

Whitegate End Primary School and Nursery



Attendance Policy

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|--------------------|------------------------|
| Responsible Person | Headteacher |
| Date reviewed | October 2022 |
| Next review | September 2024 |
| Signed | R Hollingsworth |

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

Here at Whitegate End we offer our children such a broad and rich curriculum that we do not want any child to miss a single second. We strongly encourage everyone to be here on time, every day to make the most of every opportunity on offer. By attending each day, every child will have the best possible chance to achieve and make lasting memories. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff will work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that our school has to offer.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

Our aim is to provide a caring environment where any barriers to attendance can be identified and addressed with support from both the attendance lead (Mrs Bingham) and the learning mentor (Mrs Addyman). We strongly believe that any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support.

Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school each day.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

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

Expectations

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day, and ensure that
- their children are collected at the correct time, and inform school if there is a delay
- Ensure that they contact the school in the event of an absence by 9:30am, or if known in advance, as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend school. (E.G. Dental/medical appointment)
- Try to make health appointments outside of school hours, and provide proof of an appointment if the child's absence is due to an appointment with another agency (E.G Health)
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss promptly with their class teacher or School Office any problems that may affect their school attendance

We expect that the school will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere
- Provide a safe learning environment
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, and monitor individual children's attendance and punctuality
- Contact parents as soon as possible if their child is not in school, and the absence has not been explained
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a health professional or other relevant body will be requested
- School may mark an absence as unauthorised retrospectively if contradictory information is found and will notify parents.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition
- When pupils' attendance falls below 95% school will inform parents and advice from other agencies may be sought
- Inform parents of the % attendance (including number of days missed) of all pupils
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending school regularly or who are persistently late
- Meet regularly with the Education Attendance Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Education Attendance Officer.

Roles and responsibilities

The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Mrs L Needham is our Governor who is responsible for the monitoring of pupil attendance.

The headteacher (Mr R Hollingsworth)

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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Bingham and can be contacted via info@whitegateend.oldham.sch.uk

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 by 8.55am each day.

School Office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the attendance lead/learning mentor in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Recording attendance

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 also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken by 9am and will be kept open until 9.10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.55pm in Key Stage One/Key Stage Two and at 12.35pm in EYFS.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.20am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office. This can be done via phone (0161 770 5460) or email to info@whitegateend.oldham.sch.uk.

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.

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. School request copies of any correspondence relating to 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.

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

The attendance lead and learning mentor will closely monitor any patterns linked to punctuality and lateness. Parents/carers will be contacted to discuss reasons for this and offer support/encouragement to ensure increased attendance.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call/text the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may complete a home visit/welfare check or inform other services should this be required.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session

- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels for example, via written reports and progress meetings. This will include the % attendance and number of days missed.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off situations. If an event can be reasonably scheduled outside of term time then it is unlikely that the absence will be authorized. Each application will be judged on its own merit.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as possible prior to the planned absence and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see above for more detail)
- Parents/carers being members of the armed forces where leave cannot be chosen or changed.
- 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

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.

Penalty Warnings

Should a child have 10 unauthorised sessions over a period of 10 week school may request that the Local Authority issue a penalty warning notice to parents/carers. The penalty

warning notice, issued by the Local Authority, will inform parents/carers of a 15-school day period in which the child must show sustained attendance improvement. Failure to make a sustained improvement within the 15-school day period will result in penalty notices being issued to parents/carers by the Local Authority.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

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.

If a family has previously been issued with a penalty notice and this has failed to improve attendance, school may consider using the fast track attendance process. This will be a 10-12 week monitoring/supportive period where school alongside the Local Authority Attendance Officer will hold 3 meetings with the family offering solutions/support to help the child and the parents/carers improve school attendance.

Strategies to promote attendance

Our school ethos is shared continually with parents and carers to ensure they understand the reason 'why' their children need to attend school each and every day. We understand that attendance is not only the responsibility of the individual child so we ensure we have clear procedures in place to work closely with parents/carers. We value the importance of building strong relations with our parents and if required, are prepared to have challenging conversations to improve attendance. We will do our utmost to ensure our children want to come to school each day to play their role in the curriculum we have on offer to them.

Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

Our school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. This will be done using FFT Aspire 360 attendance report.

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.

Analysing attendance

Our school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

Our school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports during weekly briefing meetings to class teachers and support staff, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Data will be shared at weekly SLT meetings to discuss actions needed and impact of these.
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

Our school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Provide a caring environment where any barriers to attendance can be identified and addressed with support from both the attendance lead and the learning mentor. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. This support will form a bespoke action plan for the individual family and be reviewed regularly to ensure the correct support is in place and having a positive impact.
- This could be regular conversation with parents, interventions with children in the form of check ins or to address barriers to attendance.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 12months by L Bingham/Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance some of which may apply to Secondary schools.

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| / | Present (am) | Pupil is present at morning registration |
| \ | Present (pm) | Pupil is present at afternoon registration |
| L | Late arrival | Pupil arrives late before register has closed |
| B | Off-site educational activity | Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school |
| D | Dual registered | Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered |
| J | Interview | Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment |
| P | Sporting activity | Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school |
| V | Educational trip or visit | Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school |
| W | Work experience | Pupil is on a work experience placement |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Authorised absence | | |
| C | Authorised leave of absence | Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances |
| E | Excluded | Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made |
| H | Authorised holiday | Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances |
| I | Illness | School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness |
| M | Medical/dental appointment | Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment |
| R | Religious observance | Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance |
| S | Study leave | Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations |
| T | Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence | Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school |
| Unauthorised absence | | |
| G | Unauthorised holiday | Pupil is on a holiday that was not |

| | | |
|----------|----------------------------|---|
| | | approved by the school |
| N | Reason not provided | Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time) |
| O | Unauthorised absence | School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence |
| U | Arrival after registration | Pupil arrived at school after the register closed |

| Code | Definition | Scenario |
|-------------|---|--|
| X | Not required to be in school | Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend |
| Y | Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances | School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody |
| Z | Pupil not on admission register | Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school |
| # | Planned school closure | Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day |