

Broadway Partnerships



Whitehall Nursery and Infant School

School Policy for Attendance and Punctuality Created in collaboration with the Broadway Cluster of Schools

Reviewed in school May 2021

Introduction

The Broadway Partnership is committed to protect the rights of all children to education as stipulated in article 27 of the united charter of the rights of the child.

At the heart of everything we do at Whitehall Infants it is children's learning, but children cannot learn if they are absent.

Our school Attendance and Punctuality Policy is therefore designed to give clear information in respect of our Attendance Management processes to parents, children, school staff, governors and the wider community.

This policy sets out our ambition for our children and recognises that there is a strong correlation between any absence and underachievement. It also recognises that good punctuality is essential for a child to start the school day prepared for learning.

We have developed the policy with our children, parents, staff and Governors and it is line with statutory guidance and expectations of Walsall Children's Services. The Policy provides information about rewards and sanctions.

We will focus on reducing persistent absence, unauthorised absence and we will challenge unsatisfactory reasons given for all absences.

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Our school will be a welcoming learning environment and our teaching staff are dedicated to help the children achieve the best they can.

In order to achieve the best outcomes for children it is expected that all our children will attend school every day on time. We believe that excellent attendance is paramount to raising standards and is fundamental to whole school improvement.

We expect our Governors, staff, parents and children to adhere to the framework of this policy.

The Aims of this Policy

- Improve Overall Attendance
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for pupils, parents, staff and Governors
- To define agreed roles and responsibilities in carrying out specific tasks
- To provide support, advice and guidance to families
- To develop a system of Reward & Sanction
- To promote multi-agency partnerships to address the needs of children with complexities related to irregular attendance
- To bring in line policies and procedures to reflect the diverse needs of the wider community
- Mitigate the further impact of COVID19 on lost learning.

Drivers – Local and National

Raising standards for children and young people are driven by legislation, national policy and the local agenda. Education establishments are subject to expectation, regulation and inspection to ensure standards continue to rise. Schools are constantly challenged to maintain standards and improve attainment. Our school will follow the principles and expectations as set out in the following documents.

- OFSTED Framework 2021
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021
- Children Missing Education 2016
- Parental responsibility measures Jan 2015
- School Attendance : Guidance for Schools Sept 2018
- Persistent Absence Sept 2015
- The Education Act 1996
- The Children Act 2004

Roles and Responsibilities

Parent Role: Parents have a responsibility to:

- Fulfil their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and any emerging issues should be advised to the school at the earliest opportunity. (At Whitehall we consider regular attendance to be at least 97%)
- Contact the school on the first day of any absence to explain the reason for the absence. Parents should understand that in law, it is the school who decides whether the absence is going to be authorised or not. Schools will base this judgement on the reason provided for the absence and/or the level of absence.
- Parents must NOT expect any leave of absence to be granted for the purpose of a holiday.
- Parents must write a note to the school offering a reason for any absence and provide medical evidence where possible.
- Parents must make sure their child/ren arrive at school on time.
- To work in partnerships to address any issues which prevent regular attendance.
- Parents of PA pupils MUST provide medical evidence during periods of absence.
- Inform school immediately if family are required to self- isolate due to Covid

Schools have a responsibility to:

- Fulfil their legal responsibility in the completion of pupil registers providing data to the appropriate body and report annually to the Local Authority
- Monitor attendance within the school, identify issues and put procedures in place to support children in accessing their right to a high quality education.
- Liaise with Public Health to discuss the closure of classes due to Covid19 & provide suitable home learning (see Remote Learning Policy)

Class Teachers

Class teachers will ensure their registers are maintained accurately. Class Teachers will ensure any information regarding a child's punctuality or attendance is communicated to the Attendance Lead (office administrator) at the earliest opportunity. This will avoid unnecessary telephone contact with families or cause them undue concern. Class Teachers may discuss any concerns regarding attendance with the Attendance Lead.

Admin Staff

Appropriate admin staff will ensure registers are updated with the appropriate attendance and absence codes.

They will also provide absence reports from the Education Management System (SIMS) at the request of the Attendance Lead & Head Teacher.

They will create letter templates for parents to ensure they are aware of their child's attendance.

Attendance Lead

The Attendance Lead will liaise with Class Teachers, the Head Teacher to report any emerging patterns of absence or when a child is absent without a good reason.

Liaise with LA Attendance Officer / EWO weekly to discuss pupils who are identified on the attendance caseload.

Liaise with HT to send out termly letters to parents to ensure they are aware of their child's attendance.

Local Authority Attendance Officer/ Education Welfare Officer

- The named Attendance Officer for the school works within a commissioned time framework and will support the school to manage their attendance. The Officer will normally visit once each week for a referral meeting with the school Attendance Lead.
- The Officers will carry out unannounced home visits to families who have recent absence.
- The Attendance Officers and the school will identify children who are PA or at risk of becoming PA each term and will actively target those children for early intervention.
- The Local Authority EWO will be responsible for all prosecutions and Penalty Notices for irregular attendance.
- The named Attendance officer will advise the school on the LA protocol for Fixed Penalty Notices & Warning Letters.

