



# Attendance Policy

February 2016

## Framework

The framework for a whole-school attendance policy is based on the 5 'Ps' - namely, Philosophy, Principles, Procedures, Performance and Practice.

### Philosophy

William Reynolds Primary School and Nursery is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that, if pupils are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as quickly as possible.

Our policy is to celebrate our pupils' achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school actively promotes and encourages 100% attendance for all our pupils.

We give high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems that affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

### Principles

The school will:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law,
- complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session,
- Parents with pupils who are arriving in late are asked to sign in their child using the "Inventry" electronic signing in system by the main office.
- stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence,
- display attendance rates around the school and reward good and improved attendance of all pupils,
- promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence,
- consult with all members of the school community and the Attendance Support Team in developing and maintaining the Whole-school Attendance Policy,
- ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by Senior Leaders and the School Governors,
- send newsletters parents and carers informing them of attendance rates and related issues, additionally update school website with any attendance related issues,

- work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a pupil is absent, she/he will be missed,
- have in place procedures which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

## Procedures and expectations

### *Lateness*

Being on time is extremely important. If a pupil is late it affects their own learning and the learning of others.

Staff greet pupils at 8.50 am. The school doors are shut at 9.00 am.

Lateness is classed as any pupil coming into school between 9.00 am and 9.30am

All children arriving after 9.00 am must report to the office.

Formal lessons begin at 9.10 am. Arrival at school after this point means that important learning is being missed. Persistent lateness is taken very seriously as it can have a detrimental effect on a pupil's progress. Arrival after 9.30am is classed as an unauthorised absence.

Lateness is monitored regularly with the school's Educational Welfare Officer.

### *Absence*

If no contact is received from the parents/carers for an absent pupil on the first morning of absence we will:

- follow 'First day contact' procedures and contact the parent by telephone, or if the parent is unavailable send a standard letter requesting information,
- consider sending a second letter if an explanation has still not been received after three days of unexplained absence or send a School Attendance Letter (SAL),
- refer to the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO), to follow up absence if no response is received after 5 days of absence and consider a referral to the '*Children & Family Locality Services*' or contact '*Family Connect*' if no contact can be made with the parent,
- invite the parents/carers into school for an 'Attendance Concern Meeting' (ACM) after a maximum of 10 days absence, unless other action is planned. This meeting will include a senior member of staff, parent/carer and the school EWO. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties that are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance,
- help the pupil's re-integration where a pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks. In the event of a pupil returning after a long-term absence then an Individual Reintegration Programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include the appropriate members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible
- Contact ***Family Connect 01952 385385*** for further guidance on available support.

### *Leave during term time*

The school supports the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents from taking holidays in term time. Holidays during term time will not be authorised.

- In *very exceptional* circumstances the Head teacher may authorise an absence from school for leave of absence. This would have to be agreed with the Head teacher prior to the leave taking place. Any exceptional circumstance would be viewed as an individual case and is entirely at the discretion of the Head teacher. (see appendix A)
- Term time dates are on the school website. The dates are sent home for parents at the beginning of every new academic year and reminders are given on each monthly newsletter.

**In order to ensure the success of this policy every member of the school staff will make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.**

### **Performance**

It is important to set realistic targets for both attendance and persistent absence; these targets are set during the Autumn term of each academic year, in consultation with the Governing Body. The Governing Body approves the school target for attendance to be set for the following academic year. The target is sent to the Group Manager, Admissions, Attendance and School Organisation once it has been agreed. In compiling an Action Plan, we look at those interventions which have been successful as part of the evaluation process.

When evaluating success we consider whether or not:

- Attendance has improved
- Persistent absence has reduced
- Punctuality has improved
- Parental response to absences has improved
- Re-integration plans have been successful
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school, governing body and the local community
- Pupils are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within school
- Attendance issues have been included as topics in school assemblies, Personal and Social Education (PHSE) lessons, or as a theme for any other lessons

Governors and senior leaders track school's performance through Raise Online, Inspection Dashboard and through monitoring the attendance of all groups of pupils on a termly basis.

