



# A Parent's/Carers Guide to how we can work together to improve school attendance



## Working together to improve school attendance

Being in school and having the best attendance possible underpins all the many benefits of school for your child, such as their learning, wellbeing and wider development.

For some children, attending school every day will be harder than for others. This is why schools, and local councils in some cases, are committed to working together with families to solve problems and support your child's school attendance.

This guide covers two areas:

- **Parents'/carers responsibilities** for school attendance/punctuality and what you need to do when your child needs to be absent.
- How schools and local authorities will work with you to **support your child's attendance**.

## Parents'/Carers responsibilities

### What are my responsibilities for my child's attendance?

As a parent, you are legally responsible for making sure your child gets a suitable full-time education, usually from the **age of 5 to 16**.

For most parents, this will mean making sure your child is on time and in school every day except when:

- Your child is too ill to go to school.
- You have permission for a leave of absence from your child's school for them not to attend. You should only ask for this in exceptional circumstances.
- Your religious body has a day especially for religious observance.

Whilst some absence is unavoidable, it is important that your child is in school every day they can be for their learning, wellbeing and development.

## What are my responsibilities for my child being on time to school?

At Whitegate End Primary School, we are committed to promoting the welfare of our children through regular school attendance. We know that every day lost to education can have a serious impact on any child's achievement and progression.

As a school we want to provide a positive and safe environment so your child can build relationships with classmates and staff and look forward to attending school.

We are committed to supporting you and your child with their attendance and punctuality. Punctuality is very important and we are keen to ensure your child arrives at school on time. As you know our school day now starts at **8.30am** and being on time is very important. Being late will have a negative impact on the progress your child is making. A few minutes late each day accumulates quickly to substantial amounts of time being missed and we want to work together to avoid this.

Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of all parents, carers and staff.

## If my child needs to be absent from school, what do I need to do?

You should contact school **as early as possible** on the first day of absence to explain why.

School phone number	0161 770 5460
School email	info@whitegateend.oldham.sch.uk

If you do not, school will contact you via text and a phone call on the first morning of their absence to find out why your child is not in school. One of our attendance procedures at Whitegate End is to carry out a home visit should no contact be made. We will always leave a slip through the door to show we have visited and ask you to contact the office as school as possible.

## My child has a short-term illness. Do they have to go to school, and will I be penalised if they don't?

If your child is ill, read the NHS advice to help you decide whether they can go to school.

If they are too ill to attend, you are not breaking the law and will not be penalised. You should let school know as soon as possible on the first day of absence and schools must record such absences as authorised. If the absence due to illness is ongoing or frequent you should speak to Mrs Bingham to see what support can be put in place.

### **Do I need to provide medical evidence to support my child's illness related absence?**

If your child is too ill to attend school, schools must record these absences as authorised.

In the majority of cases medical evidence is not needed, but we may ask you for evidence where:

- Your child is regularly absent because of illness, to assess how they can help your child by putting the right reasonable adjustments in place.
- In a small number of cases where they have reason to believe your child was not too ill to attend and a conversation cannot resolve the issue.

If you are asked to provide evidence this does not need to be a letter from your doctor or consultant, and doctors will not usually provide such letters. It can, instead, be appointment cards, prescriptions, or notes of previous consultations (including from the NHS App).

## **What should I do if my child needs a dental or medical appointment in school time?**

To avoid disruption to your child's attendance, medical and dental appointments should not be booked during the school day whenever reasonably possible. When they are, you should ask the school in advance for a leave of absence and collect them as close to the time of the appointment as possible and return them to school for the rest of the school day afterwards.

## **Accessing support to help my child attend school**

### **My child is struggling to attend because of an issue in school. Who can help us?**

The first step is to talk to us about why your child is missing school, and what help the school can give. You should still do everything you can to help your child attend as much as possible whilst waiting for help and support to be put into place. **Your point of contact in school is Mrs Bingham or Mrs Addyman.** At Whitegate End, we want to ensure we are supporting our children and families to overcome any barriers to attendance. The school and local council are expected to follow the expectations set out in the guidance document **'Working together to improve school attendance'**.

