



WALTON PRIORY MIDDLE SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Department
for Education

Guidance

Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year

Updated 1 September 2020

Please follow the hyperlink above to the most up-to-date government information.

Owner	T Kemp	Date produced	October 2020
Approved Date	25/11/2020	Next Review	October 2021
Approved by	Governors	Signed	

AIM

- The aim of this policy is to encourage pupils to attend school every day (190 days per year) and to be able to take full advantage of the opportunities available. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and it is also essential in order for pupils to maximise their chances of success. There is clear evidence showing strong links between excellent exam results and excellent school attendance.

Key personnel

- **Headteacher** The Headteacher is the only person who can authorise leave in 'exceptional circumstances'
- **SLT Link** The SLT link for attendance is Mr Toby Kemp
- **Attendance Officer** The Attendance Officer is Mrs Caroline Warrilow
- **Education Welfare** The school employs "VIP" as its EWO service
- **Worker**

Duties

- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and guardians to ensure that their children receive efficient, full-time education. Parents/Guardians are responsible for their child's school attendance and punctuality. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's roll. In addition, lesson registers are taken each lesson using 'Lesson Monitor'.

Principles

- Regular and full attendance at school is an essential part of being able to deliver a good education to pupils. Teaching and learning become increasingly difficult when attendance is poor
- By law all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a proper full time education. Parents have a legal duty under Section 7 of the Education Act of 1996 to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full-time basis either by registering the child at school or by making other arrangements which provide an effective education
- Parents do not have the right to take children out of school for a family holiday
- Unauthorised absence from school is an offence and parents can be reported to the LEA when there are persistent attendance problems
- Every absence from school has to be classified by the school. It is the school that decides if an attendance is unauthorised
- Problems with attendance are best resolved by discussion between the school, parents and the pupil
- The Education Welfare Worker is available to help the school, parents and pupils resolve problems with attendance

Responsibilities

The school will ensure that:

- Pupils are registered accurately and efficiently
- Attendance targets are set for individual pupils and year groups
- Attendance and punctuality data is regularly reviewed and attendance workshops are available for pupils with attendance below 96% or have a pattern of lateness

- Pupils are expected to:
- Attend school regularly and be registered punctually
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences

The Parents or Guardians will:

- Ensure good attendance (97% and above)
- Inform the school on each day of absence and give specific reason
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance and seek the appropriate leave of absence in good time

School Day:

- The school day for pupils begins at 8.30am — by this time all pupils should be on the school's premises
- Pupils entering the school premises after the end of "Registration Bell" at 8.45 will be marked as late for school
- Afternoon registration takes place at 12.45pm for Key Stage 2 pupils and at 1.30pm for Key Stage 3 pupils
- The school day ends at 3.15pm.

Form tutors:

- Form Tutors have the responsibility of registering pupils' attendance at the beginning of the morning session
- Form Tutors will ensure that the registers are completed in accordance with the appropriate regulations
- Form Tutors have a major role to play in encouraging pupils to be punctual and to attend school each day

- Absence notes from parents will be checked by Form Tutors for their authenticity and will be passed to the Attendance Officer for filing
- Form Tutors will bring to the attention of the Attendance Officer those pupils who are either late for registration or who are absent

The Attendance Officer:

- Will liaise closely with Form Tutors in checking that registers are completed accurately and that they are kept in a safe place
- Will ensure that the registers are available for scrutiny and for emergencies e.g. for fire drills
- Will ensure that all absence notes are stored in a secure place
- Is responsible for notifying the SLT Attendance link of attendance problems
- Is responsible for discussing with Form Tutors problems relating to pupil attendance and the accurate record keeping of registers

Punctuality:

- All pupils are expected to be punctual to school (8.30am) and to lessons
- Pupils arriving after the registration bell at 8.45am will be marked as late using an L code
- Pupils arriving after registers close at 9.05am will be marked as an unauthorised absence and the absence must be explained by parental contact. This will be coded as a U

Attendance procedures

- Parents are asked to telephone school before 9.25am at the latest to notify us of a child's absence
- Authorised absence, e.g. illness, must be supported by a letter from the parents explaining the reason for the absence

