



Attendance Policy

January 2019

1. Introduction

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the promotion of positive attendance and the recording and monitoring of attendance.

2. Rationale

High attendance at school is important. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Child protection as well as educational concerns must be considered alongside school attendance. Poor attendance not only hinders educational progress but may place some children in an environment where they are at risk. It is therefore important that we strive to achieve high levels of attendance for all our pupils.

3. Objectives and principles

The aim of this policy is to provide a framework of guidance which will raise and maintain an appropriate level of attendance for all our pupils. Through this policy the school aims to:-

- Comply with regulations regarding accurately and consistently recording attendance and punctuality in school registers;
- Support and encourage parents to fulfil their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly;
- Foster a good working relationship with the Local Authority's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to help him/her support families in meeting their legal requirements on attendance;
- Continue to provide a welcoming and secure environment where children feel valued and are keen to make progress in all aspects of school life.

4. Approaches

4.1 Communication with parents

Parents are reminded of aspects of this policy through the weekly newsletter. Parents are provided with information about their child's attendance and punctuality on the information slip provided before each Parents' Evening and with their child's end of year report. Text messages, letters and emails are sent alerting parents to concerns regarding their child's attendance and badges are presented to those children who achieve 100% attendance each term. The trigger for these is detailed in Appendix 1.

4.2 School day and Session times

Morning and afternoon session times are:

	Nursery	Reception, Y1 and Y2	Y3, Y4, Y5, Y6
Morning	9am – 12noon	8.55am – 12noon	8.55am – 12.15pm
Afternoon	12noon – 3pm	12.45pm – 3.15pm	1pm – 3.15pm

Doors are opened at 8.45am to allow children entry into school for a prompt start to the day. This also allows for parents who need to take a number of children to different entry doors. Staff are positioned on the cloakroom doors to ensure that children remain in the building once their parents have escorted them to the door.

4.3 School Term Dates

The school follows the term time pattern set by Calderdale Local Authority and the Governing Body also agrees on the five pupil closure dates to provide time for staff training. Parents are informed of these dates through newsletters and the website.

4.4 Leave of absence

Parents of children who are registered pupils at a school have a legal duty to ensure they attend regularly.

The Department for Education requires Local Authorities to implement government amendments to the regulations regarding the taking of Leave of Absence in term-time, which came into force on the 1st September 2013. The new law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional. Therefore Headteachers will only be able to grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and this will still be at the discretion of the Headteacher. No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right.

The Education Regulations state that applications must be made in advance by a parent/carer with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each leave application is considered individually by the school taking into account any factors presented by the family. The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company and produced at the time of making the application for leave of absence
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.

This is not an exhaustive list and Headteachers must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and will not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school.

Where a headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which does not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is, however, final. The ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Parents who wish their child to take time out of school during term time for a holiday or special circumstance are required to complete a Request Form (see Appendix 1) with a full explanation of the reasons behind the request. These requests are considered by the Head, in consultation with the school staff, on the basis of the impact on the academic and educational needs of the child balanced with the reasons for the requested absence provided by the parents. A confirmation letter of the decision made by the headteacher will be sent to parents.

Where a child is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time without the permission of the school, the absence will be coded as unauthorised and as such may result in a Penalty Notice. Penalties are applied by the Local Authority and as such are not at the discretion of the headteacher. If a Penalty Notice is not paid, the matter may be taken to prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

At Withinfields Nursery, all holidays are authorised as children are not yet statutory school age. However, the procedure is still the same in filling in the request form. If the child goes on holiday for a period longer than four weeks, only four weeks will be funded and the parent will be liable for the cost of any additional weeks. Where children take extended holidays and do not return on the expected date, Withinfields is entitled to terminate the place with appropriate notice. Nursery attendance is regularly monitored and prepares our children for school.

4.5 Attendance Targets

Attendance targets for each academic year are set by the Governing Body in consultation with the Head.

4.6 School Attendance Registers

School registers are important legal documents and must be completed carefully and accurately. Class registration time, therefore, needs to be a quiet session. Parents are encouraged not to engage teachers in conversations at the beginning of the day as this can distract the teacher and delay the taking of the register. If messages need to be relayed to staff, this can be through a Teaching Assistant or by contacting the school office. Registers are taken at 8.55am in the morning and at the start of the afternoon session (12.45pm or 1pm

depending on the age of the child). In the morning, the cloakroom doors are closed at 8.55am and anyone arriving after this time must enter through the KS1 cloakroom. The registers are completed electronically in the classroom with children present in the room being marked with a / for the morning session or \ for the afternoon. Once the registers are completed, they are saved and closed in the classroom so that the office staff can add on anyone who has entered through the KS1 cloakroom door. Any children who are absent should be crossed out on the laminated fire register in the classroom for the purposes of evacuation. If they subsequently arrive, the fire register should be amended.

4.7 Reporting absence

Parents and carers should inform school if their child is absent and provide a reason. These can be provided by leaving a message on the school answer machine, by emailing admin@withinfields.calderdale.sch.uk, by sending a message via SchoolComms or by speaking to the office or member of staff in the cloakroom. If the illness lasts more than a day, parents should ring each day. The only exception is that we will automatically class the next day as illness if a child is reported as having sickness and diarrhoea as we expect parents to keep children away from school for 48 hours after the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea.