### **Practice**

The school recognises the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Contacting parents on the first day of absence if no message has been given to school about the pupil's absence
- Late and attendance letters are sent home

- Leaflets are accessible and are on the school's website giving EWO contact details to parents if they need support
- Regularly analysing attendance data
- Keeping track of pupils attendance at below 95% to reduce persistence non-attendance (where attendance falls below 90%)
- Prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance
- Liaising closely with the school's EWO
- EWO meets parents as part of the induction system for pupils joining the school in Reception.
- EWO forms part of the Team Around the Child meetings if attendance is an issue.
- Recording (and retaining) carefully, all telephone messages
- A signed copy of any correspondence is retained by the school
- A referral is made to AST (the Attendance Support Team) for intervention
- Giving a weekly well done to the base that has the best attendance for the week during the Friday Celebration Assembly.
- "Best Attendance" rewards are given to pupils in the base whose attendance is the best for that term.
- 100% badges are presented to individual pupils during the summer term

### **Modified Timetables**

Modified timetable are used as a short term measure and are agreed with parents through the Common Assessment Framework. School informs the LA of any part time education arrangements.

Governors are given information about pupils who are not accessing school in the usual way through the Head teacher's report, so that governors can challenge the amount of provision being made and evaluate its effectiveness.

### **The Criteria for Placing a Pupil on a Modified Timetable**

The main groups of children and young people who are likely to be pupils missing out on education are those who:

- have been permanently excluded
- have particular social and behavioural difficulties and have personalised learning plans: this means that, by arrangement, they do not attend their usual school full time
- have mental health needs and access Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) either as an in-patient or through services provided in the community
- have medical needs other than mental health needs
- rarely attend school and have personalised learning plans as part of attempts to re-integrate them into full time education
- have complex needs and no suitable school place is available

### **Pupils who become Children Out Of School (COOS)**

Pupils who become COOS are those who are on a school roll but are not attending school in the usual way.

When a pupil has been continually absent for 10 school days or more consecutive days without permission (unauthorised), or 15 days with permission (authorised) the school will inform the Local Authority. Some of these pupils may be removed from a school roll and become *Children Missing Education* or *Missing Children* and in such circumstances the relevant protocol should be followed.

Pupils who are on a school roll may become COOS when:

- they have an illness or medical condition that is a barrier to them attending school, (*refer to DfE Statutory Guidance - Supporting pupils at schools with medical needs April 2014*)
- they are awaiting a CAMHS assessment
- they are on holiday or unauthorised leave from school
- they are subject to a 'grey' or unofficial exclusion
- they are a school refuser
- there are family circumstances that mean the family are not sending them to school, including young carers
- they are awaiting a school transfer to be processed and finalised
- they are believed to have re-located or moved house
- a house move means there are transport issues preventing attendance
- they are a CiC pupil and their placement has changed
- an alternative education provision is pending
- they are a Gypsy Roma Traveller pupil and they are travelling
- they are accommodated in a refuge following incidents of domestic abuse or are temporarily homeless
- an allegation of an assault by a member of school staff or another pupil is under investigation
- their parent is refusing to send them to school
- there has been an incident in school and they have stopped attending
- they have gone missing from home

