follow up any unexplained lateness or absence.
- Contact parents as soon as possible after 9.30am on the first day of absence if their child is absent and a reason has not been given.
- Send a letter of concern to parents by the end of the second day if contact had still not been possible, inviting them to contact the school to explain why the child did not attend school.

- Send a second letter of concern to parents if absence has not been explained within a week. The letter should ask the parents to meet the Headteacher to discuss attendance concerns. The letter should also warn parents that if there is not a satisfactory response, the EWO will be informed. Possible sanctions include a referral for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) or could lead to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment per absent child.
- Monitor and record the type of absence for each child.
- Inform the Headteacher of any unexplained lateness or absence that warrants serious concern or requires further investigation within the school.

### **The Headteacher will:**

- Highlight school attendance in assemblies, newsletters, publications etc.
- Ensure that the above procedures are adhered to.
- Support staff in encouraging and maintaining good attendance.
- Follow up any unexplained lateness or absence that warrants serious concern or requires further investigation within the school.
- Contact parents or carers if there is a concern about persistent absence (below 90%)
- Monitor overall attendance in conjunction with the governing body.
- Evaluate policy including effect of pupil incentives and parent information.
- Compare the schools attendance record with similar ASSH schools, the LA average and nationwide data.
- Liaise with the EWO about persistent late comers or non-attenders.
- Use the LA self-review/action plan material (This may include extending the red-amber-green scheme to individual classes/individuals)
- Set attendance targets for each academic year in conjunction with the School Improvement Partner

### **The Governing Body will:**

- Monitor attendance – overall figures.
- Evaluate policy including effect of pupil incentives and parent information.
- Review the attendance policy regularly.
- The LA will monitor attendance levels regularly.

### **Specific Guidelines**

These guidelines agreed by Governors will be used by the Headteacher in conjunction with the DOFE guidelines, in deciding whether to authorise absence or not:

Examples of absence that will be authorised:

- Dental and medical appointments
- Sickness – although frequent medical absences may be challenged

- Funerals and bereavement
- Weddings
- Religious Festival

**Examples of absence that will NOT be authorised:**

- Shopping
- Days out
- Extra days tagged onto weekends throughout the year unless for exceptional reasons and with prior approval
- Days when a child could have come in late rather than not at all
- Holidays during the first half of the Summer Term (SATs, Optional Tests and preparation)
- Holidays during the first two weeks of the Autumn Term; holidays during the first week of the Spring Term and Summer Terms
- Holidays for pupils with low attendance.