Attendance Policy

Werrington Primary School

Approved by:	Caroline Prince - Headteacher	**Date:** 24th September 2024
Last reviewed on:	24th September 2024	
Next review due by:	September 2025	

Contents

1. Principles 2
2. Aims.....3
3. Legislation and guidance 3
4. Roles and Responsibilities.....5
5. Recording attendance.....6
6. Authorised and unauthorised absence.....7
7. Strategies for promoting attendance 8
8. Attendance monitoring.....9
9. Monitoring arrangements.....9
10. Links with other policies 9
Appendix 1: attendance codes.....10

---

1. Principles

Regular school attendance is vital in enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Regular school attendance helps children to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community. This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other polices related to the well-being of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs. It has been developed following the Working together to improve school attendance statutory guidance published by the Department for Education, August 2024.

All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable

2. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance
- Having and implementing robust daily processes to follow up and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Accurately completing admission and attendance registers
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

- Having a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand
- Regularly monitoring data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Having a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance
- Ensuring that school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Ensuring that school staff receive training on attendance
- Working collaboratively with other schools and support services
- Sharing data with DFE and County Council Services
- Being particularly mindful of pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support
- We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets and refers to the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- section 175(4) of the Education Act 2002 (all chapters),
- sections 19(4A) and 444B(3) of the Education Act 1996 (chapters 2, 4, 5 and 6),
- section 19(9) of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 (chapters 1-6),
- paragraph 7(b) of the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 (chapters 1 and 2) and
- paragraph 3(a) of the Non-Maintained Special Schools (England) Regulations 2015 (chapters 1 and 2)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

4.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

4.3 The Senior Attendance Champion

The senior attendance champion:

- Leads on schools' attendance strategy
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Sets a clear vision for improvement and maintaining good attendance
- Establishes and maintains effective systems
- Monitors and evaluates progress

4.4 Attendance Officer

The attendance officer:

- Supports the Senior Attendance Champion to administer the schools' attendance strategy
- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Maintains effective systems and sends letters to parents/carers relating to attendance
- Monitors and evaluates progress alongside the Senior Attendance Champion

4.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

4.6 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

5. Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:50am and will be kept open until 9:30am. The register for the second session will be taken at the end of the designated lunchbreak and will remain open for 5 minutes after this time.

5.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). Parents should notify the school by phone (01782 980010).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

5.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

5.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

5.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents on a termly basis via the school's Learning Ladders report cards

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We would consider the following as 'exceptional circumstances' - wedding of parent or sibling, funeral of close family member, faith-linked pilgrimage

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 5.2 and 5.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

6.2 Reducing persistent absence

We target persistent absence through a series of letters/communications, offering 'Early help' support, providing 'wellbeing' support and offering breakfast club or attendance clinics in school.

6.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

The penalties for unauthorised leave of absence in term time will be:

For a First offence the Penalty Notice fine would be: -

- £80 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days, rising to
- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 21-28 days.

For a Second offence within 3-years of the first penalty notice being issued, the penalty notice fine would be:

- £160 per parent, per child if paid between 28 days.

Following the second offence, every new offence within the 3-year period, will be prosecuted under S444.1 of the Education Act 1996. If the prosecution were to take place, the maximum fine is £1,000 per parent, per child. This reflects the seriousness of unauthorised absence from school.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

7. Strategies for promoting attendance

Good attendance is supported through our 'Werrington Way', which encourages pupils to be respectful, try their best and keep themselves and others safe.

Our Wellbeing team also proactively support good attendance.

8. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 5.2).

Parents/Carers are expected to call the school each day that their child is absent due to illness.

If a pupil's absence goes above 10% the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. Please see the tables below for the attendance categories that we use in school:

Percentage attendance range	Categorisation
100 to 96%	as expected
95 to 91%	at risk of persistent absence
90 to 80%	persistent absence
79 to 51%	at risk of severe absence
Less than or equal to 50%	severe absence

Attendance during one school year	**Equals this number of days absent**	**Which is approximately this many weeks absent**	**Which equals this many lessons missed**
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Attendance data is collected by our school information management system (Arbor).

