

WORMLEY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Have Faith, Show Respect, Take Responsibility, Achieve

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved Autumn 2015
Reviewed Autumn 2017

WORMLEY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL (VC)

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Aims

Wormley Primary School aims to maximise attendance rates (above 95% for every pupil) in order to ensure that all students are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them and make good academic progress.

Statutory Framework

Under Section 199 of the 1993 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where he/she is a registered pupil.

The Department for Education therefore expects all schools to reduce pupil absence, particularly unauthorised and persistent absence. Absence will be monitored closely via the pupil level school census which is submitted every year.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised. (see below).

A new inspection framework for maintained schools was introduced in January 2012. The quality of teaching and learning judgement relates to attendance because, however good the teaching, it does not benefit pupils if they are not present.

Responsibilities

Maintaining good punctual attendance at Wormley Primary School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents and staff. The Governors take a particularly strong view about poor attendance and lateness.

Parents:

- are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular and punctual attendance;
- are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn
- will inform school on the first day of absence, of the reason for their child's absence from school by 9.30am
- will avoid arranging family holidays during term time

- will maintain regular communication with school staff where necessary
- will ensure that school are informed of any changes of contact details

School:

- will provide a safe learning environment
- will ensure that records of attendance are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis
- will encourage good attendance and will investigate all unexplained and unjustified absence
- staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality
- will keep parents informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record
- will work closely with parents should attendance or punctuality give cause for concern

Entering the classroom and Registration

All children are expected to arrive before 8.55am. Children in Years 3-6 arrive on the KS2 playground. Children in Reception to Year 2 arrive at their classroom door.

KS2

KS2 children can be left on the playground from 8:45am when there will be a member of staff on duty. At 8.55am a whistle will be blown and the children will be expected to line up with their class. The teacher will then lead their children into their classroom. The doors will be secured as soon as the last class enters the building.

Reception and KS1

At 8.55am the classroom door will be opened and the children will be expected to line up and enter the classroom. Parents are expected to stay with the children until the children until then. The doors will be closed as soon as the last child has entered the classroom and the adult on the door cannot see any other children on their way to the classroom.

Nursery

At 9:00am the classroom door will be opened and the children will enter the class in key groups. The doors will be closed as soon as the last child has entered the classroom and the adult on the door cannot see any other children on their way to the classroom.

Breakfast Club

Breakfast Club starts from 7:45 am every morning. Children leave Breakfast Club at 8:45. At this time, KS2 children enter the supervised playground; KS1

pupils are supervised by an adult in the KS1 library area and Reception children are taken straight to class where they are supervised by a class practitioner.

Lateness

Pupils who are late must enter the school through the main school entrance. Admin staff will register the child and ensure they are assigned the appropriate lunch. It will be the adult's responsibility to explain the reasons for the child not arriving on time, e.g., the car broke down. If a pupil arrives later **9.30am** it will be considered an unauthorised absence unless there are reasonable circumstances.

Repeated absence at the beginning of a school session can amount to failure to attend regularly for the purpose of section 199 of the 1993 Education Act.

Following up Lateness

- Admin staff will have responsibility for collating lists of pupils arriving late
- Lateness is monitored daily
- Children who arrive late may not get the selection of choice for school dinners due to the kitchen needing time to prepare meals
- If a child has more than 3 late arrivals in a week or 5 in two weeks a letter will be sent to the parents/carers
- Parents whose children are regularly late for school, will be contacted by a member of school staff who will work with the parent(s) to bring about an improvement in punctuality

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Parents must provide an explanation for **all** absences from school. The headteacher will decide whether to accept the reason given and to authorise the absence.

If a child needs to be absent from school parents/carers will need to complete a *Leave of Absence Application* form (See Appendix 2). The application will be considered by the headteacher before being returned to the parent/carer. Only exceptional reasons will be authorised. Exceptional reasons are those considered beyond reasonable control of the parents. If a request has been declined it is expected that the child should be in school. Unauthorised absences could lead to a penalty notice.

Examples of **authorised** absences:

- The pupil was ill and the headteacher is satisfied with the reasons for absence
- There is a family bereavement.
- The pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition.

- The pupil is participating in an approved public performance or sporting activity.
- The pupil has a music/dance exam.
- Unavoidable hospital/orthodontic appointments when a copy of the appointment is provided.
- Days of religious observance
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return

Absence will be **unauthorised** if:

- No explanation is forthcoming
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- The pupil is absent for reasons that are not considered exceptional
- Due to persistent absence, the Attendance Officer has instructed the school not to authorise anymore absence

Procedures for following up absence

- Wormley Primary School follows up all absences. The names of pupils absent from school is reviewed by the deputy headteacher daily.
- Parents are expected to either ring or physically visit the office to inform the school of an absence on the day by 9:30am.
- If a pupil is absent and we have not been notified the office will contact the parents, first by calling and then by text.
- If the school has been unable to contact a parent/carer a letter will be sent in the post that day. **Parents/carers must be contactable at all times in case of emergencies.**
- The deputy headteacher routinely monitors attendance
- If a pupil is persistently or frequently absent (below 90%), the deputy headteacher will write to the parents
- If the attendance does not improve, parents and the children will be invited to attend a meeting at school.
- If a pupil is persistently absent (or late) and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Officer during their consultation visits.
- The Attendance Improvement Officer checks the registers every half term and parents will be notified if their child's absences are too high.

