

WORMLEY C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Have Faith, Show Respect, Take Responsibility, Achieve

ATTENDANCE POLICY

A safeguarding policy

Approved Autumn 2021
Review Autumn 2024

Aims

Wormley Primary School aims to maximise attendance rates (above 96% 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 child may be considered at risk of harm if they do not attend school regularly. Poor attendance may be viewed as a safeguarding matter (see Child protection policy).

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 8.55am (absence line 01992 303331 option 1; attendance@wormleyprimary.co.uk)
- will avoid arranging family holidays during term time, including those that are

arranged, even as a surprise, by relatives or friends.

- 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

We offer a 'soft start' to the school day with children entering the school as they arrive within their allotted time slot. These time slots are either 8.45am to 8.55am or 8.55am to 9.05am, depending on the child's year group. These time slots are communicated to parents every year and are displayed at the entrances.

Children in Years 4-6 arrive through the back gate onto the KS2 playground. Parents do not come onto the school grounds.

Children in Years 2-3 arrive through the front gate.

Children in Reception and Year 1 arrive on the KS1 playground.

Nursery arrive at their classroom door. 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 and Morning Home Learning Club

Breakfast Club starts from 7:45 am every morning. Morning Home Learning Club starts at 8am every morning. Children leave the clubs at 8:45. At this time, they go straight to their classrooms.

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. They will receive a Late mark in the register. If a pupil arrives later than **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 and reviewed regularly
- Children who arrive late may not get the selection of choice for school dinners due to the kitchen needing suitable time to prepare meals.
- If a child has regular lateness (e.g. more than 3 late arrivals in a week or several days on consecutive weeks) parents will be contacted via text, email or letter.
- If punctuality does not improve, a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team will be arranged to explore how the parents will improve the situation.
- On the rare occasion that punctuality still does not improve, parents will be invited to a meeting with the attendance panel.
- If after extensive support from the school the parents do not ensure that punctuality is at an acceptable standard, a referral will be made to the local authority attendance officer.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Parents must provide an explanation for **all** absences from school. A member of the senior leadership team 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) or complete the google form, available via a link on the [website](#). For planned absences, parents/carers must provide the school with this form **at least 2 weeks in advance**. **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 is absent with leave as agreed by the Senior Leadership team
- The pupil was ill and the headteacher is satisfied with the reasons for absence and the school have not asked for proof of absence to be provided
- 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 in advance.
- Days of religious observance
- The pupil is of Traveller heritage and their need to temporarily leave the area to work giving reasonable indication of their intention to return.

Absence will be **unauthorised** if:

- No explanation is forthcoming
- The school was not provided with suitable notice
- 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 any more absence

Procedures for following up absence

- Wormley Primary School follows up all absences. Pupils absent from school are reviewed by the senior leadership team daily.
- Parents are expected to inform the school of an absence on the day by 8:55am.
- If a pupil is absent and the school has not been notified, the office will contact the parents, first by text and then by calling.
- If the school has been unable to contact a parent/carer a letter providing the parent/carer with an opportunity to explain the absence will be sent home on the day of the pupil's return. This letter must be returned to school immediately otherwise the child's absence will be unauthorised. **Parents/carers must be contactable at all times in case of emergencies.**

- The parents of any pupils whose attendance is below 96% will receive a letter from the school informing them that their child's attendance is below the school and national expectation.
- If the attendance does not improve, the children and their parents will be invited to attend a meeting at school to explore how the parents plan to improve the situation.
- If the pupil's attendance does not improve, the parents may be informed that all future absence will require medical evidence if it is to be authorised.
- On the rare occasion that attendance still does not improve, parents will be invited to a meeting with the attendance officer.
- If after extensive support from the school the parents do not ensure that punctuality is at an acceptable standard, a referral will be made to the local authority attendance officer.
- Parents will be issued a fine warning should their child accumulate unauthorised attendance (Appendix A) (see Fines section)

Holidays

The Department for Education directs that holidays during term time will not be authorised 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

Parents are requested not to collect their 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 regularly with the school. 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

- The school's ethos and culture centre on the children and learning. Children are made to feel welcome and valued. A sense of belonging is explicitly developed as a whole school and individual classes.
- Have a designated attendance lead in the senior leadership team with clearly assigned responsibilities, to work alongside the attendance officer to implement the attendance policy; monitor and analyse data and work with families
- An engaging and relevant curriculum is designed to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs and that children enjoy their learning so they look forward to coming to school.
- The children are taught how to be effective learners who understand the importance of attending regularly and being ready to learn.
- Teachers and the attendance lead/officer meet regularly with parents to try to work together to improve attendance and punctuality
- Attendance is monitored daily and analysed at least monthly in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement and support and inform policy and practice.
- Parents are regularly reminded (via school app, website, social media, 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.

Registers

Registration is conducted by the class practitioner every morning and afternoon. This is recorded electronically and is part of the school's information system: Arbor. 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 (see appendix A)

At Wormley School we expect parents to work with us to address attendance problems. If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day= 1 session) unauthorised absence in the previous and/or current term (including unauthorised holidays), the headteacher will ask the LA to issue a Penalty Notice.

Policy approved: Autumn 2021

Policy renewal date: Autumn 2024

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
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APPLICATION TO REQUEST AN ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

If you need to request a child's absence from school, please complete this form **at least 2 weeks before the date of absence.**

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: **No. of days/hours absence:**

Reason for absence (please tick as appropriate)

Medical Exams Other (please specify below)

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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 acceptable 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

- 1/2 a day of school missed every week
- 4 whole weeks of school missed in a year
- Over 1/2 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

If a request has been declined, it is expected that the child should be in school.
Unauthorised absences could lead to a penalty notice.

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

Mrs T Gaiteri Headteacher BEd.
Hons MEd