

Attendance Policy



Attendance Policy 2018/19- Document Status			
Date of Policy Creation	November 2018	Executive Headteacher	Denise Garner
Inception of new Policy	January 2019	Chairman of Governors	Alan Smith
Date of review	November 2020	Governor with Responsibility	Anthony Suddes
Date of Policy Adoption by Governing Body	12 December 2018		

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school documentation, which provides additional relevant information and guidance: Safeguarding Policy, Children Missing in Education Guidance

Philosophy

Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Oakengates Nursery Federation is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all children. We believe that, if children are to benefit from education, punctuality and good attendance is crucial. As a federation, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all children. Any problems that impede punctuality and regular attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our federation to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful federation career. Our federation will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our children.

Our federation will give a high priority to conveying to parents and children the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a child's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and children to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the child to full attendance at all times.

Principles

The federation will:

- ensure that all staff are aware of the registration procedures and receive in-service training on registration regulations and associated education law,
- complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and during the afternoon session,
- stress to parents/carers the importance of contacting staff early on the first day of absence,
- display attendance rates around the federation and reward good and improved attendance of all children,
- promote positive staff attitudes to children returning after absence,
- consult with all members of the federation community and the Attendance Support Team in developing and maintaining the whole-federation attendance policy,

Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Oakengates Nursery Federation

- ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures by senior managers and the federation governors,
- send newsletters each term to parents and children informing them of attendance rates and related issues, additionally update federation website with any attendance related issues,
- work towards ensuring that all children feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that, if a child is absent, she/he will be missed,
- have in place procedures which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

Following up Absence

The school and nursery has effective and recognised procedures for identifying and following up absences. All absence will be followed up as soon as possible. The action taken, and the responses received, will always be recorded

Procedures

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent child on the first morning of absence we will:

- follow 'First day contact' procedures and contact the parent by telephone/text message, or if the parent is unavailable send a standard letter requesting information,
- consider sending a second letter if an explanation has still not been received after three days of unexplained absence or send a School Attendance Letter (SAL),
- refer to the federation's 'Nominated Attendance Person' (NAP) or Education Welfare Officer (EWO), to follow up absence if no response is received after 5 days of absence and consider a referral to '*Family Connect*' if no contact can be made with the parent,
- invite the parents into the school or nursery for an 'Attendance Concern Meeting' (ACM) after a maximum of 10 days absence, unless other action is planned. This meeting should include a senior member of staff, parent, child and the NAP/EWO. The aim of this meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the child from attending school/nursery. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school/nursery attendance (see Telford & Wrekin's attendance guidance)
- help the child's re-integration where a child is returning to school/nursery after an absence of longer than two weeks. In the event of a child returning after a long-term absence then a

Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Oakengates Nursery Federation

'Reintegration Plan' can be implemented. The plan should include all members of the school/nursery staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the child's needs as possible

- In the case of SAL2 Admin team will ensure parents bring medical evidence.
- If medical evidence is not provided for a SAL 2 the register will ensure the register has been marked as an unauthorised absence.
- Contact **Family Connect 01952385385** for further guidance on available support.
- Follow the safeguarding policy and procedures for children missing in education if a family cannot be contacted

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absence is absence without approval from an authorised representative of the school or nursery and includes all unexplained absences.

Parentally Condoned Absences

This form of absence is equally as damaging to the child's educational experience as any other form of absence. The parents, in many cases, perceive that they are keeping their child away from school or nursery for legitimate reasons; they may feel that they are protecting their children. It is essential that, when school and nursery staff feel that a worrying pattern of non-attendance is emerging, they work closely with the educational, social and health support services to ensure that the most appropriate and effective intervention is available to the child and parents.

Parents of children from different cultures may feel that the school or nursery is not a safe, or proper, environment for their child. It is vital that schools investigate and endeavour to recognise cultural issues, which may prevent a child from attending school. There is a range of specialist support services, which will assist and advise schools and parents on ways forward when these difficulties arise.

Factors which may contribute to Condoned Absences

- A parent may not value education, they may have had a negative experience of school themselves, and prevent their child from attending school because of this belief.
- Separation anxiety: a parent and/or child may be frightened of separation from each other. Domestic violence may also be a factor.
- A child may be needed to contribute to the family income by working either within the home or outside.

- A child may be the only significant carer within the family.
- A parent may be physically or psychologically ill.
- There may be social issues which parents may feel are of more importance than educational issues.
- Financial restraints, the parent may be unwilling or unable to provide lunch or appropriate clothing (uniform, shoes, and coats).

Leave of absence in term time

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulation 2006 previously allowed Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in “special circumstances” of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers could also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 Regulations make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Any leave of absence during term time can be disruptive both to the child's learning and to the school whether for a family holiday or for any other reason.

