

Attendance Policy

Name of school: Watercliffe Meadow

Date of policy: July 2015

Member(s) of staff responsible: Sue Bibby and Claire Bradley

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October 2018
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Reviewed by: Inclusion Governors

Governors Present: Ian Read, Cathy Baker, Chloe Mallinson

The purpose of this policy is to inform parents, governors, staff and any other interested individuals of the procedures put in place to deal with issues relating to attendance and punctuality at Watercliffe Meadow. This policy has been created in order that the school can implement procedures that enable the school to comply with the Education (Pupils Attendance Records) Regulations 1991 - circular 11/91.

1. Rationale

- Watercliffe Meadow is committed to maximising the achievement of all pupils. We know there is a clear link between good attendance and educational achievement.
- Attendance is prioritised as part of our safeguarding responsibility to children and families.
- School have a statutory duty under section 175 of the Education Act 202 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Good school attendance plays an important part in this.
- Parents have a duty under section 444 of the Education Act to ensure their child receives a suitable education.
- Good school attendance is vital to educational achievement. Regular and punctual attendance is essential if children are to benefit fully from the academic, personal and social opportunities, which are offered to them within the school.
- The aim of the Attendance Policy is to encourage all pupils to achieve their potential.
- Good attendance is recognised when a pupil achieves more than 96% during the school year.
- Parents play a vital role in supporting the school and encouraging pupils to achieve to reach good attendance levels.
- A broad and balanced education is dependent on regular attendance at school. School will take appropriate action to promote and encourage good attendance.

2. Creating an effective attendance policy

At Watercliffe Meadow we believe that an effective attendance and punctuality policy is dependent upon:-

- Parents support and co-operation
- A good example set by adult members of the school

- Praise and encouragement

We also believe that good attendance and punctuality leads to

- Good behaviour for learning
- High self-esteem
- Better academic achievement

We intend that all children will feel welcomed into school at any time. It is much better for a child to arrive late than not to come at all. We do however want to encourage a strong expectation that children should be punctual.

3. Inclusion

Attendance and punctuality form two major strands in our overall Inclusion Policy. We feel poor attendance and/or punctuality is:-

- Unsettling for the children who may miss important teaching points and then find it difficult to carry out tasks given to them.
- Distracting for other children.
- Time consuming for the teacher and other school staff.

4. Expectations

i) What the school expects of parents

- To fulfil their responsibilities by encouraging their children to attend school regularly
- To ensure they contact school on the first day their child is unable to attend, and on the third day if the illness continues.
- To ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the school day.
- To contact the school, should any problems occur which may keep their child away from school.
- To inform the school of any forthcoming appointments, providing medical appointment cards, letters and texts where possible.
- To take holidays during the school holiday periods and to arrange appointments outside of the school day wherever possible.
- To complete a holiday form which should be returned to the attendance officer if they wish to take a holiday during term time.

ii) What parents and pupils can expect of the school

- A broad balanced education that is enhanced by regular attendance at school.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance.
- Prompt action on any problems notified.
- Close liaison with the Local Authority Attendance and Inclusion Officer to assist and support parents and pupils where needed.
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance
- First day contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school and no contact has been made
- School will record holidays during term time as un-authorized.
- School will notify the Local Authority of any term time holidays and these may be liable to a fine.
- School will follow the Local Authority guidance on issuing penalty notice warning letters, where attendance continues to be a concern after discussions have been made and actions have been carried out.

5 Procedures

Registration

1. The morning register is taken at 8.55 am and in the afternoons it is completed at 12.45pm in F2-Y1, 1.15pm in Y2-Y4 and at 1.30pm in Y5-Y6.
2. The classroom doors are 'locked' at 8.55 a.m.
3. Any child arriving after that time must enter school through the main entrance and is deemed to be late after 9.00am.
4. Any lateness is entered into the class register by the office staff using the Local Authority (LA) agreed codes.
5. The school attendance officer inputs the register information onto a database. This enables the school to produce a range of information regarding attendance on an individual, class, year group or whole school basis. This information is used by the school and LA to identify any areas of concern.
6. All absence, authorised or unauthorised, is recorded in the class register using the LA agreed codes.
7. A daily report is printed off of all absence and the attendance officer and Deputy Head analysis this before 11.00am and undertake home visits for any unauthorised absences.
8. Pupils arriving after 10.00am is deemed to be "late after the registers have closed"
9. Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium Funding will be highlighted daily and included in the daily analysis for the Deputy Head

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

i) Authorised absence

Absence is deemed to be authorised under the following circumstances:-

- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- When an agreement has been made, following a discussion with the school, for the child to be absent from school ie/ Funeral, graduation

ii) Unauthorised absence

Absence should be unauthorised if:-

- No explanation is forthcoming from the parent.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil is absent for unexpected special occasions e.g. the pupil's birthday.
- The pupil is away from school on a family holiday for a period of time longer than that negotiated with the school.
- The pupil is on a family holiday without permission or if the parents have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday and instead seek retrospective approval on their return.

