

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy



**Wistaston Academy**  
Primary and Nursery School  
Together We Learn • Together We Achieve

<b>Policy Author</b>	<b>Linda Davis, Principal</b>
<b>Responsible Governor's Committee</b>	Standards
<b>Date discussed at SLT Meeting</b>	Autumn 2015
<b>Date discussed at Staff Consultation Committee</b>	N/A
<b>Date discussed at Staff Meeting</b>	Autumn 2015
<b>Date established and approved by Governors</b>	Autumn 2016
<b>Frequency of Review</b>	Review in the light of changes to legislation or operating experience
<b>Website</b>	No

We believe that children can reach their full potential only by receiving full-time education, through regular and structured attendance. Wistaston Academy expects all pupils to arrive and leave school punctually and we emphasise this to parents. Arriving late can be embarrassing to the child and they may miss important parts of the curriculum.

All staff are concerned for the children's welfare and happiness and everyone plays a part in promoting regular attendance among the pupils. Good attendance is critical to good progress and attainment and this is underpinned by legislation:

*The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable ... to his age, ability and aptitude, and ... to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

### **Aims**

- To foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the school community – teachers, parents and pupils
- To provide a framework, with agreed roles and responsibilities
- To provide support and guidance for parents and pupils
- To develop positive and consistent communication between home and school, including set procedures for attendance information
- To develop a systematic approach for gathering and analysing data
- To improve the overall attendance of pupils at school and reduce unauthorised absence
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions
- To promote effective partnership with the Education Welfare Service

### **Communication**

Information on punctuality, unauthorised absence and illness is set out on the school website. This emphasises the importance of being at school on time and notifying the school if a child is absent for any reason, preferably by telephone on the morning of the first absence. We ask parents to ring the school on every day of absence thereafter, first thing in the morning before registers close. Where no notification is given, the school will either telephone or send a text to the parent/carer and complete a home visit. After a lengthy illness, or where absence is a concern, we ask parents to send in a doctor's note or letter and evidence that medicines have been prescribed.

Attendance is discussed and explained at the Pre-school Induction Meetings held each year for children about to enter Reception Class. This reiterates that parents and children should arrive at school on time, so that each child can be given the best possible start to the school day. It is also stressed that young children particularly should be collected promptly, as they can become upset if left behind on their own. Parents are asked to share any worries that their child might have in school. Parents need to be aware that even little things can upset children, which means that they might become unhappy and might not want to come to school.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various Year Groups. All parents requesting a place are asked to make an appointment with the Attendance and Welfare Manager. At this meeting, the importance of regular attendance is always highlighted, together with other school routines.

## **Holidays & Leave of Absence**

At the initial Induction Meeting, parents are requested to arrange their family holidays within the school vacations, rather than in term time. At Wistaston Academy, we ask that family holidays are not taken during school time, so that a child's education is not disrupted. Parents are reminded in Newsletters that they should not take their children out of school unnecessarily for holidays or visits. The Principal or her delegate contacts those parents who frequently take the family on holiday in term-time and reminds them of the disruption to their child's education. New regulations introduced in September 2013 state that a school is not allowed to authorise a holiday unless there are "exceptional circumstances". Should a parent still choose to take an unauthorised holiday, the school will request that the Local Educational Authority issue a fixed penalty notice to those parents. Each Fixed Penalty Notice carries a penalty of £60 per parent/carer per child. This will increase to £120 per parent/carer per child if not paid within a 28 day notice period.

<b>Penalties for unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>Timeline</b>	<b>One child</b>	<b>Two children</b>
Paid within 21 days	£60 per parent	£60 per child = £120 per parent
After 21 days and before 28 days	£120 per parent	£120 per child = £240 per parent
After 28 days	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your child's regular attendance	You will receive a summons to appear before the Magistrates' Court on the grounds you have failed to secure your children's regular attendance

In light of the High Court ruling on Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> May Cheshire East Council are reviewing its practice with regards to the issuing of Penalty Notices for term time holiday absence as a matter of priority and is seeking urgent guidance from the DfE.

## **Registration**

Wistaston Academy uses a computerised registration system and the Register is completed in the morning and afternoon at 8.50 a.m. in both Key Stages. Our Nursery registers at 9.15 a.m. for the morning session and 12.30 p.m. for the afternoon session. A pupil will receive a late mark (L) between 8.50 am 9.20 a.m. After these times an unauthorised absence will be recorded (U). All pupils who are late must report to the main office where an explanation and minutes late will be recorded.

