

Attendance and Punctuality Policy



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

Policy Author	Dominique Griffiths, Principal
Responsible Governor's Committee	Quality of Education
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Frequency of Review	Review in the light of changes to legislation or operating experience

CHANGE CONTROL		
Date	Details of Change	Staff Member
4.09.24	The New National Framework for Penalty Notices	Tina Brittan

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.

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.

PENALTY NOTICES

Penalty Notices will be issued for

Term time leave: Penalty Notice fines will be issued for term time leave of 5 or more consecutive days.

10 Sessions of Unauthorised absence in a rolling 10-week period: A Penalty Notices may be considered when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absences in a 10-week period.

NB - The Local Authority retain the discretion to issue a Penalty Notice before the threshold is met. For example, where parents are deliberately avoiding the national threshold by taking several term time holidays below the above thresholds.

Per Parent/Per Child

Penalty Notice fines will continue to be issued **per parent per child**. For example: 3 siblings absent for term time leave, would result in each parent receiving 3 separate fines.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for term time leave or irregular school attendance the fine will be charged at:

£160 per parent, per child if paid within 28 days of the issue, reducing to **£80** per parent, per child if paid within 21 days.

(Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Second Offence

Where it is deemed appropriate to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first penalty notice, for either term time leave or irregular attendance the second penalty notice will be charged at:

£160 if paid within 28 days. (Unpaid penalty notices may result in a parental prosecution)

Third Offence

On the third time that an offence is committed within 3 years of the first penalty notice for either a term time leave or irregular attendance a penalty notice will not be issued. The case may proceed to Parental Prosecution under the Single Justice Procedure. If found guilty of the offence of 'Failure to send a child to school' the Magistrates can impose a fine up to **£1000** or legal proceedings under Section 444 (1a) can include a fine of up to **£2500**.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

- Worksheets on attendance; time-keeping monitoring sheets
- Lessons on telling the time
- Weekly attendance assemblies
- 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 – August 2024
- Guidance for parents on school attendance