Schools will only consider leave in term time where both:

- the application is made on schools ‘**Request for leave in term time**’ form, to the Headteacher in advance of the leave by a parent/carer the child normally lives with. The legislation does not allow for retrospective permission to be granted
- there are exceptional circumstances, as agreed by the Headteacher for the leave and in such circumstances the Headteacher determines the length of any agreed leave in term time.

Applications should be made as far in advance of the leave as possible and parents/carers should speak to the school before they book any holidays.

The headteacher will only agree absence in exceptional circumstances. It is entirely the Headteacher/school's decision and is not a parental right.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absence

Parents could be issued with a penalty notice if their child is absent from school without permission. In Telford & Wrekin, Holiday Penalty Notices (HPN) are issued by the Attendance Support Team to parents who take their children out of school during term time without getting authorisation from the school. The

Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Oakengates Nursery Federation

penalty is £60, rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days, per parent, per child. If parent/carers fail to pay the penalty fine within 28 days they will be prosecuted.

The Headteacher will consider each request individually and consider:

- the time of year of proposed leave of absence
- the length and purpose of the leave of absence
- the duration of the leave of absence and its impact on continuity of learning
- the circumstances of the family and the wishes of parents
- the overall attendance pattern of the child

The school will carefully explore with parents why leave of absence is necessary. Where absences are sanctioned, they should be counted as an **authorised** absence.

Where parents fail to abide by the agreement reached with the school and keep a child away from school in excess of the period agreed or, where parents fail to apply for permission, the extra time taken should be treated as an **unauthorised** absence.

All requests for leave of absence should be in writing and the application should be made by a parent with day-to-day care of the child even if they are not actually going on holiday themselves. If the parent with whom the child lives does not give consent to the holiday, leave cannot be given lawfully by the school **except** by a Court order

Extended Overseas Trips

When making judgements about extended absence for children from ethnic minority families, the federation will ensure that a full account has been taken, not only of the regulations and DfE guidelines, but also of the situation of ethnic minority families in general and the particular circumstances relating to each individual case. There is no automatic right to any parent to remove their child from school during term time.

We will take account of the following:-

- a visit involving family overseas has an entirely different significance from the normal associations with 'holiday' which is the category recognised by the DfE
- visits may be very important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up
- parents may feel that the planned visit outweighs the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school - maintaining family

Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Oakengates Nursery Federation

links may involve greater significance and greater pressure in some societies than it does in many western societies

- the reasons for parents making a visit may be similar to those for indigenous parents, e.g. family illness, bereavement, etc.

However, parents will be made aware that:-

- leave in term time is disruptive and detrimental to a child's learning and attainment
- advanced permission must be requested and agreed
- the absence should be planned carefully with the school
- wherever possible, extended visits should be made during school holidays
- leave of during examination time should be avoided
- children who miss school for six weeks or more fall behind in their school work by a full term
- some children never catch up and will under-perform in their examinations
- their child's name may be removed from the register if he or she has not returned to school within twenty school days of the expected date of return

If absence is agreed, schools will consider:-

- the potential educational value of the visit
- the amount of school work missed and how parents and school can help their child catch up on his/her return to school
- preparing a study pack
- asking pupils to make notes/observations in relation to a current or forthcoming class topic
- going through any work that has been completed by the pupil on return to school
- sharing experience with other pupils - class teacher could ask child to bring into school postage stamps and other memorabilia from country visited.

Lateness

Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Oakengates Nursery Federation

- A child's punctuality is a legal requirement and the parents/carers of a child who is persistently late are guilty of an offence. The law treats persistent lateness in the same way as irregular attendance and parents can be prosecuted if late arrival, after the register closes, is not resolved.

The Role of the Headteacher in Primary Schools

The Headteacher is responsible for the recording and monitoring of the registers and for following up absences; the task of managing attendance is often delegated to the pastoral lead and a Nominated Attendance Person (NAP) identified to liaise with the LA. Consistency of practice is helped where there is effective liaison between the class teacher, NAP and the head teacher.

Performance

The Federation will set realistic targets for both attendance and persistent absence; these targets will be set during the Autumn term of each academic year, in consultation with the Governing Board. The Governing Board must approve the target for attendance for the following academic year.

When evaluating success the federation will consider whether or not:

- Attendance has improved
- Persistent absence has reduced
- Punctuality has improved
- Parental response to absences has improved
- Re-integration plans, where implemented, have been successful
- The federation has been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the federation, governing body and the local community
- Children are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within federation
- Attendance issues have been included as topics in federation assemblies, Personal and Social Education (PHSE) lessons, or as a theme for any other lessons

Practice (see Appendix 3)

The federation will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regularly analysing attendance data
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-federation attendance
- Liaising closely with the federation's NAP/EWO, if appropriate
- Recording (and retaining) carefully, all telephone messages
- A signed copy of any correspondence to parents is retained by the federation

Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Oakengates Nursery Federation

- A referral is made to AST (the Attendance Support Team) for intervention using the electronic ASTR form

Appendix 1 Request for Leave in Term Time from School

Date:

To: The Executive Headteacher *Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Oakengates Nursery federation*

I request permission for leave in term time from school for my child:

(Full name) _____

From (date) _____ to (date) _____ for _____ School days.

