Whittington Green School

Attendance Policy 2024

Dream Reach Achieve

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Government guidance

We have made a few changes to our attendance policy following the new DfE *Working Together to improve school attendance* guidance that came into effect on 19th August 2024. This also introduced a new national framework for penalty notices and amended the law. All schools and LAs across the country are expected to follow the new statutory guidance. Therefore, the changes to our policy are in line with Derbyshire County Council and government guidance surrounding attendance in schools.

Statement of Intent

Whittington Green School (WGS) believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive sufficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'
- Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Encouraging all pupils to achieve their maximum potential.
- Raising student awareness of the importance of attendance and punctuality and its impact on progress and attainment.
- Encouraging in students a sense of responsibility for their own attendance.
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE School Attendance 2020
- DfE Child Performance and Activities Licencing Legislation in England 2015
- DfE Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024
- DfE Children Missing Education 2024
- DfE Improving School Attendance: Support for Schools and Local Authorities 2021
- DfE Working together to improve school attendance 2024
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

WGS believes that good attendance is not simply a legal requirement. The school recognises that high levels of attendance and punctuality are essential in meeting the outcomes of the *Keeping Children Safe in Education* agenda which are vitally important if students are to take full advantage of the full range of opportunities that the school offers and gain the appropriate skills that will equip them for life. The school also recognises the direct link between attendance and attainment and as such encourages high levels of attendance in order for students to fulfil their potential academically.

Key Contacts

Denise Marsden	Deputy Head/Senior Manager responsible for Attendance
Deanna Spafford	Attendance Officer
Sue Collins	Attendance Officer/Student Support

Roles and Responsibilities

Whole School

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.

Parents/Carers

- Ensure that children are regularly attending school.
- Follow the Absence Procedure for parents/carers (page 5) if your child is absent.
- Provide up-to-date contact details and update school if these details change.
- Support school by encouraging good attendance levels.
- Where possible make any medical or dental appointments outside of school hours.
- Bring a copy of any medical appointment cards to school if in school time.
- Do not book any holidays or take children out of school during term time.
- Notify school as soon as problems arise with your child's attendance.
- Encourage children to report any issues that are concerning them, including bullying, immediately to school staff.

Students

- To raise student awareness, students will be encouraged to monitor their own attendance in their planners.
- Have consistently good attendance and punctuality.
- Work with school to improve attendance if needed.

Governors

- The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on a least a termly basis. It holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- Challenge the appropriateness and effectiveness of Attendance Policy Procedures.

Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher

- Have a clear Attendance Policy which all staff, pupils and parents/carers understand and which is published on the school website.
- Be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the Attendance Policy and Procedures of the school.
- Have overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Work closely with the Attendance and Pastoral Teams to ensure that the Attendance Policy and procedures are applied consistently and coherently across the whole school.
- Proactively use data to identify pupils or cohort with, or at risk of, poor attendance and develop strategies to support them.

- Monitor and evaluate school systems and interventions designed to promote exceptional attendance and behaviour.
- Accurately complete admissions registers.
- Regularly monitor data for pupils with medical conditions or SEND, including at board and governing board meeting and with Derbyshire County Council (DCC).

Attendance Team

- Be responsible for communications with parents/carers on attendance issues.
- Ensure contact is made with parent/carer on the first day of an unexplained absence.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents/carers to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Carry out safe and well checks as required.
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.
- If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with DCC and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all the partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with DCC and partners.
- Continued support for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and where absence does become persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential for legal intervention in the future.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with DCC on legal intervention.
- Continued support for persistently absent pupils and a joint approach with DCC.
- Analyse attendance and absence data to ensure appropriate and timely intervention.
- Provide timely and accurate data in order that attendance can be tracked effectively.
- Refer cases to the Early Help Service when necessary.
- Provide information necessary for Attendance Panel meetings and lead panel meetings.
- Check that lesson registers are completed by all staff every lesson.
- Inform Safeguarding Lead on the first day of absence of a student with a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need or a Child in Care.

Designated Safeguarding Lead

- Contact Social Services immediately on the first day of absence of a student with a Child Protection Plan, Child in Need or a Child in Care.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through statutory Children's Social Care.
- Inform the student's Social Worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register.
- Manage attendance issues through 1:1 sessions or Social Care meetings.

Student Support Team

- Responsible for supporting the Attendance Team.
- Discuss attendance with children and/or parents who are already on their caseload.