7. Term Time Leave

- Any parent wishing to take their child out of school for the purpose of a holiday, or a period of term time leave must complete a Term Time Leave form. This must state the dates requested, the reason for absence and proof of a return date. The Head Teacher can authorise absence in exceptional circumstances only. Absence taken (of 5 days or more) that has not been authorised will be progressed for a penalty notice fine. This fine will be issued to each parent.

8. Monitoring absence

1. On the first day of a child's absence, if no message has been received from the parent, the school attendance officer will attempt to make contact by text or telephone in order to ascertain the reason for the child's absence before 11am. If the child is on the 'red list' (pupils with long term persistent absence) then a home visit will be made.
2. If the child is still not in school on the 2nd day and the parent has not been in contact with school, the attendance officer will phone and a home visit will be made.
3. If a child is known to be 'at risk' of non-attendance the procedure will start on the first day of absence and will continue until contact has been made. In such cases the Local Authority Attendance Officer will already be involved.
4. A 'traffic light' system is in place to identify the differing degrees of intervention needed for individual children.
5. In certain circumstances an Individual Attendance Plan will be created to support a pupil's attendance. This will be agreed at inclusion meetings.
6. In extreme circumstances parents will be invited to a School Attendance Panel attended by the attendance officer and representatives of the Attendance and Inclusion Service.
7. Pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium Funding will be supported in line with the Pupil Premium Strategy Document.

9. Responding to lateness

1. In cases of persistent lateness the school attendance officer contacts the parents/carers to inform them of the number of late marks and the number of minutes lost with the implications of this time loss projected over a week/half term/year.
2. If there is no improvement the parents/carers will be invited to discuss the problem with a member of the Inclusion Team in order to devise a plan of action which will reduce the number of late marks.

10. Data

Data relating to attendance is initially collected in the class registers. The data is entered onto the Local Authority's database by the school attendance officer. The data is available to the LA, OfSTED, DfE and any other appropriate bodies. The system allows the attendance officer to produce attendance reports at a number of levels which can be used appropriately by authorised personnel e.g. in the case of child protection or special educational needs issues.

11. Targets

The attendance target for the school is set by the Department for Education. The target figure for 2025-2026 is:
96% for the whole school

12. Involving Parents

Parents are reminded of the importance of good attendance and punctuality at various times during the year. As well as individual meetings when concerns are expressed by the school the following regular reminders are made:

- Reminders are given in the newsletters
- Discussion at pupil progress evenings
- Half termly letters to inform families when attendance is below expected levels

13. Strategies to improve attendance

Strategies identified to improve attendance:

- Weekly assemblies where certificates are given to each Phase
- Attendance details available at parent's meetings these are part of the individual progress information on Tracker Plus.
- Certificates given to children with 100% attendance over the term. Their names are also entered in a termly prize draw.
- Information about school attendance is displayed around school.
- The Attendance Officer meets new Reception parents in July to stress importance of good attendance and school procedures for reporting absence, rewards for 100% attendance, etc.
- At the end of the year children with 99-100% attendance are presented with a certificate and a gold attendance badge, attendance above 98-98.9% will be rewarded with a silver attendance badge and a bronze badge will be given to all children whose attendance is above 96-97.9% during the academic year.
- In order to encourage Y6 children to attend on a regular basis Governors pay for the Prom for everyone with attendance of 96% and over.
- Target persistent absence children for free Breakfast Club
- Focus weeks on punctuality
- Random prizes for highest weekly attendance.
- Half termly class prizes for highest attendance
- Input from School Council to increase attendance

14. Children Missing from Education and Looked After Children

The designated member of staff with responsibility for the identification and monitoring of the above groups of pupils is Claire Bradley (Attendance officer). The model procedure for reporting Children Missing from Education is followed by school.

This policy was agreed by the Governors in June 2025 and will be reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently if deemed necessary.