Holidays

The Department for Education has recently changed their view on holidays during term time. Holidays will not be authorised during term time unless the circumstances are considered exceptional. For example, parents who work in the armed services. Retrospective holiday requests will not be authorised. Parents who take their children out of school for an unauthorised holiday may be issued a penalty notice.

Leaving and returning to School during School Day

Please do not collect your child prior to the end of the school day unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers must notify the school of any expected absence as soon as possible. This should be done through a leave of absence application. If the absence is for a specialist medical appointment, a medical appointment card should be included to support authorisation. Please make routine medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

Children must be signed in or out of the school via the main reception.

Working with the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)

Wormley School works in partnership with the allocated AIO to improve attendance for individual pupils and the whole school. The AIO meets with the school every half term. Wormley School works with individual pupils and their parents to improve poor attendance. When attendance does not improve sufficiently, and after discussion with the AIO the school will make a referral to Children, Schools and Families for the AIO to work with the family on a formal basis.

Strategies for promoting Attendance

- Wormley Primary School offers an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos demonstrates that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.
- The class with the highest attendance for the week is celebrated during the Friday assembly.
- Every week the whole school are provided with an opportunity to earn a collective privilege if attendance is above 95%
- Children who achieve 100% attendance per term are awarded a certificate
- Teachers to meet regularly with parents to try to work together to improve attendance and punctuality
- An engaging and relevant curriculum is designed with the Every effort is made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to the pupils' needs and that children enjoy their learning and look forward to coming to school.
- The children are taught how to be effective learners and the importance of attending regularly, ready to learn.
- Attendance is monitored daily and analysed at least monthly in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support an inform policy/practice.
- Parents are regularly reminded (via News on the 19th, the school brochure, parents' evenings, etc) the importance of good attendance.

- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.
- The headteacher reports to the school's governing body on attendance matters termly.
- Children who have been absent will not normally be given home learning to catch up from their teachers.

Registers

Registration is conducted by the class practitioner every morning. This is recorded electronically and is part of the school's information system: SIMS. This is monitored every day and is updated as appropriate. It therefore is always current and can be used to provide reports to external partners monitoring attendance.

Registers are legal documents – should the parents of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the LEA under Section 199 of the 1993 Education Act, then the register would be used in the court action.

It is imperative that children are constantly reminded that the school takes attendance very seriously.

Penalty Notices

At Wormley School we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 21 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in the previous and/or current term (including unauthorised holidays), the headteacher may ask the LA to issue a Penalty Notice *. The penalty is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid before 28 days. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.

Parents at risk of incurring a penalty notice will be informed via letter after 6 unauthorised absences.

** The Local Authority is planning on reducing the number of unauthorised sessions to 15.*

Policy approved: Autumn 2015

Policy renewal date: Autumn 2017

APPENDIX 1: Late form APPENDIX 2: ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

APPLICATION TO REQUEST AN ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

If you need to request a child's absence from school, please complete this form.

It is a legal requirement that children attend school unless there is an exceptional circumstance, such as illness, a medical or exam appointment, a personal situation etc.

Family holidays should be booked during the thirteen weeks of school holidays. These dates are available in newsletters (News on the Nineteenth) and the website.

Absence may be directly authorised by the school's Attendance Officer if supporting evidence is supplied or at the discretion of the Headteacher. You may be asked to meet with the Headteacher to discuss a request for absence.

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

Name:

Class:

Date of absence:
absence:

No. of days/hours

Reason for absence (please tick as appropriate)

Medical
(please specify below)

Exams

Other

Parents will be notified of their child's attendance throughout the year at Parent Consultation Evenings and in the end of year child's annual report. The Local Authority visit the school on a regular basis to monitor attendance. You may be contacted if your child's attendance falls below an accepted rate. Parents can be prosecuted for their child's low attendance at school.

You may find the following information about attendance very useful.

USEFUL FACTS AND FIGURES LINKED TO ATTENDANCE

90% attendance

- ½ a day of school missed every week
- 4 whole weeks of school missed in a year
- Over ½ a year missed in total from Reception to year 6

80% attendance

- 1 day of school missed every week
- 8 whole weeks of school missed in a year
- Over 1 year missed in total from Reception to year 6

Attendance over 93%

- Improved SATs results at primary school
- Students achieve an average of 75% A*-C GCSE grades at secondary school

Attendance below 90%

- SATs results lower at primary school
- Students achieve an average of 25% A*-C GCSE grades at secondary school

OFFICE ONLY

Your child' absence is authorised

- as the result of supporting evidence
- as the result of extenuating circumstances

Your child's absence is unauthorised

- as a result of insufficient evidence
- as a result of the absence due to a holiday taken in term time

Our attendance rate as a school has really improved over the past 18 months and we thank you for all of your support in achieving this.

Mrs T Gaiteri
Headteacher BEd. Hons MEd