Communication

We will communicate any changes or updated information to families and the community in the following ways. We welcome feedback from our families and Governors.

- News letter
- Website
- Texts

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- Emails
- Annual reports
- Meetings
- Letters
- Telephone (to address individual matters when needed).

Home School Agreement

Our school will invite parents to sign a Home School Agreement whereby they are informed of expectations for excellent attendance.

Our School Attendance Management Process

Pupil registration

The school is required to maintain two registers:

- An admission register (known as the school roll)
- An attendance register

The admission register shall contain a list of all pupils at the school. The school will ensure that an attendance register for all pupils on the school roll is taken twice a day – once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site, or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school.

Authorised or unauthorised absence?

Authorised absence is whether the school has given approval for a pupil of compulsory school age to be absent from school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. Absences will only be authorised when the Head teacher is satisfied that the reason for absence is genuine and meets the following criteria:

- The child is observing a religious festival (code R)
- The child has an agreed medical appointment and the school has been notified in advance (code M)
- The child is too ill to come to school and parents have given specific symptoms (code I)*
- There are specific circumstances, usually agreed in advance by the Head teacher, where a child is unable to attend the school (code C)
- Self-isolation due to Covid related absence (code X)

****Where a child has had a series of previous code absences marked as I or O and attendance has fallen below 92%, (or in the first half term of a new school year where the attendance in the previous year was below 92%) the parents will be required to provide medical evidence to demonstrate the reason for the***

absence. Failure to do this will result in the absence being marked as unauthorised (code O)

Unauthorised Absence (UA)

All other absences must be treated as unauthorised (UA) and referred to the Head teacher who will use the appropriate code (code O)

Examples of Unauthorised Absence could be:

- Family Birthday
- Holidays not agreed
- Shopping
- Hair cuts
- Buying shoes or uniform
- Emerging patterns of any absence until satisfactory reason has been sought
- Illness of another family member (with exception of Covid self- isolation)
- Illness & bereavement of grandparents and extended family members
- Trips to airports
- Non urgent appointments dental/ optician etc.

LATENESS: Morning Session

The school operates a rolling start to the day. Doors will open at 8.30am (Nursery) and Classes 7, 8, 9. Year 1 start at 8.40 and Year 2 at 8.50. The school gate will close at 9.00am and parents will need to buzz the office to enter. The morning registration session ends at 9:20am and at this time registers are closed.

If a child arrives after doors have closed but before the registers close they will not be classed as late. However, if they arrive after registers close but before 9:30am they will be classed as late and the register will be marked with the L code. If they arrive after 9:30am the register will be marked with the U code indicating an unauthorised absence. This will be the case unless it can be demonstrated that there was a legitimate reason for the child arriving at school after registers close. Late arrivals please come via main school entrance gate.

For example, a medical or dental appointment where proof of the appointment has been provided. In this case the appropriate code will be used. Without proof, the **absence will still be recorded as unauthorised.**

Where children are persistently late, the school will refer the details to the LA Education Welfare Service to ensure appropriate action, including where necessary legal action, is taken.

LATENESS: Afternoon Session

Most children remain on site during the lunch time period. Any children returning from a morning absence should arrive at the prescribed time. Afternoon registration for Nursery is 12.30pm, Reception 12.30pm, for Year 1 it is 1.00pm and for Year 2 it is 1.15pm.

On a Friday Nursery is 12.30, Reception 11.45, Year 1 is 12.00 pm and Year 2 is 12.15pm

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Children arriving within 30 mins of these times will be classed as late and the register will be marked with the L code. Pupils arriving more than 30 mins late will be marked with the U code indicating an unauthorised absence.

First day absence

Parents are expected to contact the school on the first day of absence to provide reasons and a likely return date. However, if contact is not made with the school, delegated staff will call the family and check on reasons for absence. The information will be then recorded on our database. Where no contact is made the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Designated staff will continue to contact the family throughout the duration of the absence.

5+ day Absences

If a child has been absent for 3 days and no contact has been made with the family, details will be passed to the Education Welfare Officer to make a visit to the home. While the child is absent the school will continue attempting to make contact with the family. **If after 20 school days have elapsed no contact has been made, the school will consider taking action in line with the agreed LA guidance Removal from School Roll Policy.**

Frequent Absence (Persistent Absentee)

In cases where a pupil's attendance falls below 92% the Education Welfare Officer will contact parents to discuss issues affecting the child's attendance and look at ways to ensure it improves.

The Attendance Lead will identify pupils who are 'at risk' of becoming PA each term (Below 92%) and will report to the LA Attendance Officer at the end of each term the names of our children who are at risk. The school will then track these children through the year to ensure the risk of them becoming PA is reduced. School will send out letters termly to inform parents of any child at risk of PA. Teachers will discuss at Parent Consultation each term.

The Head Teacher will report all cases of PA pupils to the Governors each term.

