

# Attendance Policy



<b>Attendance Policy 2017/18- Document Status</b>			
<b>Date of Policy Creation</b>	<b>4 December 2017</b>	<b>Federated Headteacher</b>	Denise Garner
<b>Date of reviews for 2017/18 to be completed by</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> November 2018</b>	<b>Chairman of the Governing Board</b>	Alan Smith
<b>Inception of new Policy</b>	<b>6 December 2017</b>	<b>Governor responsible for Attendance</b>	Anthony Suddes
<b>Date of Policy Adoption by Governing Body</b>	<b>6 December 2017</b>		

## **CONTENTS**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. School's roles and responsibilities**
- 3. Collection and analysis of data**
- 4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**
- 5. Term-time holidays**
- 6. Extended leave of absence**
- 7. Parents' / Carers' responsibilities**
- 8. Pupils' / Students' responsibilities**
- 9. Governors' responsibilities**
- 10. Conclusion**

## **1. Introduction**

**Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

## **2. School's roles and responsibilities**

All staff (teaching and support) at **Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

### **Attendance Leader**

At **Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery**, the Headteacher (as Attendance Leader), will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. S/he will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with relevant personnel; pupils and parents are regularly reminded about the importance of good school attendance and data may be used to reinforce this. A report is prepared for the governing board termly. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

### **Registration**

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once at the start of the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers; administrative staff add prescribed codes for absence (shown overleaf).

### **REGISTER CODES - CODE DESCRIPTION MEANING**

/ Present (AM) - Present

\ Present (PM) - Present

- B** Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) - Approved Education Activity
- C** Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)  
Authorised absence
- D** Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) - Approved Education Activity
- E** Excluded (no alternative provision made) - Authorised absence
- F** Extended family holiday (agreed) - Authorised absence
- G** Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) - Unauthorised absence
- H** Family holiday (agreed) - Authorised absence
- I** Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) - Authorised absence
- J** Interview - Approved Education Activity
- L** Late (before registers closed) - Present
- M** Medical/Dental appointments - Authorised absence
- N** No reason yet provided for absence - Unauthorised absence
- O** Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) - Unauthorised absence
- P** Approved sporting activity - Approved Education Activity
- R** Religious observance - Authorised absence
- S** Study leave - Authorised absence
- T** Traveller absence - Authorised absence
- U** Late (after registers closed) - Unauthorised absence
- V** Educational visit or trip - Approved Education Activity
- W** Work experience - Approved Education Activity
- X** Non-compulsory school age absence - Not counted in possible attendances
- Y** Enforced closure - Not counted in possible attendances
- Z** Pupil not yet on roll - Not counted in possible attendances
- #** School closed to pupils - Not counted in possible attendances

The register will be called promptly at **9.00 am** and **12.50 for EYFS** and **1.10pm, for KS1** by each class teacher and a mark will be made in respect of each child.

The registers will close after 30 mins at **9.30 am** and **1.20pm for EYFS** and **1.40pm for KS1**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Pupils who arrive late but **before** the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness.

### **Categorising absence**

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked as having unauthorised absence, unless leave has been granted by the school in advance, or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment /correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the headteacher.

**Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's

education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at **Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** will then challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. **The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the Headteacher / Governing Board.**

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
  - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority, a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence, the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered, in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday, for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see school's policy on term-time holidays)
- where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand);
- where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
- the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil / student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, having reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months
- in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period.**

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday, without prior permission;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

### **Approved educational activity**

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

### **Class registers**

In order to track pupils' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of pupils, class teachers will ensure all expected pupils attend each lesson. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the school office and measures taken to locate the pupil.

### **Staff Training**

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

## **3. Collection and analysis of data**

The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to relevant school personnel, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

Attendance is monitored for each pupil; where relevant, it is analysed and discussed with all appropriate parties.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DFE within the stipulated time-frame.

## **4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

Attendance has a very high profile at **Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** and is discussed at assemblies, meetings for parents and in governor meetings. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

**Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences, within a week. Administrative staff endeavor to make contact with the families concerned; if necessary a follow-up letter is written by the Headteacher and a meeting convened. Advice is sought from the AST when the matter cannot be resolved.

### **First-day calling**

**Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned or sent an SMS text message on the first day a pupil is absent without explanation, to establish a reason for the

absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence, or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.

### **Meetings with parents**

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans are put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

### **Referral to the Attendance Support Team**

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Attendance Support Team.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the taxi, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other pupils with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Attendance Support Team.

Where a pupil arrives late for school, but before the register closes parents / carers are asked to sign the late book, with reasons for the lateness. Persistent lateness will be followed up by a letter / meeting with those concerned and strategies suggested to improve the matter. The matter is referred to the AST if no improvement is seen.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the Office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**

For the same reason it is important that pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day, are collected from /returned to the Office area. Parents / Carers do not go to the classrooms.

## **5. Term-time holidays**

**Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday, other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a**

**right.** An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.

**Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays out of term-time because they are on active duty;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- more convenient flight times;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.
- If a child's attendance is already poor

**Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** will respond to all requests for a leave of absence, giving the reasons for the decision.

**Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, ie SATs examinations Phonic screening.

## **6. Extended leave of absence**

In considering absence for extended trips overseas, **Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas, (where this is their country of origin), has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday'; such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit are more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved;
- Where extended leave of absence is granted, there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

## **7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities**

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by **Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery**

**Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

- Notify **Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** on the first day of absence ; a telephone call is sufficient. We ask that children are not asked to relay a message about another child's absence, or reasons for it. We also ask that messages are not relayed via the taxis.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives.

**Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Nursery** will endeavour to support parents to address any concerns.

## **8. Pupils' responsibilities**

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. Parents may wish to confirm the reasons for any absence by sending in a letter when the child returns to school. Providing a telephone call has been made at the start of the absence, a follow-up letter is not obligatory. In cases of prolonged absence, a letter may be requested, in addition to the initial telephone call. Pupils also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

## **9. Governors' responsibilities**

The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

## **10. Conclusion**

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring outstanding outcomes for children

### **Reviewing the policy**

The school governors and T&W attendance support team (AST) monitor this pol