



Wray Common Primary School

Attendance Policy – Pupils

Governors' Committee Responsible:

Teaching & Learning Committee

Lead Member of Staff:

Pippa Kober

Next review Date:

Spring 2022 (review cycle annual)

Introduction

- At Wray Common Primary School we expect children to attend school every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so
- Excellent attendance and punctuality is important if children are to benefit from everything school has to offer. Regular attendance at school is vital for children to be successful
- School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life and research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance, punctuality and educational progress and attainment
- Parents/carers and the school staff are partners in making this a success and this partnership is very important to the school. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly
- As parents/carers, it is your responsibility to ensure your child/children arrive at school and return home safely

Aims

Our attendance policy aims to:

- ensure that all children have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning
- improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality
- clearly set out the processes that are made available to parents to report absence
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets

Expectations

We expect that all children will:

- attend school every day as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so
- attend school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss promptly with their class teacher, or the school office, any problems that may affect their school attendance

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
- ensure that they contact the school **daily** in the event of absence
- ensure they inform the school if absence is known in advance
- 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 the school will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere

- provide a safe learning environment
- provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's/carer's concerns
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, and monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality
- contact parents on the first day of absence when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the Headteacher can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested
- encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition
- regularly inform parents/carers of the % attendance of all children
- make initial enquiries regarding children who are not attending regularly
- meet regularly with the Local Authority Inclusion Officer to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service
- notify the Local Authority after 15 days sickness
- notify the Local Authority Inclusion Officer after 10 days unexplained absence

We expect that the Governors will:

- monitor attendance against the annual target set by the Local Authority Inclusion Officer.
- receive updates regarding attendance levels and any children whose attendance is causing concern, although not by name, from the Headteacher in a termly report.

Definitions

- Every day counts as two sessions.
- Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone.
- Regular attendance means that a child must attend school every day, unless there are justified reasons, and arrive at school on time.

Authorised Absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. The Headteacher authorises the absence.

Unauthorised Absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.
- Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no reason has been given.

Examples of Authorised Absences:	Examples of Unauthorised Absences:
*genuine illness of the pupil *hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil *major religious observances *visits to prospective new schools *external exams or educational assessments	*shopping / day trip / visit to a theme park *a birthday treat *oversleeping due to a late night *looking after other children / other family member *appointments or illness of other family members *holidays

Each child's attendance can be broadly summarised as:

97%+	Well done! This will give your child a good start in life and supports a positive work ethic. Your child's attendance is at, or above, the school target.
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95% – 96%	Strive to build on this. Your child’s attendance is below the school target and will be monitored. You may be sent a letter of concern from the school’s lead on attendance.
90% - 94%	Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. This is a cause for concern and will be closely monitored. The school and Local Authority Inclusion Service may work with you to improve your child’s attendance and/or punctuality. You will be sent a letter of concern from the school’s lead on attendance and you may also be asked to provide medical evidence for future absence.
Below 90%	This level of attendance is known as persistent absence and is unacceptable. Absence is affecting attainment and progress and disrupting your child’s learning. Your child’s attendance is now a major concern. A formal referral to the Local Authority Inclusion Officer may take place.

The school and their Local Authority Inclusion Officer work closely together and regularly monitor both attendance and punctuality. Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

Rewards

- The main benefit from regular and punctual attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.
- As a school, we acknowledge good attendance through a variety of rewards.

When to Report Absence to the School

All absences must be reported on a daily basis. In all cases of absence the parents/carers should:

- only keep your child away from school if really necessary. The school will always call and send home an unwell child.
- telephone the school on 01737 761254 at the earliest opportunity to let them know why your child is going to be absent. Please try and phone by 9.20am at the very latest. The office has an answer machine and messages can be left there.
- please call daily and keep the school informed if more than one day’s absence is necessary.
- send a note to school explaining the reason for absence.
- if medical appointments are absolutely necessary, please bring your child to school for the rest of the school day.

Wray Common uses a ‘1st day calling’ system. If your child fails to register or is absent and we have not received notification by 9.20am, a call will be made to you. This only applies on the first day of absence. It is the parent’s/carer’s responsibility to call the school each day their child is off school and explain the reason why.

If a child is absent from school and no explanation is offered by the parents/carers, and the school office are not able to contact the parents/carers, the Designated Safeguarding Lead may refer the child’s absence to the Local Authority Inclusion Officer. After ten days of unexplained absence, the school is required to refer the absence to the Local Authority Inclusion Officer.

‘There is a statutory duty for schools to refer to the Local Authority designated EWO after 10 days of unexplained absence. However they can seek advice or assistance from their allocated IO sooner. The IO on behalf of the Local Authority will make enquiries collaboratively with the school to ascertain where the child is and will carry out a visit to the child’s last known address where appropriate.’