Early Help Manager

- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.
- Work with other schools in the local area and the Local Authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.
- Complete Early Help Assessments for identified students.

Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo)

- Work closely with the Student Support Team and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments such as an individual healthcare plan and, if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external, making timely referrals.
- 1:1 sessions with students on their caseload and support parents where attendance issues are present.

Form Tutor

- Keep an accurate and up-to-date register of attendance on Arbor.
- Maintain effective communication with the Student Support/Attendance Teams on all attendance matters concerning the form.
- Assist and encourage students in the recording and monitoring of their own attendance in their planners.
- Develop a positive ethos within the form which recognises good attendance and punctuality as the norm.
- Be vigilant in checking for forged absence notes.

Administration Team

- Accurately complete and/or amend attendance registers on Arbor.
- Follow correct daily processes regarding absence.
- Process new students onto Arbor.

Absence Procedure for parents/carers

- Parents/carers are required to provide an explanation of why their child is absent by contacting school through the Arbor app to log same-day absences. Alternatively, you can contact us on 01246 450825 or at attendance@wgs.derbyshire.sch.uk by 8:30am on the first day of their child's absence.
- Parents/carers should also let us know the day they expect their child to return to school and update us if that changes.
- A phone call will be made, or a text message sent, to the parent/carer of any child who has not reported their child's absence on the first day that they do not attend school or if a child does not return when expected.
- In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for the Attendance Team to speak with parents or undertake a home visit.

Attendance Register

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational visit
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

The school will use the following national attendance codes to ensure that attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way:

Code	Description
/	Present (am)
\	Present (pm)
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)
C	Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code)
C1	Absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
C2	Pupil on part-time timetable
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
J1	Interview
K	Attending education provision arranged by LA
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical / dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)
P	Approved sporting activity
Q	Lack of access arrangements
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Non-compulsory school age – not required to be in school
Y1	Normal transport provision unavailable
Y2	Widespread travel disruption
Y3	Part of school premises closed
Y4	Unexpected school closure
Y5	Criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable circumstance
Z	Student not yet on roll
#	School closed to students

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code # will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

A student is absent if they arrive at school after the register has closed or if they are not attending school for any reason.

Examples of unauthorised absence

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

Term-time leave

In September 2013 the government introduced new regulations making it clear that Headteachers must not give approval for any leave of absence during term time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Any requests for term time leave should be made on a holiday form available from the school office and handed in 4 school weeks before the first date of the requested absence whenever possible. You must have received written authorisation before your child can be absent from school.

Parent/carers may be issued with a penalty notice fine or prosecution should leave of 5 days or more be taken which is not authorised by the Headteacher, or where repeated incidents of leave in term time for less than 5 days occur or where the unauthorised absence contributes to wider poor attendance that meets the legal threshold. Absence deemed for the reason of unauthorised leave in term time will be marked in the register with the Attendance code G.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.

Promoting and Celebrating Attendance

The school acknowledges high levels of attendance in a variety of ways including:

- Recognised on school Attendance Board
- Contact home to parents/carers
- Boxes of chocolates for the form with the best attendance

At the end of the academic year, all students who have achieved 100% attendance will be celebrated.

Monitoring and Reviews

Contact will be made with parents/carers when we feel it is necessary. This can include phone calls home, letters, attendance contracts, meetings and home visits.

Unsatisfactory School Attendance

The threshold for when a school should consider requesting the issue of a penalty notice is 10 sessions (5 school days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be made up of any form of unauthorised absence including late after close (attendance code U) of register and odd days of unauthorised absence (attendance code O) which add up to 5 days within a 10-week period. At this point the school will consider if it is likely that the attendance will improve with further support or if they should refer the case to the local authority for formal monitoring with a view to legal action if the attendance does not improve.

Interventions and Legal Sanctions

Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 states that "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent/carer is guilty of an offence".

- Prosecution under section 444(1) Education Act 1996, where if convicted, may result in a fine of up to £1000.
- Prosecution under section 444(1a) Education Act 1996, where if convicted, may result in a fine of £2500 or imprisonment.

The law defines a parent as:
• Any natural parent, whether married or not
• Any parent who, even if not married, has responsibility as a parent
• Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person
Having care of a child or young person means that if the child or young person lives with you and is cared for by you then you will be regarded as the parent irrespective of what your relationship is with the child.

By law a student must currently remain in education until the last Friday in June in the school year in which he/she reaches the age of 16.