

# Attendance and Punctuality Policy



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

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<b>Responsible Governor's Committee</b>	Quality of Education
<b>Date Reviewed</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> August 2022</b>
<b>Frequency of Review</b>	Review in the light of changes to legislation or operating experience

## CHANGE CONTROL

Date	Details of Change	Staff Member
17.08.22	Introduction section added.	Tina Brittain
17.08.22	Legislation section added	Tina Brittain
17.08.22	Subheading 'Aims' replaced with 'Objectives' section.	Tina Brittain
17.08.22	Subheading 'communication' replaced with 'What can parents do to help'	Tina Brittain
17.08.22	Subheading 'Registration' replaced with 'Completing the Register'	Tina Brittain
17.08.22	Subheading 'Holidays & Leave of Absence' replaced with 'Leave of Absence in Term Time' as per new updated guidance May 2022.	Tina Brittain
17.08.22	Under subheading 'Leave of Absence in Term Time' 3 new paragraphs added and one paragraph removed as per the new updated guidance May 2022.	Tina Brittain
17.08.22	New subheading 'if parents are worried about their child's attendance at school what can they do?'	Tina Brittain
17.08.22	Overview section added.	Tina Brittain
17.08.22	Under Subheading 'Useful Documents and Resources' the following document has been listed.  - DFE Working Together to Improve School Attendance – May 2022	Tina Brittain

## **Introduction**

For the purpose of the policy Wistaston Academy is referred to as the school.

## **Legislation**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that *“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”*.

Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996 states that *“if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school his parent is guilty of an offence”*. Therefore, regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement, as well as being essential to enable children to maximise their educational attainments and opportunities.

For the purposes of Education Law the definition ‘parental responsibility’ lies with whomever the child resides. This could be one parent, both parents or carer/s.

## **Objectives**

- To ensure that all learners attend school well, aiming for 100% attendance or as close as possible.
- To ensure that all learners are punctual.
- To win the support of parents in ensuring that their children attend school well and that they arrive on time.
- To keep good electronic records of attendance through school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
- To investigate and act immediately where unauthorised absence is confirmed or suspected.
- To work effectively with other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and efficiently.
- To monitor closely pupils with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and where appropriate, other agencies to bring about improvement.

## **Procedures**

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is good reason for absence.

There are two types of absence:

- Authorised (where the school approves learners absence)
- Unauthorised (where school will not approve the absence)

Parents will be asked to telephone or notify the school if their child is absent or ill as part of fulfilling the schools safeguarding requirements. The school office will make telephone contact with home when a child is absent and the parent has not notified the school of the absence. If no contact can be achieved or the reason for absence is not accepted the absence will be unauthorised.

### **Completing the Register**

Registers provide the daily record of attendance of all pupils. They are legal documents that have to be marked twice daily. The register may be required in a court of law, for example as evidence in prosecutions for non-attendance in school. The register should be marked using the codes as advised by the Department of Education. One school day is marked as two sessions, a.m. and p.m.

School 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.

### **Medical Absences**

Any medical absences in excess of 7 days (14 sessions) per academic year will need to be supported by medical evidence. This does not have to be a doctor's note but can be prescriptions, medication, or appointment cards. If no medical evidence is received then the absence will be coded as unauthorised.

### **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE – PENALTY NOTICES**

Parents/carers should be aware that school may contact the Local Authority if a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences in any one term, with a view to issuing a Penalty Notice. The Penalty Notice is issued individually to each parent/carer who fails to ensure their children's regular attendance at school. The Penalty is £60 per parent/carer per child if paid within 21 days rising to £120 if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of the Penalty Notice may result in prosecution in the Magistrates court.

### **Lateness & Punctuality**

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.

### **Leave of Absence in Term Time**

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.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant a leave of absence. School will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Principal to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

As Principals should only grant leaves of absence in exceptional circumstances it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purpose of a family holiday.

Should a parent still choose to take an unauthorised holiday, the school will request that the Local Educational Authority issue a penalty notice to those parents. Each 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.

Penalties for unauthorised absence		
Timeline	One child	Two children
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

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

- 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

### **What Parents can do to help**

Let the school know immediately why your child is absent. Contact must be made with school each day your child is absent from school. 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.

Communication with school is extremely important in supporting your child. Try to make any dental/GP appointments outside of school time.

### **IF PARENTS ARE WORRIED ABOUT THEIR CHILDS ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL WHAT CAN THEY DO?**

- You can talk to Tina Brittain, Attendance Manager and Family Support Worker.
- Talk to the Principal or Class teacher
- Each school has a designated Education Welfare Officer who can be contacted through school

### **Overview of Wistaston Academy Attendance Policy.**

If learners are to get the greatest benefit from their education in school, it is important that they have good attendance and arrive punctually. As learners grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and employers. We will do all that we can to encourage good attendance and punctuality.

Where learners are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality, we will put into place effective strategies to bring about improvement. Wistaston Academy will strive to ensure that the most vulnerable pupils are given the same opportunities, which may mean extra support in some cases. This Attendance policy is based on the premise of equal opportunities for all.

### **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
- DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance – May 2022