The SLT are responsible for collating Attendance Records in school and notifying the Principal if there is any reason for concern. At the end of the year, each child's attendance is analysed and a copy is given to parents with their child's School Report.

The School Profile records the school attendance figures for authorised and unauthorised absence. These figures can also be found in the Ofsted Report.

## **Concerns**

The registers are examined regularly. If there is a frequent pattern of absence from school, a member of staff will telephone the parents to ascertain the reason for persistent absence. If there are concerns about a child's non-attendance or poor punctuality, the class teacher consults their Phase Leader immediately. Details of attendance percentages or late marks are extracted from the computer database. The Phase Leader and Class Teacher shows this to the

parent(s) during an informal discussion. If absences or poor punctuality persist, the Educational Welfare Officer will be contacted. Data is shared and a home visit may ensue.

The Educational Welfare Officer meets the Attendance and Welfare Manager and Deputy Principal regularly to discuss attendance issues offering action, advice and support.

### **Absence Through Illness**

Wistaston Academy continues to provide as much education as the child's medical condition allows us to.

The School monitors attendance of those pupils who are absent from school because of short-term or chronic illness, and close links are maintained with parents. It is requested that each absence through illness is supported by medical evidence from the doctor giving appointment dates and times when medical advice has been sought.

In the case of sickness, pupils should refrain from attending school for 48 hours after the last episode of sickness. A full list of illnesses is held in school with recommended times of absence for each illness.

Educational support, including the provision of work and materials is provided for those pupils who are absent from school, with medical conditions for prolonged periods. The teaching staff liaise with Medical Advisers and/or Home Tuition Providers, so that, during prolonged absence, pupils receive suitable work for their age and ability group.

The reintegration of children into school after a long absence through ill health is considered a high priority. The school consults parents about general concerns, medical issues and the timing and pace of return. Staff including the class teacher, Teaching Assistants, Learning Mentor and Home or Hospital Tutor, meet to discuss the return to school. Friends and other pupils are encouraged to help the child settle back in school. Extra support is provided (subject to available resources) after an analysis of the child's needs.

### **Truancy**

All staff at Wistaston Academy believe in the importance of continuity in every child's learning. Staff are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Although truancy is very rare at the school, if staff are suspicious that a child might be playing truant, action is taken immediately.

If truancy is suspected, the Principal and the Educational Welfare Officer are notified. Parents are contacted, either by telephone or a home visit. We encourage parents to bring their child to school, so that the reasons for truancy can be discussed and, we hope, resolved. If the Attendance and Welfare Manager is unable to talk to the parent(s), he or she talks to the child to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If problems are identified, these are discussed and resolved with the class teacher/member of staff/other pupils.

At Wistaston Academy, we endeavour to discover, through discussion with the individual pupils, classes and the Schools' Council, what the children like and dislike about school. The staff consider the children's opinions and, where practical take appropriate actions.

### **Persistent Absenteeism**

Persistent absenteeism is defined as school-age pupils missing more than 10% of sessions in a school year.

### **Change to Persistent Absence criteria**

From September 2015, the government is reducing the persistent absence threshold from 15% to 10%. This applies to those children whose attendance falls below 90%. Children who fall into this category, or who are at risk of, will be monitored closely and a referral will be made to the Educational Welfare Officer.

### **Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality**

#### **Class Organisation/Lessons**

- Worksheets on attendance; time-keeping monitoring sheets
- Lessons on telling the time
- Children design posters for attendance and punctuality to be displayed around the school
- Writing letters
- Class/Children's Council discussions on feelings, likes and dislikes about school
- Peer group support – contacting friends who are absent
- Positive support for those pupils who have been absent for a significant period – planned reintegration

#### **Rewards**

- Termly attendance rewards
- Class rewards e.g. non-uniform day and an extended playtime are examples of the kinds of rewards that are given to classes achieving 100% attendance over one week

#### **Sanctions**

- Fixed Penalty Notices may be used where all other avenues have been pursued. They will be used as a means to support parents to meet their legal responsibilities and where there is a reasonable expectation that their use will secure improved school attendance or punctuality.

#### **Useful Documents and Resources**

DfES	Consultation on the Education of Sick Children 2001
DfES	LEA Behaviour Support Plans (Circular 1/98)
DfES/Home Office	Social Inclusion: Pupil Support (Circular 10/99)
DfES	Tackling Truancy Together
Cheshire East Council	Code of Conduct on Penalty Notices

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