*This list although comprehensive is not exhaustive*

## Guidance Notes for Parents requesting Leave in Term Time

1. Parents wishing the school to consider granting leave of absence in school term time should read these notes carefully and then complete and send to the headteacher the tear off request form below. This form should be sent to the school in time for the request to be considered **well before** the desired period of absence. Parents are strongly advised not to finalise any holiday booking arrangements before receiving the school's decision on their request. In any event the request form must be received by the school at least four weeks before the departure date to allow sufficient time for appropriate consideration.
2. The granting of leave of absence in school term time is, by law, a matter for consideration and decision by the school. There is no automatic right to any leave in term time. The Department for Education (DfE) and Telford & Wrekin Local Authority (LA) policy is that family holidays should not be taken in school term time. Where such requests are made, for the leave to be granted, the Headteacher should decide if there are **exceptional circumstances**.
3. Each case will be considered individually and on its own merits. Parents need, therefore, to consider very carefully before making any request for leave of absence the demands of the National and wider School Curriculum especially at the Key Stage assessment stage. In considering a request, the school will take account of: -
  - the exceptional circumstances stated that have given rise to the request;
  - the age of the child;
  - the stage of the child's education and progress and the effects of the requested absence on both elements;
  - the overall attendance pattern of the child;
  - the nature of the trip.
  - pupils on examination courses or due to take SATS will not normally be granted leave of absence.
4. Where parents have children in more than one school a separate request must be made to each school. The Headteacher of each school will make their own decision based on the factors relating to the child at their school. It is possible that because of these factors different decisions may be made. It is hoped that if this situation arises parents will be persuaded to accept the reasons for refusal given and, thereby, withdraw any other requests.
5. Where requests for a grant of leave of absence are received from only one parent the response letter - agreeing or refusing - will be either addressed to both/all parents where they live at the same address or to each where they do not. This is to ensure, particularly in the case of a refusal, that both or all 'parents' are fully aware of the consequences of ignoring a refusal as the refusal letter clearly states that each parent will receive a penalty notice.
6. Should the school decide to grant leave of absence but, the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and, no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence or, make known the whereabouts of the child, **his/her place at the school could be lost**.
7. Should the School decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** which may be subject to a Holiday Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.





**Request for Leave during Term Time**

To: The Headteacher of:..... (School) Date.....

**I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:**

my child (full name) .....

for the period from (date) ..... to (date) .....

**The exceptional circumstances and reason for this request are: -**

.....  
.....  
.....

**I have (an)other child(ren) in (an)other school(s) as follows**

**Child(ren) (full name(s) ) ..... School(s) attended .....**

.....  
.....

(Signature of 1<sup>st</sup> Parent/Carer(s) ..... Print Name.....

(Signature of 2<sup>nd</sup> Parent/Carer(s) ..... Print Name.....

**Please return completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.**

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**For Office Use Only**

Current Attendance.....%

Last Year's Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time .....(this Academic Year)

**Agreed/Not Agreed**

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed ..... Date .....

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent .....

## School Letter Leave Not Agreed

(Parents name and address)

Date

Dear (Parents name)

(Child's Name and Date of Birth)

Thank you for your letter dated (date) requesting permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school for (number of days), (dates).

As you may be aware the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Having looked at your application, although understanding of your reasons, I do not feel that your request can be supported in this instance. **Therefore, if the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised.**

As a school we are asked to inform you that, in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, unauthorised absence may be subject to a penalty notice fine of £60 payable per parent, per child, increasing to £120 each if not paid within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within 28 days this may lead to court proceedings.

Our key priority is to ensure that (pupil's name) is as successful as possible and is able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would hope that, upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

I have attached a copy of (pupil's name) attendance for this academic year.

***The Headteacher has been fully consulted in relation to this request for leave and fully supports the decision made.***

Thank you for your understanding; I hope this letter explains the decision that has been made.

Yours sincerely

## School Letter Leave Agreed

(Parents name and address)

Date

Dear (Parents name)

(Child's Name and Date of Birth)

Thank you for your letter dated (date) requesting permission for (pupil's name) to be absent from school for (number of days), (dates).

As you may be aware the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take holidays in term time if there are exceptional circumstances.

Having looked at your application, I feel that your request can be supported in this instance. **Therefore, the absence to include the dates requested will be authorised.**

Our key priority is to ensure that (pupil's name) is as successful as possible and is able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would hope that, in the future you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy that leave should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

I have attached a copy of (pupil's name) attendance for this academic year.

***The Headteacher has been fully consulted in relation to this request for leave and fully supports the decision made.***

I hope this letter explains the reason for the decision that has been made.

Yours sincerely