My child will be accompanied during the leave by:

(parent/carer) _____ and (parent/carer) _____

The **exceptional circumstances** and reason for this request are: -

(If necessary, please continue on a separate sheet and attach it to this form)

I have (an) other child (ren) in (an) other school(s) as follows

Child(ren) (full name(s) School(s)

Name of 1st Parent/Carer(s) Signed

Current address.....

Wrockwardine Wood Infant School & Oakengates Nursery Federation

Mobile No.....

Name of 2nd Parent/Carer(s) Signed

Current address.....

Mobile No:

Please return the completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether your request is authorised or not. Please do not confirm any holiday booking until you have confirmation of permission for the leave in term time from the Headteacher.

For Office Use Only

Date request for leave in term time received by school

.....

Current Attendance.....% Last Year's

Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions previously taken as leave in term time

.....

Re: **Siblings:** other schools confirmed?

.....

What action are other schools taking?

.....

.....

Leave in term time Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is **agreed/is not agreed** for the above pupil to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Signed Job

Title.....

Print Name Date

Notification of decision: Date letter sent to parent.....

Any notes:

Appendix 2 Leave in Term Time Refusal – Example Letter

Date

(Parents name and address)

Dear (Parents name)

(Childs Name and Date of Birth)

Thank you for your letter dated (date) requesting permission for leave during term time for (pupils name) for (number of days), (dates), for the purpose of a family holiday).

As you may be aware the Government has renewed appeals to parents not to take their children out of school during term time. The Governors of the school support this and have decided that students will only be given permission to take leave in term time if there are exceptional circumstances. Having looked at your application, although understanding of your reasons, I do not feel that your request can be supported in this instance. **Therefore, if the absence occurs the dates will be unauthorised.**

As a school we are asked to inform you that, in line with Telford and Wrekin Council Policy, unauthorised holidays may be subject to a penalty notice fine of £60 payable per parent, per child, increasing to £120 each if not paid within 28 days. Failure to pay this fine may lead to court proceedings.

Our key priority is to ensure that (pupil's name) is as successful as possible and is able to achieve (his/her) full potential. I would hope that, upon reflection you are able to support this decision in line with the Local Authority and Government policy that holidays should be restricted to the 13 weeks school holidays except in exceptional circumstances.

I have attached a copy of (pupil's name) attendance for this academic year.

The Executive Head Teacher has been fully consulted in relation to this holiday request and fully supports the decision made.

Thank you for your understanding; I hope this letter explains the decision that has been made.

Yours sincerely

(Name)
(Job Title)

Appendix 3

	Class Teacher, HLTA, Cover Supervisor	Admin Team & School Business Manager (SBM)	SENDCO and Learning Mentor	Deputy Headteacher (DHT)	Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
Actions completed	<p><i>Keeping and maintaining registers accurately as a legal document.</i></p> <p><i>Ensure children know they are missed when they are absent.</i></p> <p><i>Forge good relationships with parents and hold them to account.</i></p> <p><i>Have procedures in place to allow children to catch up on work missed.</i></p> <p><i>Seek advice and support from KS leader when necessary</i></p>	<p><i>Monitoring registers to ensure they are marked accurately.</i></p> <p><i>Recording (and retaining) carefully, all telephone messages</i></p> <p><i>Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-attendance or poor punctuality</i></p> <p><i>Ensure actions from attendance monitoring are followed up e.g. medical evidence required (SAL2).</i></p> <p><i>A signed copy of any correspondence to parents is retained by the federation</i></p>	<p><i>Monitor attendance of SEND and vulnerable children who are involved in CAF /TAC process</i></p>	<p><i>Ensure good attendance and punctuality is consistently promoted across school & within the community e.g. certificates for good attendance & punctuality/communication with parents</i></p> <p><i>Hold staff to account to ensure high levels of good attendance and punctuality are maintained.</i></p>	<p><i>Liaising with Executive Headteacher (EHT) or Nominated Attendance Person (NAP) to monitor attendance.</i></p> <p><i>A referral is made to Attendance Support Team (AST) for intervention</i></p>
Monitored by for compliance and standards	<p><i>The Executive Headteacher & Governing Board will monitor levels of absence and punctuality. Particularly monitoring the impact attendance has on pupil progress, particularly for disadvantaged children.</i></p> <p><i>Senior Leaders hold class teachers to account and take into account the clear link between attendance and progress when monitoring data, books and lessons.</i></p> <p><i>T&W Attendance Support Team (AST) will monitor the work of EWO and offer advice on legal proceedings and penalty notices.</i></p>				