Attendance Policy

Whitmore Park Primary School

Approved by:	Jaqueline McGibney	**Date:** November 2022
Last reviewed on:	May 2023	
Next review due by:	November 2023	

Contents

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance

- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

- [The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)](#)

- [The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- Regularly reviewing attendance data

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school

- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance

- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

- The link governor for attendance is Kaffy Oladapo

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of the policy at Whitmore Park

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for: Kieran Johnston

- Leading attendance across the school

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement

- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Having an oversight of data analysis

- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data

- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Kieran Johnston and he can be contacted via 024 76335697.

3.4 The attendance team

The attendance team are responsible for;

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data

- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The attendance team is

Mrs Lynsey Smith - Inclusion, Welfare and Attendance Officer

Miss Chloe Keeling – Attendance and Admin Officer

They can be contacted via 024 76335697

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9:00am for the morning session and by 1:30pm for the afternoon session.

3.6 School admin staff

The Attendance and Admin Officer will:

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record the reason

- Transfer calls from parents to the Inclusion, Welfare and Attendance Officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide a valid reason for absence e.g. high temperature
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4 Recording Attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the first session of the afternoon. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not for any pupil of compulsory school age.
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:45am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9:20am. The register for the second session will be

taken at 12:30pm for Reception and Nursery, 1:00pm for Year 1, 3 and 5 and 1:30pm for Year 2, 4 and 6 and will be expected to be completed as soon as the children are back in the classroom.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:00am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Any leave of absence during term time should be requested on a 'Exceptional Leave of in Term Time' form which can be requested through main reception. This then needs to be completed and returned as soon as possible back to main reception which will then be processed with the Attendance and Admin Officer and the Headteacher for authorisation.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed at 9:20am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed at 9:20am using the appropriate code

The school keeps a daily record of punctuality and informs parents and carers if there are concerns regarding regular lateness.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may complete a home visit to the child's home address.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels during:

- Parents Evening in the Autumn and Summer term
- End of Year school reports

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. Holidays taken during term time will not be authorised.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and before the absence in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via Main Reception. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

Fixed penalty notices can be issued to parents or carers if the children in their care are absent from school for any of the following reasons:

- Holiday/leave of absence taken during term-time that has not been authorised.
- Irregular attendance including persistent late arrival to school (after registration has closed) – 10 or more sessions (five school days) within a current five week period.

A fine of £60 for each child is issued to each parent or carer. If the fine is not paid within 21 days, another £60 fine will be issued; both must be paid within 28 days of the date when the original fine

was issued. A fine will also be issued when leave of absence has been taken but the school have not received and authorised a request in advance.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher or the local authority.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We reward good attendance and improved attendance at Whitmore Park in the following ways:

- 5 dojo points = Class with the highest attendance in each year group per week
- 5 dojo points = Winning class from Y1/2, Y3/4 and Y5/6 per week
- 5 dojo points = Most improved class from each year group from the previous week
- 1 dojo point every day for a child being in school on time
- Attendance trophy and a sweet each week for the winning class from: Reception, Year 1/2, Year 3/4 and Year 5/6
- 5 minutes extra play-time for the most improved class from each year group from the previous week
- 100% half-termly badges given out in the last week of each half-term
- End of term certificates for children achieving 96%+ or 100% for the term given out in the last week of each term
- Personalised incentives for children showing a significant improvement with their attendance

Attendance is celebrated every Monday in assembly. We announce the following:

- The most improved class in each year group
- The winning class in each year group
- The winning class from each phase

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

- The school will compare attendance data to the national and regional average and share this with staff and the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated yearly by the attendance lead in the school.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

	N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
	O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
	U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day