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by the local governing body. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Relationships and Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Registration Codes from 19/8/24			
Code	**Summary**	**Rational**	**Classification of code**
/	**Present AM**	The session is a morning session and the pupil is present at the school when the attendance register begins to be taken.	Attending
****	**Present PM**	The session is an afternoon session and the pupil is present at the school when the attendance register begins to be taken.	Attending
L	**Late in registration time**	The pupil is absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended.	Attending
K	**Local Authority alternative provision**	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority under section 19(1) of the 1996 Act(12) or section 42(2) or 61(1) of the 2014 Act.	Attending an approved educational activity
V	**Educational Visit**	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or another school at which they are a registered pupil, for an educational visit or trip arranged by or on behalf of the proprietor and supervised by a member of school staff.	Attending an approved educational activity
P	**Approved sporting activity**	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity.	Attending an approved educational activity
w	**Work Experience**	The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by a local authority or the proprietor as part of the pupil's education.	Attending an approved educational activity
B	**School alternative provision**	The pupil is attending a place for any other approved educational activity within paragraph (11) of The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024	Attending an approved educational activity
M	**Medical Appointment**	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.	Authorised absence
J1	**Interview**	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.	Authorised absence
S	**Study Leave**	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Study Leave	Authorised absence
X	**Not required to attend**	The pupil is not of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because their timetable does not require them to attend	Not a possible attendance
D	**Dual Registered**	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of attending another school at which they are a registered pupil. Dual Registered.	Not a possible attendance

C	**Exceptional circumstances**	The pupil is absent with leave for any other purpose	Authorised absence
C1	**Regulated performance**	The pupil is absent with leave for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	**Part-time timetable**	The pupil is of compulsory school age and is absent with leave because, in accordance with an agreement between a parent who they normally live with and the proprietor that the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis, their timetable does not require them to attend.	Authorised absence
T	**Traveller**	The pupil is a mobile (i.e. Gypsy, Roma, Travelling) child, their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with that parent.	Authorised absence
R	**Religious observance**	The day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a parent of the pupil belongs.	Authorised absence
I	**Sickness**	The pupil is unable to attend because of sickness.	Authorised absence
Q	**Local Authority failed to make access arrangements**	The pupil is unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements for them within paragraph (12) or (13). Local authority failed to make access arrangements.	Not a possible attendance
Y1	**Normal Transport failed**	The pupil is unable to attend because the school is not within walking distance of the pupil's home and the transport to and from school that is normally provided for the pupil by the proprietor or a local authority is not available.	Not a possible attendance
Y2	**Travel disruption due to emergency**	The pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency.	Not a possible attendance
Y3	**Partial school closure**	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use and the pupil is one of those who the proprietor thinks cannot practicably be accommodated in those parts of the premises that remain in use.	Not a possible attendance
Y4	**Whole school closure**	Whole school site unexpectedly closed.	Not a possible attendance
Y5	**Child in custody**	The pupil is unable to attend because they are in criminal justice detention.	Not a possible attendance
Y6	**Public health guidance**	Unable to attend in accordance with Public Health guidance or Law	Not a possible attendance
Y7	**Other unavoidable cause**	The pupil is unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Not a possible attendance

E	**Excluded or suspended**	The pupil is excluded or suspended from the school for any other reason.	Authorised absence
G	**Family Holiday**	The pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday.	Unauthorised absence
N	**Not yet known**	The circumstances of the pupil's absence have not yet been established.	Unauthorised absence
O	**No reason or unsatisfactory reason**	No reason for absence is established or the school is not satisfied that the reason given is one that would be recorded using one of the codes classified as authorised.	Unauthorised absence
U	**Late after registration close**	Arrived in school after the registration closed	Unauthorised absence
Z	**Not on admission register**	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Administration Code, not collected
#	**Planned school closure**	Planned whole school closure	Administration Code, not collected