

Waite End Primary School Attendance Policy

Aim

This policy aims to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and arrive at school on time. It aims to clarify how the school will reward good attendance and punctuality and steps that will be taken if a child is often, or persistently absent or if a child is regularly late in the mornings. It also clarifies procedures for requesting a leave of absence during term time. It is based on the premise that regular attendance at school coupled with prompt arrival has a significant effect on children's educational attainment.

Rationale

Waite End Primary School believes in working with parents to improve punctuality and attendance. A significant concern is the school's overall level of attendance which is considerably below county and national averages; the school also has a number of persistent absentees (children with less than 80% attendance). A second concern is the number of requests for leave during term time, generally for purposes of a family holiday. The final concern is the number of children who regularly arrive late and specifically those that arrive late after registers close. This policy seeks to clarify the school's processes to improve the present situation.

Collection of Attendance Data

Each term the following data will be collected and analysed in order to assess performance and trends:

- whole school attendance rates;
- numbers and proportion of persistent absentee pupils;
- rates of unauthorised absence;
- attendance/absence rates for particular cohorts and groups (year groups, gender, ethnicity, SEN, etc)
- number of students arriving after the close of registers

Rights, Responsibilities and Roles

The rights, responsibilities and roles of the school, its pupils and their parents are outlined below.

School

- Waite End Primary School expects pupils to attend school regularly and to arrive on time in a fit condition to learn.
- Waite End Primary School will encourage good attendance and will investigate all unexplained and unjustified absenteeism.
- Waite End Primary School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.
- Waite End Primary School will work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern.
- Waite End Primary School will maintain electronic records of the attendance and punctuality for all pupils and keep parents informed of these records
- Waite End Primary School will contact parents on the first day of absence if no contact by the parent has been received.

Pupils

- Pupils will ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.
- Pupils will attend all lessons punctually.
- Pupils will not leave the school without permission.

Parents

- Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance.
- Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- Parents are responsible for immediately informing school of the reason for any absence by phone call on the first morning of any absence
- Parents will avoid arranging family holidays during term time.
- Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record.

Personnel who are involved with attendance

School staff

Home School Link Workers (HSLW) :Yvonne Dixon
Tina Martin

Administrative Officer: Sallyann Dunn
Administrative support: Sue Hatherley
Class teachers
Headteacher: Diane Lawry

Local Authority Staff

Parent Support Advisor: Laurel Cufley
Education Welfare Officer: Debra Bailey
Locality Team Manager: Lorraine Spacey
Behaviour for Learning Consultant: Anna Bagley
SEAL independent consultant: Sandy Flauta

Registration Procedures

Morning

The bell rings on the playground at 8.40am. The children are met and led into school by their class teacher. Registration is at 8.50am. The registers are sent immediately up to the school office. Any child not in the classroom by 8.50am will be marked late. The registers close at 9.30am. Any child arriving after this time without an authorised reason will be marked late after the register closes. This is marked as an unauthorised absence.

Afternoon

Currently all full time children stay on the premises for lunch.
Registration is at 1.00pm. The registers are immediately sent up to the school office.

The school administrative assistant manages the school registers. The school uses an electronic system (SIMs) to maintain attendance data and this is updated twice daily. Reports are printed for the whole school and each class at the end of each week. Annual attendance returns are made to the DCSF.

Every Friday afternoon, the administrative assistant will run two reports for each class; one indicating the percentage attendance for each child for the week, and a second indicating the cumulative attendance for the term. The teacher will then be

able to encourage the children to improve their attendance. The report will also indicate the number of "late" marks each child has received.

Celebrating good attendance

Whole class:

Every Thursday assembly, the class with the best attendance the previous week will be given the attendance award to hold in their class for the week. They will have a special lunch table on Friday.

Individual:

Every child in the school will be rewarded with a leaf for every week they achieve 100% attendance. These will be displayed on an attendance tree. Every week there will be a draw and three children who achieved 100% attendance the previous week will win a small prize. At the end of each half term, all the leaves will be put into a draw for a bigger prize.

Every half term there will be an attendance assembly and children with 100% attendance and at least 95% attendance for that half term will be awarded certificates. Children with 100% attendance and at least 95% attendance for the whole term will also receive a "Waite End hatter".

Children with 100% attendance for the whole year will be taken on a trip at the end of the summer term.

Children with at least 95% attendance for the whole year will be put in a draw for a major prize (e.g. summer 2009 a DS lite).

Informing parents of attendance

The overall school attendance will be published on the website every week and in "Waiteenders".

Every child will be sent an individual printout indicating attendance every half term. A final attendance report will be sent home with the annual report to parents at the end of the summer term.

Absences

It is the responsibility of the parents to inform the school if their child is unwell. This should either be by telephone or in person. Another child cannot inform school about a sibling's absence. Parents are asked to telephone the school office by 9am on the first day of their child's absence.