Medical Appointments

Parents will be encouraged to make medical and dental appointments, wherever possible, outside of school hours or in the school holidays. If an appointment is made during the school day, proof of the appointment will need to be brought into the office before the child is released. (This needs to be an official appointment card or letter from the doctors, dentist or hospital. Where one of the above has not been provided, school may contact the organisation to confirm the appointment). Where there are siblings and parents can demonstrate they need to be collected at the same time, this can be authorised at the discretion of the head of school.

Holidays during term time: NOTE: NO TERM TIME HOLIDAY WILL BE AUTHORISED

Parents need to apply for leave of absence **in writing to the Head Teacher in** advance using the Leave of Absence Holiday / Extended Leave Form. A meeting with the Attendance Lead & LA Officer will take place to explain the LA term time holiday procedure.

Following the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 to the The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the school will not authorise holidays during term time. Where parents take their children on unauthorised holidays, the school will report the issue to the Education Welfare Service and request a £60 Penalty Notice is issued to each parent for each child. In these cases the register will be marked with the G code.

In Law, it is the Head Teacher's decision whether to authorise absence or not and this has been upheld by the high court. Only in very exceptional circumstances will the Head Teacher agree to absence which is in relation to holiday absence.

There is no automatic right for any absence. The Child's education will be paramount and absence will only be granted in very exceptional circumstances. The school and governing body are committed to raising standards and therefore the educational needs of the child will be critical in the decision making process. Parents should not expect holiday absence to be granted.

Absences in Exceptional Circumstances

Following the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 to the The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 parents can only remove their children during term time for exceptional circumstances. If parents feel they can demonstrate exceptional circumstances they should make application to the head teacher outlining their case and the amount of time they need to be away from school. The head teacher will determine if the absence can be authorised based on the evidence provide and the number of school days the child can be away from school if the leave is granted. Where the leave is granted, the register will be marked with the C code. Where no or inadequate evidence is provided, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and the register marked with the G code.

Emergencies Leave of Absence

Parents need to apply for leave of absence **in writing to the Head Teacher in** advance using the Leave of Absence Holiday / Extended Leave Form (See Exceptional Circumstances)

Attendance for Nursery Children

Even though there is no legal responsibility for children who attend our Nursery to be in school, we expect them to attend regularly. (At Whitehall Infants we consider regular attendance for children in Nursery to be at least 92% (Target 96%)). This is because poor attendance disrupts the learning of other children. Where attendance falls below 92% parents will be called to a meeting with the Attendance Lead / Class Teacher to discuss the child's attendance. If, after this meeting, the child's attendance does not improve, the school

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reserves the right to withdraw the child's place. However, this action will only be done in cases where the school can demonstrate that parents have not engaged with the school to improve their child's attendance.

Parent Information

All parents will be provided with the following information:

- Access to the agreed policy
- Half Termly updates of their child's attendance
- Updates on awards presented in school

Attendance monitoring

The school monitors the attendance and punctuality of all pupils on a daily basis as part of school Safeguarding Procedures. School will contact parents either by text / phone call on the first day of absence.

The school attendance lead monitors the attendance and punctuality of all pupils on a weekly basis. Education Social Workers/ LA Attendance Officer visit the school once a week to pick up any concerns raised. Where a child's attendance has fallen below 92% the case will be referred to Education Social Worker to take further action

The half termly PA tracks children and measured as follows .

Half Term 1	Half Term 1+2	Half Term 1+2+3	Half Terms 1+2+3+4	Half Terms 1+2+3+4+5
Pupils with 10 + sessions of absence	20+ sessions of absence	29+ sessions of absence	38+ sessions of absence	48+ sessions of absence

10. Rewards and Sanctions

Rewards

Each school will use appropriate rewards.

100% attendance awards , 96% attendance certificates (Termly)

Weekly class awards: Attendance Ted, certificate

Schools should have a prominently placed attendance board to celebrate good attendance.

Sanctions

The following sanctions will be applied in respect of irregular attendance

- School Letter Absence 1
- School Letter Parent Meeting 1
- School Late Letter
- Parent Attendance Contract
- EWO Medical Evidence Form

➤ Referral to the Local Authority Attendance Officer

We follow Walsall Attendance thresholds guidance.

- EWO Monitor for 6 week period
- LA Warning Letter
- LA Final Warning Letter
- Fining for non-attendance via attendance panel.

GDPR

Information will only be shared with necessary parties relating to attendance.

COVID 19

- School will refer to Public Health Walsall Guidance for support.
- Families must remain at home and self-isolate if ANY family member displays Covid 19 symptoms. The family member MUST seek a test to confirm whether positive or negative.
- Pupils will be coded X in the register to indicate the period of self –isolation.
- School will provide work in line with the Remote Learning Policy.
- School will move Pods/ Bubbles onto online learning if whole class isolation is required. All pupils will be coded as X .
- Please note Covid 19 related absence does not reflect in the pupils overall attendance percentage.

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