



Inspire, Create, Achieve

Attendance Policy

January 2020



Introduction

To achieve our School Vision of creating well-rounded, self-motivated individuals who are healthy, confident, happy and achieve the best they can, it is paramount that they have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Principles

- Regular and punctual attendance is hugely important in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.
- Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.
- Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.
- Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ❖ ***parents keeping children off school unnecessarily***
- ❖ ***truancy before or during the school day***
- ❖ ***absences which have never been properly explained***
- ❖ ***children who arrive at school too late to get a present mark***

Parents are expected to contact school on the first morning of absence to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way and attendance improved, the school will refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service (ESBAS) from the Local Authority. The Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on parents or seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Procedures

Attendance is monitored for all children and termly rewards are offered for children with attendance over 97% attendance over the term.

1. If a child's attendance falls below 95%, parents will be contacted in writing to ensure they are aware of the school's concerns over their child's attendance.
2. If a child's attendance falls below 93%, parents will be contacted by letter and a meeting requested to explain that the child's attendance must improve. Strategies to improve attendance will be put in place and a target to improve attendance will be set. Any time off school for illness must be verified by a doctor's note.
3. If the child's attendance does not rise in the ten weeks following step 2 or if the child's attendance falls without good reason during this period, a referral will be made to ESBAS who set and closely monitor targets for improved attendance.

Holidays

The school strongly discourages holidays during term time. Whilst the school understands that holidays during term time are cheaper and holidays do have innate educational benefits, the amount of curriculum time missed by children often has negative effects. For example, when re-joining the class following a holiday period, children often feel less confident because they have missed learning that underpins current teaching or children can have gaps in their learning due to lost curriculum time that can be difficult for the teacher to identify and fill and ultimately may cause the child to underachieve.

To support parents to be able to book cheaper holidays, the school places 3 inset days before the May half term holiday. This allows holidays to be booked taking advantage of cheaper periods.

If you need to take holiday during term time, please fill in a holiday request form available from the school office. A holiday authorisation flow chart is included in the policy in appendix 1. This will be used by the leadership team to decide whether the outcome of the application is authorised, not authorised but no fine recommended or not authorised and a fine recommended.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets for the academic year from September 2019 to July 2020:

- Whole school attendance is at least 97% for the academic year.
- Attendance of disadvantaged pupils is above 95% for the academic year.
- Attendance of pupils in receipt of free school meals is above 95% for the academic year.

The people responsible for pupil attendance in Westfield School are:

- Mr M Jarvis
- Mrs A Fry

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Appendix 1

Authorisation of Absences during Term Time

