



Witley C. of E. Infant School

Attendance Policy

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Our Attendance Policy should be read in conjunction with our current School Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

The school staff, alongside the LA, firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. We know that every day lost to education can have a serious impact on children's attainment and overall progress in school. As a staff we do all we can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the children in our care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

Aim:

- To encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance in order to benefit fully from the education provided
- To ensure any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly

Expectations

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly
- attend school punctually
- attend school ready to learn

We expect that all parents/carers who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that the children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day and are collected on time
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child/children is unable to attend school
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school
- not take holidays in term time

To encourage attendance we expect that school staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, twice daily
- monitor every pupil's attendance
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences
- encourage good attendance and punctuality
- provide a caring and welcoming atmosphere for children in a safe learning environment
- meet with the school's Inclusion Officer regularly to discuss any new concerns and report on the progress of existing cases;
- respond promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils
- meet with the parents of children whose attendance causes concern;
- refer children whose attendance is an on-going concern, despite their best efforts to resolve the situation, to the Inclusion Officer for additional ongoing support and guidance
- work with the Inclusion Officer and follow his/her advice once cases are referred to ensure that the legal process to address attendance concerns can be implemented if necessary

Leave of absence

Attendance at school is one of the most important factors in educational success. The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and parents/carers are expected to book their family holidays during those times. Leave of absence will not be granted for holiday to be taken in term time.

In exceptional circumstances when leave in term time is unavoidable, a leave of absence request form must be completed as soon as possible once the dates of the proposed period of absence are known. The request form can be obtained from the school office. In the event that parental responsibility is shared both parents/carers will be informed.

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for their child as a right. If leave is taken, without prior authorisation, the child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the school register.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. Examples of exceptional circumstances, quoted by the Department for Education (DfE), are: service personnel and family crisis. Family holidays taken during term time due to affordability or work restrictions do not meet the DfE criteria for authorisation. The Headteacher will decide whether or not to authorise the absence having decided whether or not the circumstances are exceptional.

Should absence be taken without the Headteacher's authorisation, parents may be issued with a penalty notice as a result, see below.

Dental and Medical Treatment

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book dental and medical appointments outside the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified via a medical form. Evidence of the appointment may be requested. Parents are asked to remove the child only for the duration of the appointment.

Penalty Notices

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider prosecuting the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996. Parents should be aware that each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who incurs unauthorised absence.

Circumstances when Penalty Notices may be issued

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent may be liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they may be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason. With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents may be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

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Penalty Notices relating to Exclusions

Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. The amount payable is stated above.

Responding To Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9am the school will endeavor to contact them that day
- if there is no response to the phone call or the absence remains unexplained or still a concern, the office will inform the Headteacher and further investigation and action will be made accordingly in line with the Education Regulations 2006 (Pupil Registration), all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority
- if there is persistent non-attendance, the school office will keep records of the contact with home during the period of absence and this will be discussed with the Inclusion Officer when a formal referral may be made
- if a child has persistent absence or has been identified on truancy patrols and meets the criteria for a Penalty Notice to be issued; or has been taken out of school without the school's permission for 5 or more days; the school will liaise with the Inclusion Officer / LA to decide whether a Penalty Notice should be issued
- failure to comply with the expectations set by the Inclusion Service may result in further action, an application for an Educational Supervision Order, or court prosecution.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Any absence has an impact on a child's educational achievement and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The Department for Education and the Local Authority monitor levels of PA children and levels of absence in all schools.

Parents will be informed on a regular basis of their child's attendance when it is a cause for concern.

Responding to lateness

Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount, therefore, that all pupils arrive at school on time.

We encourage parents to ensure their children arrive on time for school in order to access class early bird activities. The classroom doors open at 8:45am and the register is taken at 8:55am. If pupils arrive at school after the close of the register, they should be brought to the main office so they can be recorded as being

present. Children will be recorded as being late if they arrive after 8:55am but before 9.25am, when the registers close. Any child arriving after 9.25am, without a valid explanation, will be recorded as late after close of register and this denotes an unauthorised absence.

Persistent lateness will be monitored and letters sent to parents to inform them of learning time lost. If lateness remains a problem and this lateness is after close of register a referral may be made to the Inclusion Service.

Children should be collected at 3:15pm. If children are not collected by 3:20pm they will be taken to the office and parents will be asked to sign their child out in the late collection book.

Changing schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform the school as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from our school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving our school and starting the next
- the address of the new school
- the new home address, if it is known

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Service.

Elective Home Education

If a parent/guardian elects for their child to be home educated then it is recommended that they inform the school and the Local Authority. In this instance we will refer to DfE guidance on Elective Home Education.

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