



WYLDE GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

School Attendance Policy for pupils

Principles:-

Education is important. Missing school means a missed opportunity for your child to thrive.

The Law states that every child has the right to an education, thus every child should be at school, on time and ready to learn, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent that can result in legal action by the Local Authority.

The Education Act relating to School Attendance states that:-

Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996:

“If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence.”

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

Section 444 (1A) Education Act 1996:

“If in the above circumstances you, the parent, know that your child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fail without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend, you are guilty of an offence.”

The court can fine you up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Please note that:

- a) Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- b) ‘Parent’ includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of him/her.

These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

Absences:-

Every half-day session has to be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

A parent can provide a reason for an absence, but cannot authorise an absence.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons absent from school where a reason has been given, such as illness, medical appointment, or any other genuine exceptional circumstance or pastoral consideration, as deemed appropriate by the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school do not consider reasonable or for which no "leave" has been given. These are an offence by the parent and include:

- keeping children off school without a good reason***
- truancy from a whole session***
- absences which have never been properly explained or where the reason given is not one that the Local Authority would authorise***
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark***
- taking unauthorised holidays, or days off for family events***

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one School Year	Equals this many days absent	Equals this many weeks absent	Which means this many lessons missed
90%	19	4	100
80%	38	8	200
70%	57	11.5	290

Frequent absence can add up to a considerable amount of lost learning opportunities and could seriously disadvantage your child's future prospects, both academically and socially.

As a parent what should you know or do:-

Any problems or concerns with regard to regular attendance, are best discussed between the school and the parent/carers at an early stage.

The School has a Family Support Worker along with other Staff members, who parents and children can discuss any concerns with.

Where a child's absence falls below 95%, and the reasons for absences are given as re-occurring periods of illness, the School may make a referral to the School Nurse Team. If parents decline the offer of help from the School Nurse, then school will make the referral without parental consent. The school may consider seeking advice from Children's Services in the event that we have further concerns.

If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may offer parents a formal Parenting Contract or refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority.

They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement wherever possible but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use legal proceedings against parents if required, including Penalty Notices (fines) or prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents/carers may wish to contact the Education Welfare Officer themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

The school has a legal responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance falls below 90%. These are called “persistent absentees” by the Government. Special procedures may be applied to children at risk of falling into this category.

Initially parents/carers will be informed verbally of any concerns, and this may then be followed up with a meeting in the first instance, with the Family Support Worker or SENDCO in charge of attendance. If your child’s attendance does not improve or remains a cause for concern parent/carers will be asked to attend an attendance review meeting with the Assistant Headteacher.

The School may also choose to run a Spotlight on Attendance Campaign, which is a Government led initiative to raise individual and whole school attendance by the use of Legal Action.

Procedures:-

Parents/Carers are required to telephone the School, or pop into the Main Office, on each day of an absence before 9.30am, to explain that day’s absence.

If no call reason has been received then a personal phone call will be made (where possible), and where we have been unable to speak to a parent/carer a voice mail will be left asking for a phone call to explain that days absence. This may also be followed up with a text message. If the School are unable to establish a reason for an absence, it will then be coded as unauthorised.

Parents may be invited into school to discuss the attendance issues with the Head Teacher and further advice from Educational Welfare will be sought, particularly in the case of persistent absences.

Parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school time wherever possible. Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, staff should be informed (in advance if at all possible,). A copy of the Hospital appointment letter, or proof of an appointment at the Doctors or Dentist **must** be brought into School, in order for the School to authorise that absence. If this is not done then the absence may be coded as unauthorised. A “present” mark can still be awarded if the child attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day.

Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process

The Leave in Term Time Penalty process allows the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice for removing their child from school for an unauthorised leave of absence in term time. This is different to the Spotlight Process.

Where a child has unauthorised term time leave but does not meet the criteria for ‘Spotlight’, schools can use the ‘Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process’.

This process enables the Local Authority to issue a penalty notice for removing their child from school for an unauthorised leave of absence in term time.

If the Leave in Term Time (Penalty Notice) Process is followed, parents may be issued with a penalty notice for taking their child on two weeks unauthorised leave in term time with no previous unauthorised absence.

Parents may also be issued with a penalty notice for taking their children out of school for a week of unauthorised leave as long as there are at least 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence over the previous 12 calendar months.

For pupils who have taken unauthorised leave in term time for four weeks or more, penalty notices may not be issued as cases may proceed straight to court. Decisions as to whether a penalty notice is to be issued or the matter proceeds straight to court lie with the Education Legal Intervention Team. The Headteacher cannot make this decision.

Where children do not attend school, but unauthorised leave in term time is suspected (parents have not followed the application process) the usual school absence procedures must be followed. Schools must then follow the Children Missing in Education procedures, for safeguarding purposes, jointly with the Local Authority making reasonable enquiries to try to locate the pupil.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives and strategies:-

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

Wylde Green Primary endeavour to continue to improve overall attendance year on year.

Attendance and Punctuality assemblies are held every week on a Monday, with the class for the best attendance and the class with the best punctuality receiving an award which is then displayed in their classroom.

Attendance/Praise Awards are given every term to children with good attendance together with good punctuality. These awards are presented in a special assembly.

From time to time the school will offer further rewards and incentives to encourage good attendance for all children or targeted groups.

100% Attendance which may include up to two lates will be awarded with a certificate.

98.50% to 99.99% will receive a Gold sticker

98.59% to 97.00% will receive a Silver sticker

96.99% to 95.60% will receive a Bronze sticker

The people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs Karen Swingler
Miss Clare Bird

Family Support Worker
SENDCO

Summary

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly. School staff are committed to working closely with parents/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

The School strive to maximise all learning opportunities and academic, social and emotional outcomes for all children, by encouraging good attendance and punctuality.

Date approved by Governing Body: April 2017

To be reviewed: Spring 2020