If your child is struggling to attend because of something that is happening at school, we will work with you (and your child if they are old enough) to overcome the issues. You should agree a set of joint actions with school that you have all developed together to support your child. This will often include a commitment to support you and your child by working together or help you to access support services in exchange for an agreement from you (and your child if they are old enough to understand) to take part in the support offered. School will also arrange times for you to come together to review these actions and your child's progress.

Depending on the reasons for your child's absence, this may take the form of an action plan, an early help plan, or a parenting contract.

### **My child is struggling to attend because of an issue at home or getting to school. Who can help us?**

Again, speaking to **Mrs Bingham** or **Mrs Addyman** should be your first step. We want to do as much as possible to help. At school we work closely with the Attendance Officer for Oldham Council who is expected to work with the school and provide access to the support you need if the issues you or your child are facing are beyond the remit of the school. If there are lots of reasons for your child's absence, local services are expected to work together to support you and your child. They are expected to provide you with a single action plan and lead worker to help and support you.

## Accessing support for my child with long term illness or special educational needs and disabilities

### **My child has a long-term illness, special educational needs or a disability that is impacting their attendance. What help is available?**

If your child is regularly absent from school because of illness (regardless of whether it is mental or physical) or special educational needs or a disability, they have the same right to a suitable full-time education as any other child. You should work with school to discuss the reasons and make sure the right support is in place.

All schools are expected to provide support in these cases. More information can be found in Whitegate Ends policy on **supporting pupils with medical conditions**.

### **At Whitegate End we are expected to:**

- Work with you to make reasonable adjustments to help your child attend. These could include adjustments to uniform, transport, routines, access to support or lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensure your child receives the right pastoral care and in certain cases consider a time-limited phased return to school where appropriate, for example for those who have anxiety about school attendance.
- Work jointly with other services including your local council and health services.
- For pupils with a long-term medical condition – either physical or mental – we are also expected to make attendance support a key feature of any individual healthcare plan.
- For pupils with **Education, Health and Care plans** - ensure access to any provision outlined within the plan.

To make this work, it is important that you are open and work with school by sharing written information. This will help agree the right support and take an active part in agreeing and putting in place the solution.

In most cases this will be sufficient, but no child should be out of school without appropriate education for more than 15 school days over a school year. Where additional support is needed, your local council is responsible for arranging alternative suitable full-time (or close to) education for your child. If your child has an Education, Health and Care plan, and is out of school for more than 15 days, we expect the school to inform the local council who is responsible for your child's plan. This is to ensure that they are aware of the situation and to seek their support for your child where necessary.

## Where can I get help if my child is too anxious to go to school?

Attending school usually helps to protect your child's mental health, for a range of reasons including giving them a chance to be with friends and to benefit from learning. However, some children can be anxious or worried about going to school, particularly around the start of the new year or joining a new school or class. This is a normal emotion, and not necessarily indicative of an underlying mental health condition.

If their anxiety continues and becomes an attendance issue, you should speak to **Mrs Bingham** or **Mrs Addyman** together with your child about why they are anxious and what can be done.

Working with you as parents/carers is the key to making your child's attendance work. We are here to help so please do not hesitate to get in touch. We need to ensure we make each day count!



At Whitegate End, we create **emotionally resilient children** and staff with a range of academic and life skills. We prepare our children for life, not only the next stages of their education, and provide them with the tools to be **lifelong learners**.

Everyone **belongs**. The environment we create for each other is **safe** and gives us the opportunity to challenge each other's thinking and stand up for the things we feel passionate about.

We **thrive** when we go out into the ever-changing world and are proud of the **memories** that we create together.

# Whitegate End Primary School and Nursery



## 2023-2024 School Calendar

September 2023						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

October 2023						
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29	30	31				

November 2023						
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December 2023						
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31						

January 2024						
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February 2024						
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March 2024						
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April 2024						
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May 2024						
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June 2024						
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July 2024						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
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August 2024						
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18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

School closed to pupils / holidays

PLEASE KEEP IN A SAFE PLACE



<https://www.whitegateend-oldham.co.uk/>



Whitegate End Primary School



@SchoolWGE



Whitegate End  
PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY