Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Wellesbourne Primary and Nursery School

Approved by:	N.Ryan/K.Howard	Date: January 2023
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Contents

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1. Introduction

Wellesbourne Primary and Nursery School recognises the clear link between the attendance and achievement of pupils. The aim of this policy is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality for pupils within Wellesbourne Primary and Nursery School to support learning and development.

The importance of attendance and punctuality is underpinned by an awareness of safeguarding issues. It is important to see our children every day and provide an educationally safe and secure environment.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that all pupils attend regularly and on time. Pupils should aim to attend every day that the school is open. We set a target for all pupils to aim for 100% attendance with the expectation all pupils achieve at least 97%. *As a school we define regular attendance as 97% or above.*

Wellesbourne Primary and Nursery School believes teachers, parents, carers, pupils and all members of the school community have an important contribution in improving attendance and punctuality to enable children to achieve. This policy sets out how we will achieve this together and should be read in conjunction with the Attendance Roles and Responsibilities Guidance attached to this document (Appendix 2).

2. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

> Maximising the overall percentage of pupil attendance and punctuality at Wellesbourne Primary and Nursery School

> Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

> Raising the profile of attendance and punctuality amongst the school community

> Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

> Acting early to address patterns of absence, ensuring a whole-school, consistent approach

> Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

> Ensuring a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon attendance data

> Continuing to promote effective partnerships with the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health and other partner agencies.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

> Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

> Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

> The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)

> The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

> Present

> Attending an approved off-site educational activity

> Absent

> Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

> The original entry

> The amended entry

> The reason for the amendment

> The date on which the amendment was made

> The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

> Whether the absence is authorised or not

> The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

> The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Doors open for children to enter school from 8:45-8:55am each day. Children who arrive after this time will be marked as late and coded accordingly.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff or by leaving a message on the ParentApp (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or a genuine concern about poor attendance.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

If your child/children have excessive and/ or sporadic illness related absence that is not evidenced appropriately, parents will be required to meet with school nurse to access appropriate medical support and advice, in some cases support can be given in making necessary referrals in respect of your child health, which impacts on their ability to maintain regular attendance of 97%.

There is appropriate medical advice available with reference to childhood illnesses etc for all parents/guardians to seek:

Public Health England Wellington House 133-155 Waterloo Road London SE1 8UG Tel: 020 7654 8000

www.gov.uk/phe

Twitter: @PHE uk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland

Some useful links:

- Gov.uk https://www.gov.uk/
- Public Health England https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england
- Department for Education https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education
- Health and Safety Executive https://www.hse.gov.uk/

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary (for example, if the appointment is in the morning, the child should be present in school for the afternoon).

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a pupil misses the start of the school day, they can miss work. Pupils arriving late disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for the pupil when it is out of their control, and can encourage future absence.

The school day starts at 8:55am. Children arriving after this time will be marked as late. If a child is late on more than ten occasions in a half term. Parents will be required to attend a meeting at school to discuss this.

Late arrival to school following the close of registers at 10:30am will be marked as absent for the morning session and coded accordingly. If a pupil is persistently arriving at school after the official close of the register, the school may request the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If a parent/carer has issues getting their child to attend school on time, they should contact the Inclusion Officer who will offer support to resolve the problem.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

> Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit or contact the police if we are concerned

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than five working days after the session

> Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly reports. Where attendance is a concern, parents will be contacted regularly.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted in writing as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. Absence forms can be requested from the school office.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

> Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Any absence affects education and regular absence will seriously affect pupils' learning. Pupils who have too much time off school often find it difficult to catch up and do well.

90% attendance is equivalent to a pupil missing one half day per week or approximately 118 lessons per year

To promote regular attendance, we ensure:

> An appropriate curriculum is provided and reviewed regularly

> The need for high-quality teaching and learning throughout the school is recognised as being essential to the promotion of attendance.

> Pupils are provided with appropriate support to minimise absence from school. This includes Wellesbourne Primary and Nursery School and multi-agency provision as appropriate.

> Special Educational Needs, Disadvantaged and Looked After pupils and other vulnerable groups are given appropriate support, and attendance is monitored rigorously.

> Effective partnerships with parents/carers are encouraged through regular contact and support provided.

> Parents/carers are kept informed of pupils' attendance and punctuality through first day contact, termly progress reports, individual letters and meetings when required.

> Attendance and punctuality is regularly discussed with pupils in class and at assemblies.

> Staff attendance roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and all staff ensure these are followed

We also ensure that attendance and punctuality is rewarded through regular incentives such as Champions' Breakfast, Attendance Trophies, half-termly visits to Costa Coffee for selected children who achieve 100% attendance and certificates.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and Senior Leaders to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. This is for any absence, whether authorised or unauthorised. The DFE expects schools to intervene before pupils reach these levels of absence.

Whilst we understand that pupils can be absent from school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend. If a pupil is reluctant to attend or a parent/carer has concerns, it is important that contact is made with the school as soon as possible to gain support and to work together to gain a resolution.

A pupil who is persistently absent is one who misses 10% or more of their schooling for ANY REASON from the beginning of the school year to the end of any given half term period as indicated below:

TERMS	PERS ABSENCE AT 10%	No OF DAYS OFF SCHOOL
SEP TO OCTOBER	7 OR MORE SESSIONS	3.5.DAYS
SEP TO CHRISTMAS	14 OR MORE SESSIONS	7 DAYS
SEP TO FEBRUARY	20 OR MORE SESSIONS	10 DAYS
SEP TO EASTER	25 OR MORE SESSIONS	12.5 DAYS
SEP TO MAY	31 OR MORE SESSIONS	15.5 DAYS

The school will:

> Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

> Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school

> Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

> Issue Penalty Notices where necessary

> Submit Multi-Agency Referral Forms where parents of children with persistent or sever absence do not engage with school support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Miss Howard (Designated Attendance Lead/Deputy Headteacher). At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection and safeguarding policy

> Behaviour policy

10. Removal from Roll

Whenever a child of compulsory school age leaves our school before Year 6, we are required to do the following:

> Inform the Local Authority in every circumstance when deleting a pupil's name from the admission register

> Inform the Local Authority of the pupil's destination school and home address if the pupil is moving to a new school

> Provide information to the Local Authority when registering new pupils, including the pupils' address and previous school

If your child is leaving our school, parents are asked to give the Inclusion Office or school admin staff comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move, new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to school in writing.

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, your child is considered to be a **child missing in education**. This require schools and Local Authorities to then carry our investigations to locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	**Definition**	**Scenario**
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Attendance Roles and Responsibilities

When	Whom	Actions Expected
DAILY	Pupils	• Be in class on time for registration by 8.55am (doors open from 8:45am)
	Parent/Carer	• Make sure their child attends every day on time • Telephone school if their child is going to be late • Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the first day of the absence and advise when they are expected to return • Answer phone calls received as a result of their child's absence to ensure all children are appropriately safeguarded • Contact the Inclusion Officer if the reason for absence requires a more personal discussion • Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child, ensuring these are up-to-date at all time • Ensure that routine, non-emergency medical and dental appointments for their child are made outside of the school day and are evidenced
	Class Teacher	• Complete registers every day on time • Ensure attendance has a high profile in class • Welcome long-term absentees back into the class • Informal discussions with identified pupils to follow up attendance issues and agree future action required.
	Administration Staff	• Ensure staff have completed AM/PM registers • Ensure input of accurate attendance marks in the register via SIMs • Identify pupils who are absent from school without reason • Log on SIMS, parental voicemails, text messages and emails regarding student absences • Ensure all Late arriving pupils are spoken to and their attendance is entered on to SIMS • First day absence phone contact with parents/carers, following up unexplained absences where no text message/phone call has been returned. • SLT and class teachers contacted with specific attendance queries and necessary follow ups required • Support staff with registration queries • Log attendance of all pupils going out /in school for medical, dental or visits • Daily liaison with other settings for pupils educated off site to ensure AM and PM registers are provided within set time parameters and pupils who fail to attend with reasons unknown are followed up through the First Day contact systems. • Daily Attendance/ PA report sent to senior leader with responsibility for attendance.
	Inclusion Officer	• Safeguarding home visits as required. • Focused casework interventions with persistent absence pupils and families. • Phone call contact with pupils/parent/carers • Home visits • Instigation of legal proceedings • Tracking of actions and interventions and feedback to pastoral staff.
	Senior Leader	• Monitoring and tracking of staff not completing registers in line with Safeguarding requirements. • Liaison with EWO, Pastoral staff and Curriculum Leaders regarding support work with identified pupils