



## Whittington CE Primary School Attendance Policy

Adopted by the Governing Body: 15<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Review due: autumn term 2020

### Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if a child is to make the most of the educational opportunity available to them. Absence is a serious problem for children. Much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving these children at a considerable disadvantage for the remainder of their school career. There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement.

This policy is intended to ensure every child's regular and punctual attendance at this school, in line with all schools in the Nunnery Wood cluster. In this way, as well as in others we work in partnership with parents/carers to give every child the opportunity to develop to their maximum potential academically, socially and morally.

### Aims

- To ensure good levels of attendance for all children
- To raise awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality for all children.
- To promote positive and welcoming provision in which children feel safe, secure and valued.
- To ensure attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- To ensure that all parents/carers are aware of the processes to follow in relation to absence from school or in the event of lateness

### Roles and Responsibilities

- **Governors**
  - To set and monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance, in consultation with the Head Teacher.
  - To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.
  - To compare attendance rates at the school with national benchmarks.

➤ **School/Attendance Officer**

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil, group and whole school attendance patterns.
- To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- To work in partnership with key agencies in cases where attendance and/or punctuality becomes a concern.
- To make contact with parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance. (This may be by telephone, face to face and/or in writing).
- Take appropriate action regarding attendance and punctuality.
- To offer support to parents/carers experiencing difficulties that affect children's attendance.
- To support parents/carers to fulfil their legal duty to promote regular attendance.
- To refer the child/family to appropriate agencies and/or the Local Authority when necessary.
- To review and update the attendance policy.

➤ **Parents/Carers**

**Lateness**

- To ensure regular and punctual attendance. The school day begins at 9.00am and ends at 3.15pm. Children that arrive, without a valid reason, after the registers have closed at 9.10am, will receive an "unauthorised" mark.
- Then at 1.15pm. Children that arrive, without a valid reason, after the registers have closed at 1.25pm, will receive an "unauthorised" mark.

**Illness**

- To contact the school office as soon as parents/carers are aware that their child is going to be absent. School must be notified of the reason for absence every day the child will not be in school. A message can be left on the school answerphone. This is available 24 hours a day.

**Non-urgent Medical/Dental Appointments**

- Where possible, to arrange all non-urgent medical appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, advance notice should be given and parents/carers must sign the child out at the school office, and sign back in again upon return.

### ***Leave of absence for holidays in Term Time***

Regulations came into force on September 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 which makes it clear that Head Teachers are not permitted to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Family holidays during term time do not count as exceptional circumstances.

If parents/carers want their child to have leave of absence during term time, the request must be put in writing to the Head Teacher. The request will not be granted unless the Head Teacher (taking into account statutory guidance) deems the circumstances for making the request to be exceptional. If the leave is not granted but still taken, the pupil's absence will be marked as unauthorised which may lead to a referral being made to the Education Investigation Service.

### ***Other Absence***

- Other absence from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made to authorise or unauthorise the absence.

### **Authorised or Unauthorised Absence**

- **"Authorised"** absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

The following may be reasons for authorising absences:

- Illness
- Family bereavements
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available
- Days of religious observance, within certain parameters
- Fixed term exclusion
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated

All other absence must be regarded as **"unauthorised"**

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Attendance data is collected weekly to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This includes cases where there may be:
  - Persistent Absence (see below)
  - Incomplete weeks
  - Monday and Friday absences
  - Lateness
  - Periods of extended absence
  - Periods of "unauthorised" absence

The Head Teacher and the Attendance Officer will discuss the impact of the School's Attendance Policy and the strategies used to promote good attendance at least annually and the Head Teacher will ensure that an attendance target is agreed by the Governors.

The Governors will set an annual target of attendance and absence and review this annually at its first meeting. The attendance target for Academic year 2018/2019 is 96.5%.

### **Persistent Absence**

A persistent absentee is defined as a student who is absent for more than 10% of all possible half days (sessions). This is all absence, authorised or not.

The Department for Education and Whittington CE Primary School place a high priority on reducing the levels of persistent absence in our school. All attendance of less than 90% can be a cause for concern and attendance is reviewed regularly by the head teacher and the school's attendance officer. If a child is a persistent absentee or the patterns of attendance cause concern (see above) then the school will contact the parent/ carer in order to arrange a meeting to discuss strategies to improve overall attendance.