The administrative support will telephone every child on the first day of absence if they have not received any information from the parents.

Categorisation of Absence

Definition

Authorised absence This is an absence that has been authorised by the headteacher or deputy headteacher.

Unauthorised absence This is an absence that has not been authorised so includes absences for which no reason has been given, family holidays that have been refused.

Absence from school may be authorised if it is for the following reasons:

- sickness
- unavoidable medical/dental appointments (these should be made out of school hours wherever possible)
- days of religious observance
- exceptional family circumstances, such as a bereavement.'

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- shopping
- parents being unwell
- looking after brothers, sisters or unwell parents
- taking relatives to the airport
- birthdays.

Tackling poor attendance

Our line of action with poor attenders is:

- Home school link worker
- Parent Support Advisor
- CAF offered
- If CAF refused refer to EWO

If a child has more than 20 unauthorised absence in 100 they will be referred to the EWO.

NB Once attendance dips below 89% absences will only be authorised with medical evidence.

From September 2009 the school will initiate a three letter system:

- If attendance is below 92% an initial standard letter will be sent explaining how important it is for children to attend school. The parents will be offered an appointment with the home school link worker or the parent support advisor. If attendance improves a standard congratulatory letter will be sent
- If attendance continues to drop to below 89% a second letter standard letter will be sent and the parent will be offered the opportunity to complete a common assessment form (CAF) with the home school link worker to judge what support would be helpful
- If attendance drops below 85% a third standard letter will be sent requesting the parent meets with the headteacher and the education welfare officer.

Persistent Absentees

Persistent absentees are those children whose attendance falls below 80%; this is the equivalent of missing one whole day of education every week. These children are a considerable concern as they are at risk of not attaining as highly as they should and, because of a lack of routine and consistency, they can find it hard to cope with school over time, both on a social and academic level.

All school staff will be aware of the children who are persistent absentees and will work hard to ensure that they have positive experiences in school. The home school link workers will meet regularly with persistent absentees when they are in school and will also maintain at least weekly contact with the parents. The parents will be offered the support of the parent support advisor.

The education welfare officer will be involved with persistent absentees and, reluctantly, legal action will be taken if there is no improvement in attendance without good reason.

Leave of absence during term time

A parent can request a leave of absence for a child during term time. Only the headteacher or deputy headteacher can authorise that request. The governors at Waite End have agreed that no absence will be granted to children who have less than 95% attendance due to the negative impact such an absence could have on their education. No leave of absence will be authorised during the month of May for children in year 2 and 6 while statutory national assessments are taking place.

A form to request a leave of absence can be obtained from the home school link workers, who will ask parents why it has not been possible to organise the leave during school holidays.

A parent who wishes to request a leave of absence during term time should note the following points:

- By law applications must be made by a parent normally residing with the child.
- Permission must be sought for authorised leave of absence before making firm bookings/ arrangements/payments for any holidays.
- Applications should be made in writing on the school form (available from the home school link workers) at least 1 month before the absence is due to begin and sent to the school office.
- Absence will not be granted retrospectively.
- After consideration of the above criteria, the headteacher will write to the parents explaining the decision to the parent giving or refusing authorisation for the absence with reference to absence to date.
- Work will not be set for completion during the holiday, but children should be encouraged to read and keep a diary of their experiences.
- Parents who decide to take a holiday without permission, will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on a child's record and are monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Officer, and could result in court action.
- If a pupil does not return to school within ten school days of the agreed return date after a family holiday in term time, then the school will consider removing the child from the school roll. The school has the right to do this under government legislation.
- No absence for more than 10 days will be authorised

Lateness

Any child who arrives at school after 8.50am must be taken by an adult to the school office. The adult will be asked to sign the child into school with an explanation as to why they are late. Every week, parents of any children who have been late will be sent a note detailing how many times the child was late during the week. School staff will encourage children who are late to hurry along and explain to them how much learning time they have missed.

If a child is regularly late, the home school link workers will arrange a meeting with the parents and will organise for a daily text to be sent to them between 8.15am and 8.30am reminding them that school is about to start.

Home school link workers will meet weekly with children who are regularly late to discuss how they can ensure they are on time more often. Children who have reduced the number of times they are late will receive certificates.

Role of Governing Body

It is the role of the governing body to monitor the attendance rates at the school. This is reported to governors through the RAISEONLINE information and by the local authority.

The governors have to set annual targets for attendance. These are published on the school website.

THE LAW

Under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, parents are responsible for making sure that their children of compulsory school age receive full-time education.

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at the school where they are registered.

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school then the parent is guilty of an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Since March 2001 there has been a further offence where a parent, knowing that their child is failing to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend (Education Act 1996, section 444(1A) as amended by the Criminal Justice and Court Service Act 2000).

Review dates for policy

Date governors approved policy 23rd Sept 2009

Date for policy to be reviewed September 2010