A variety of codes are used to record reasons for absence, the most common being:

- M Medical Appointment
- I Illness
- R Religious Observance
- H Authorised holiday in exceptional circumstances
- G Unauthorised holiday
- C Authorised absence with headteacher's permission
- O Unauthorised absence where no reason is provided or the headteacher deems the reason to be unacceptable e.g. went shopping
- N Code used when no reason has yet been given. Parents and carers are prompted for a reason with this code then being changed according to the response or converted to O if no reason is provided.

4.8 Absence due to illness

Although the school places high priority on good attendance, following absence due to sickness and diarrhoea, parents and carers should keep their child at home until 48 hours after the last instance. This is to prevent further spreading of the problem and so causing further absence.

It is the school's policy though not to authorise absence due to headlice. The school recommends checking each child's hair at a weekend on a weekly basis and, where the child is found to have headlice, treating them immediately prior to them returning to school on Monday.

4.9 Punctuality and Recording lateness

Arriving on time sets the children up for an orderly start to the school day and a settled start to learning. Important learning is consolidated through the time when the register is being taken. Children who regularly miss this consolidation are at a disadvantage. Entering a room where everyone else is already settled can also be upsetting for some children. The school places high expectations therefore on families to get children to school on time.

Children who arrive too late for them to enter through the cloakroom doors before 8.55am will enter the building through the KS1 door if it is before 9am. A member of staff will be positioned on this door from 8.45am and will record any children entering through this door from 8.55am onwards on the 'Late List'. The record will include the time they entered.

At 9am, the playground gates are locked and all entries to the school secured. Children arriving after 9am, enter the school via the main entrance reporting the reason for the lateness to the office staff who record this and the time on the 'Late List'.

Late arrivals are also recorded on the child's attendance register by the office staff using the 'Late Lists' to identify the children needing recording. The number of minutes late are also recorded. The following codes are used:

- L Arrived between 9am and 9.45am
- U Arrived after 9.45am

A child arriving before 9.45am is still classed as present for the purposes of attendance of that session. However, if the child arrives after 9.45am, the session would not count towards the overall attendance percentage.

The school would always recommend to parents that bringing the child in late is better than not bringing them in at all.

4.10 First Day Calling Procedures

The school ensures that they have accounted for all pupils by 9.30am and follows Calderdale's First Day Calling procedures for any children not accounted for.

4.11 Monitoring of attendance patterns

Children who achieve 100% attendance each term receive a badge. For the first term of 100% attendance the child would receive a bronze badge, the second a silver and those children achieving 100% for the full year receive a gold badge.

We are aware that for some children, 100% attendance is difficult because of circumstances beyond their control. We therefore also praise children who improve their attendance and meet targets set for them.

Weekly attendance for each class is announced in assembly each Monday with the class with the highest attendance being presented with the Attendance Seal. Attendance points are awarded to the four classes who have the highest attendance with points adding up towards a reward for the end of the term.

Attendance and punctuality are monitored weekly and actions taken according to the pattern of attendance, previous attendance and individual circumstances. All concerns regarding attendance and punctuality and actions taken should be logged on CPOMS. Any actions taken or conversations with parents should also be logged on CPOMS.

It is possible that even with the weekly monitoring, some children may not be identified whose absence causes concerns. This may be due to particular patterns e.g. late every Tuesday or absent for the last few days before a holiday. Classteachers are often in a strong position to identify these children. If a classteacher has concerns, they should be logged on CPOMS so that further investigations can take place.

The school employs the services of Calderdale LA's EWO service. When cases cause particular concern, they will be referred to the EWO for further investigation and, where necessary, legal action.

5. Monitoring and Evaluation

The headteacher will report attendance patterns and data termly to the Governing Body. The safeguarding governor will also include attendance as a discussion item during termly meetings with the Pastoral Support Officer. Through these reports and discussions, the governors will evaluate the impact of the policy.

6. Review

The policy will be formally reviewed in January 2022 if not deemed necessary before.

Approved by Full Governing Body on: 24th January 2019



**WITHINFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL
APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES
DURING TERM TIME**

This form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the school as far in advance as possible and at least **2 weeks** before the first date of the period of leave being requested. Parents/carers must obtain the schools permission **before making any arrangements for leave in exceptional circumstances, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right.**

The Education regulations state that applications for leave must be made in advance by a parent with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each application is considered individually by the school. The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

Please note: Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional

This is not an exhaustive list and Headteachers must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Where a Headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is final. Parents who take a child on leave in term time without the permission of the school risk being issued with a penalty notice fine for unauthorised absences.

Taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt educational progress. Before completing this application parent/carers are asked to consider the effect on their child's continuity of education.

Please contact school if you have any queries on 01422 363581

**APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES
DURING TERM TIME**

Name of pupil(s):

Class(es):

Address:

Telephone No:

I request permission for my child to be absent from school

From.....To.....Total school days.....

Exceptional circumstances for request:

(this section must be answered in full and against stated criteria)

Signature of Parent/Carer.....Date.....

For school use only

Seen by Headteacher

(signature).....Date.....

Decision reached.....

Date reply returned.....