Warren Park Primary School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed by:	FGB	Responsibility:	FGB
Last Review:	September 2023	Next Review:	September 2024
Review Cycle:	Annually	Ratified by governors:	18.09.2023
Signed by chairperson			

1. 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.

2. Rationale

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils have a vital part to play in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that children are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop regarding attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. We will ensure our expectations of what parents need to do to enable their child to achieve good attendance is clear.

We will:
Provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular newsletter and on our website;
Report on how children are performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments;
Celebrate good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.
Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education, employment or training.

3. Non-negotiables
- Every child is expected to attend school every day.
- When pupil's attendance falls below 96% they become a concern for senior leaders. Attendance is monitored weekly.
- Regular contact is made with the parents of pupils whose attendance is a concern.
- Good attendance is rewarded and celebrated publicly.
- Pupils whose attendance is consistently good are recognised and rewarded.

- Pupils who are persistently absent are monitored and will trigger intensive support.
- All parents are informed of attendance expectations.
- Reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with medically diagnosed serious illness. Termly meetings are held with parents and medical professionals to update next steps.
- Medical appointments should be, whenever possible, held outside of the school day except in exceptional circumstances where school leaders are made aware of the exceptional circumstances and evidence is provided.
- Unauthorised leave may lead to penalty notices.

4. 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.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Governing Body	Responsible for:
	Promoting the importance of school attendance through the school's policies and ethos.
	Making sure school leaders fulfill 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.
	The named Governor responsible for attendance is Helen Fisk.
Headteacher	Responsible for:
	Implementation of this policy.

	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.
Designated senior leader responsible for attendance	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. Reporting to Headteacher and Governors. The designated senior leader is James Wood.
Attendance officer	Responsible for: Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues. Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families. Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9). Weekly monitoring of pupils if attendance drops below 96%. 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 Year Leaders to implement plans and strategies. Working with the local authority to tackle persistent absence. Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices. Undertake daily administrative and organisational tasks related to the effective and efficient management of attendance data. The attendance officer is Danielle Read.
Admin team	Responsible for: Undertaking administrative duties to support the attendance officer.

	Liaise with parents/carers in promoting attendance and punctuality. Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording them on the school system, ensuring accurate details of reasons for absence are recorded. Transferring calls from parents to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.
Year Leaders	Responsible for: Supporting class teachers in ensuring that attendance and punctuality are promoted within the year group. Ensuring rewards are given. Liaise and monitor individual plans in consultation with the attendance officer. raising concerns to the attendance officer and senior leaders at the earliest opportunity. Signpost and challenge parents when concerns are raised.
Class teachers	Responsible for: Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office and the attendance officer. Ensure that all children are registered accurately am and pm Promote and reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities. Liaise with the attendance officer and admin staff on matters of attendance and punctuality Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence Signpost and challenge parents when concerns are raised.
Parents/carers	Expected to: Make sure their child attends every day on time. Call the school to report their child's absence before 08:45 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence if appropriate and advise when they are expected to return. Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child. Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. Always show proof of unavoidable appointments. Only request leave of absence for exceptional

	circumstances and always complete a leave of absence form at least 2 weeks before. Come to the school office to sign their child in if they are late, arriving after 8.50. Sign children out at the office if they are leaving before the end of the school day.
Children	Expected to: Arrive in school on time every day, aiming for 100% attendance Come to the school office to register if they are late (arriving after 8.50) or to sign out if they are leaving during school hours

6. Recording attendance
6.1 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 also record:

- 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

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 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 8.55am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.10pm.

6.2 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 08:45 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school on 02392 475502.

School will contact parents/carers of absent children following closing of the register.

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.

6.3 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 and shows proof 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.

Leave of absence forms can be requested from the school office.

6.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code of L

After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code of U

Parents will be challenged if lateness is repeated as this cannot be tolerated, and will be referred to the attendance officer for intervention.

6.5 Follow up of unexplained absence

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

- Contact 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 attend the home address or notify the police.
- 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 the local authority.

6.6 Reporting to parents
The school will regularly inform parents about the attendance, lateness and absence levels by half termly letter.

7. Authorised and unauthorised absence.

7.1 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.
Absences will only be authorised if they are rare, significant, unavoidable and short and could not reasonably be scheduled outside of term time. Family holidays, as a consequence, are not considered an exceptional circumstance.
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 it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher will require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.
Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:
- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- 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

We will not agree to leave during term time under these circumstances:

- At any time in September. This is a crucial transition time for all pupils to settle into their new class at the start of the academic year as quickly as possible.
- During assessment and test periods (including internal school tests/assessments in the school's calendar affecting your child
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes previous poor attendance, any level of unauthorised absence or they have already been granted authorised leave within that academic year.
- Where a pupil's attendance record falls below 96%.

7.2 Legal sanctions

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered through a referral to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panel.

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.

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. We will work with parents to ensure our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance are clear.

Rewards are a popular initiative used as an incentive to improve attendance and punctuality. They can be used for individual or whole school initiatives. Schools can use a variety of rewards as an incentive to

improve attendance, for instance, stickers, treats, certificates, awards, badges etc. The attendance of those children with 100 per cent attendance is celebrated in assemblies. Recognising and rewarding those children who have the most improved attendance can also act has an encouragement to promote even better school attendance.

These are examples of the rewards that we offer:

- Good attendance may be recognised when children are awarded Star of the Week
- Good attendance is promoted in weekly assemblies and the class with the best attendance and punctuality is rewarded with extra playtime.
- Texts are sent out weekly celebrating 100% attendance
- Half termly trophies are awarded to the class with the best attendance and there is a half termly draw for a £10 voucher.
- Attendance information is shared with the school community through regular newsletters and letters as well as on our website.
- Children can earn termly certificates and rosettes.

Supportive targeted intervention for improvement

We will work to ensure early identification of children who may need targeted intervention. Strategies may include:

- Targeted recognition for children who reach their targets will include certificate in assembly, vouchers, books
- Parents are encouraged to use breakfast club to support with punctuality
- Class teacher and year leaders are available for conversations to support with barriers to attendance/punctuality
- Regular postcards sent home to ensure positive praise and as a reminder to parents/carers
- Early morning calls home to check in if children struggle with getting ready for school
- Use of Voluntary Parenting Contracts (VPC) in respect of attendance
- Termly rewards for parents/carers and children together

9. **Attendance monitoring**

All staff are aware of their safeguarding duties regarding the monitoring of attendance.

9.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, 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

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.

9.2 Analysing attendance

The 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

9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to [class teachers/form tutors], and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

9.4 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.
The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school 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

Trigger points for contact

2 days	Class teacher contact – we have noticed absence - can we help? Discuss impact of poor attendance
4 days	Year Leader – meet with parent to discuss, more formal discussion with a letter to follow up
6 days	Letter from Attendance Officer
7 days	VPC and intense monitoring/support

10. Support for disadvantaged, SEND and children with medical needs

The school will build strong relationships with families, to listen and understand the barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
The school will:
- Listen to and understand the barriers to attendance when pupils are absent
- Support pupils and parents to address any in-school barriers.
- Work with the local authority and other local partners to support families with out of school barriers.
- Intensify support where absence does not improve or earlier support is not engaged with.

11. Review arrangements
This policy will be reviewed by our designated senior leader responsible for attendance James Wood, as guidance from the local authority or DFE is updated and as a minimum of yearly. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

12. Links with other policies
This policy links to the following policies:
- Child Protection
- Safeguarding
- Behaviour

Appendix 1: attendance codes
The following codes are taken from the DFE's guidance on school attendance.

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