Improving school attendance: support for schools and local authorities – DfE March 2021

If a child is absent from school and no explanation is offered by the parents/carers within two weeks of the absence, it will automatically be recorded as an unauthorised absence. If an appropriate reason is given by parents/carers within two weeks of the absence, a member of the Senior Leadership Team will decide if the absence is authorised in retrospect.

Registers, Punctuality and Lateness

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount therefore that all children arrive at school on time. For KS2 children the main playground is supervised from 8.30am. Early Years and KS1 children need to remain with their parents until they enter the classroom from 8.40am. Registration takes place promptly at 8.50am. If your child arrives after this time they must enter via the school office where they will be signed in. Your child will receive a 'late' pass which they then give to their teacher.

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every child

- Registration takes place at 8.50am and children who arrive after this time will be recorded as late to school.
- Registers close at 9.20am and after this, lateness may be recorded as an unauthorised absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.15pm.
- Persistent lateness by a child may be dealt with through the Team Around the Child Champion and may be referred to the Local Authority Inclusion Officer.
- Children's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools.

Children Leaving During the School Day

During school hours, the school staff are legally *in loco parentis* and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission and agreement from parents/carers and the school.
- Whenever possible, parents/carers should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents/carers are requested to **confirm in writing**, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, and the expected return time.
- Children must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a child is being collected from the school, parents/carers are to report to the school office before the child is allowed to leave the site.
- If a child leaves the school site without permission, their parents/carers will be contacted. *Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the child as a missing person (Memorandum of Understanding between Schools in Surrey and Surrey Police in relation to Children Missing During the School Day – July 2018).*

The Law

By law, parents and carers must ensure that all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 18) receive a suitable, full-time education (Education Act, 1996). Surrey County Council employs Education Welfare Officers to monitor school attendance and to support both schools and parents/carers to ensure that every child attends school regularly. As a parent/carer, you may be committing an offence if you fail to make sure that your child attends school regularly. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice, prosecution or application for an Education Supervision Order.

Leave of Absence

- Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which came into effect on 1st September 2013, states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Any absence must be requested as far in advance as possible, and **no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date**. A form (Application for Leave of Absence during Term Time) will need to be collected from the office or downloaded from the school's website and completed.

- The guidance from Surrey County Council states that if a parent/carer takes their child out of school e.g. on holiday or other unauthorised leave of absence, for 5 days (10 sessions) or more, without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent/carer **will** be liable to receive a Penalty Notice for each child who is absent.
- If leave is taken without authorisation by the school, it may be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Local Authority Inclusion Officer may be notified. A Penalty Notice **will** be issued.

Penalty Notices

Under existing legislation, each parent/carer commits an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and the absences are classed as 'unauthorised' (those absences for which the Headteacher has not given permission). Depending on circumstances, such cases may result in prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Surrey County Council and Wray Common Primary School considers that regular attendance at school is of such importance that Penalty Notices may be used in the following circumstances where unauthorised absence occurs:

- Children identified by police and Local Authority Inclusion Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
- Unauthorised leave of absence during term time (5 days or 10 sessions or more) where it is judged that a parent/carer is failing to ensure their child's regular and punctual attendance at school and is failing to engage with any supportive measures proposed by the school or the Education Welfare Service. This may be considered if a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence during the previous 6 school weeks. Unauthorised absence may include a child arriving late after close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised 'leave of absence' taken in term time, parents/carers will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 (issued to each parent/carer, for each child) if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices will increase to £120 after 21 days but within 28 days. After 28 days, the LA may prosecute under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Behaviour and Penalty Notices relating to Exclusions

- Section 103 of the Education and Inspectors Act 2006 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. Failure to do so will render the parent/carer liable to a Penalty Notice.
- The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient may be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103.
- Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send their child or children in their care to a different school that they inform the Headteacher in writing as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- The new home address, if it is known

The pupil's school records will be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Local Authority Inclusion Officer.

Please read the following guidance carefully.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, children are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct. The Penalty Notice is **£60 (per child per parent/carer)** if paid within **21** days of receipt of the Notice, rising to **£120 (per child per parent/carer)** if paid after **21** days but within **28** days of receipt of the Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, you may be prosecuted in the Magistrates Court for the offence for which the Notice was originally issued.

Please complete and submit the form overleaf if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to back up your request.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request and will notify you of the decision.

For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Wray Common Primary School

Application for Leave of Absence Form

To be completed by the parent / carer

Name of child:	
Class:	
First day of absence:	Number of school days:
Date of return:	

Please outline the special circumstances for which leave is requested:
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Signed:	Dated:
Leave requested by: Mother/ Father/ Both <i>(name and address of the parents/ carers requesting the leave)</i>	
Name:	
Address:	

To be completed by the Headteacher

Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:		
Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	The absence will be recorded as authorised.
Not approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
Explanatory notes:		
N.B. Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice.		
Signed		Date:
Name: Mr Lloyd Murphy		