- Pupils who wish to leave the premises during the school day will be expected to bring a letter from their parents notifying the form tutor
- Pupils arriving at school after registration should sign in at the General Office and should sign out if leaving the premises before the end of the school day
- Where parents fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the School Attendance Officer will endeavour to contact them
- Where a child's attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern, or when a parent fails to notify the school of the reason for an absence, the school will contact "Attend" to further investigate. This will usually mean a home visit

Unauthorised Absences

- An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:
 - School has not given approval in advance for a pupil to be absent
 - School does not accept a given explanation as satisfactory justification for absence
 - Medical evidence requested by school is not forthcoming
 - No explanation of absence is received within two weeks
- If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether that absence is authorised or unauthorised. Parents may not authorise any absence. In cases where parents seem to condone unauthorised absence, school may involve the court officer
- The Governing Body have agreed to adopt the Government initiative of imposing Penalty Notices in cases of persistent unauthorised absence and persistent lateness to registration
- Parents will receive a written warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and will have 20 days to ensure an improvement in attendance and / or punctuality. Failure to ensure improvement will lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice

- Penalty Notices are issued by the court officer to the family home. The fine for unauthorised absence currently stands at £120 per parent, per child. This amount is halved if paid within 21 days. Non-payment of the Penalty within the 28 day time limit will trigger the prosecution process under the Provisions of Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act
- In circumstances where a PN has been served with no impact on attendance patterns show chronic poor attendance the school may request a prosecution through Section 444 (1) of the 1996 Education Act. This will result in prosecution through the courts if there is no improvement in attendance

Leave of Absence

- Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time
- Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education
- Applications should be requested before any expenses are committed. Costs already incurred are not considered when a leave for absence request is reviewed
- There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to take leave during school time.
- All applications for leave must be made, in advance, by the parent.
- Parents who wish to apply for a leave of absence must complete the official request form. This can be collected from reception or downloaded from the school's website. Completed forms should be returned to the school's Attendance Officer at least 3 months before the proposed absence (where possible).
- Leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us at any time unless circumstances surrounding the request can be evidenced, by parents, to be exceptional.
- A request for a leave of absence involving a pupil missing 4 or more days of school will not be authorised without a formal discussion between a parent/guardian and a member of the school's Senior Leadership Team.
- In considering the request we will also look at various factors such as:

- The timing of the request:
- When a pupil is just starting the school, absences should be avoided as this is a very important transition period as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible. Pupils should not be absent where possible both immediately before and during assessment periods e.g. SATs or any other public examinations.
- Other periods of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic year
- A leave of absence will not be authorised retrospectively
- Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence is shown on reports and ultimately school references. The fine for unauthorised absence currently stands at £120 per parent per child or £60 if paid within 21 days. In certain circumstances, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if the pupil does not return to school on the agreed return date. Readmission cannot be guaranteed.
- From January 2018 any period of unauthorised absence can result in a fixed penalty notice
- From January 2018 a fixed penalty notice can be issued for 10 late marks. The school follows the Staffordshire LA Code of Conduct for issuing fixed penalty notices.
- The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (Amended 2010 and 2013)

Children Missing Out on Education through health and medical needs (CMOOE)

- Any child that is away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative, details will be passed to Local Authority for action.

Local authorities should:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that the child will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutive or cumulative. They should liaise with

appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the child

- Ensure that the education children receive is of good quality, as defined in the DfE's statutory guidance Alternative Provision (2013), allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from slipping behind their peers in school and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible
- Address the needs of individual children in arranging provision. 'Hard and fast' rules are inappropriate: they may limit the offer of education to children with a given condition and prevent their access to the right level of educational support which they are well enough to receive. Strict rules that limit the offer of education a child receives may also breach statutory requirements.

Monitoring attendance:

- The Attendance Officer will provide a daily list of absentees for SLT Attendance Link.
- The Attendance Officer has an agreed list of "first day response to absence" pupils, agreed by the Headteacher and SLT Attendance Link. Families of these pupils will be contacted as early as possible on the first day of absence.
- The Attendance Officer will provide analysis of attendance on request.
- "VIP" will discuss fortnightly with SLT Attendance Link, issues regarding attendance and highlight individual pupils.
- Pupils will be rewarded for excellent attendance via the school's rewards system.
- The Full Governing Board meeting (termly) will receive reports on attendance.
- The Headteacher will inform all Governors of the school's response to its attendance target on a termly basis at the Full Governors meeting.