

White Bridge Primary School
Attendance Policy

Regular attendance by pupils is a vital requirement if they are to make good progress at school in all areas. We strive to ensure that every child attains the highest levels that they are capable of, and they need to have very good attendance to do this. An attendance rate of 95% is the nationally expected level for attendance and we strive to achieve at least this for all pupils.

It is important to establish good patterns of attendance for children from their very first year at school.

Aims

The aims of our policy and practice are:

- To work with parents to establish good attendance and punctuality.
- To monitor the attendance of all pupils, and to talk to parents and try to help resolve issues where attendance is poor.
- To teach children about the importance of regular, punctual school attendance.
- To work closely with the Education Welfare Officer where there are specific problems of regular non-attendance or persistent lateness, so that help and support can be provided for those pupils and their parents/carers.

We recognise that all children will have times when they are unwell, and we always try to balance the need for them to be at school with their medical need to be at home when they are poorly. It is often a difficult time when children are young and first starting school, as it can be hard for parents to make judgements sometimes about when a child is well enough to be at school. We work with parents in this regard, and as part of our school ethos in caring for children, we will always contact parents if they are clearly too ill to be at school. We will also administer medicine if a child is well enough to return to school, but still needs to finish a course of medication. We hope that we can help to establish a positive approach in all our pupils so that they are able to achieve high levels of attendance throughout their school life and beyond.

Attendance certificates are awarded termly to children who have achieved 100% attendance. Parents are routinely sent attendance data for their child twice a year, and more frequently if there are problems.

School Practice

- Attendance registers are taken at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. In KS1, parents should bring their children to the classroom doors from 8.50am. Doors will be opened shortly after this and will be closed at 9.00am which is the start of the school day. Any child arriving after this time must come to the main door at the front of the school and be signed in as late

by their parent or carer. In KS2, children should arrive in the playground from 8.40a.m. At 8.55am, a bell rings and the children enter the building by the appropriate door without parents. These doors are closed at 9.00am. Any child arriving after this time must come to the main door at the front of the school and be signed in as late by their parent or carer. Any child entering via the main doors will need to be signed in and this will be recorded in the register as a late. Pupils arriving for the afternoon need to be brought to the main door and signed in, but will not be marked as late if they are here by 1.10pm.

- If a child is absent for any reason, please phone us as soon as you can on the first day of absence to advise us of the reason for absence. Usually this will be because they are unwell, but can sometimes be for various other unavoidable reasons. If we do not hear from you, we operate a first day phone call system, and will try to contact you on the first day of absence to find out the reason. If we have had a phone call, and your child is only absent for one day, then we do not need a note. Otherwise we need a note on their return.
- If a child has a contagious illness or infection and you need advice about when they can return to school, please contact us.
- If you need to take your child out of school for medical appointments during the school day, please let us know in advance if you can. You will need to sign them out at the main front office and we will collect your child from the class. We encourage you to bring children back into school as soon as possible if they have had an early morning appointment and are well enough to be at school. (You need to book a school dinner in advance by phoning the office by 10.00am if you know that your child will want one at 12 o'clock.)
- Where no reason is given, or no note is received for absences of more than 1 day, such absences will be recorded as unauthorised.

Authorising Absences

When advised by a parent/carer of a reason for absence, we generally accept the reason given, as we work on a trust basis with parents, and absences are authorised accordingly. However, if a pupil's attendance is poor (below 90%), we may need to ask for medical evidence to support absences for illness. This is rarely necessary, and where this is required you will be advised of this. Medical evidence can be a copy of a prescription or a stamped appointment card from the GP. At this stage, the education welfare officer may also be involved in trying to get improved attendance.

Special leave of absence during term time

If, for exceptional reasons, you wish to take your child out of school during term time, you will need to complete a Leave of Absence request form, which you can get from the school office. Holidays in term time (in line with National Policy) are **not** considered to be exceptional reasons, and if you are requesting leave for holidays you will need to give clear and full reasons why you consider the request to be exceptional.

Leave of absence is never granted:

- in the first half term of the academic year, for any year group. This is a vital settling in time which sets the tone for the whole year.
- in April/May for Year 2 or Year 6 as this is a national assessment time.
- in June for Year 1, as this is a national assessment time.

If a parent takes their child out for a holiday that has not been authorised, they may be issued with a fine of £60 (£120 if not paid within 28 days). Such fines are imposed by the Education Welfare Service.

Children Leaving

Parents are required to notify the school in writing if their child will be leaving the school, with details of their new school. If children disappear from school, we will make every effort to contact the parent/carer to trace the child. If we are unable to make contact, we will advise the Education Welfare Officer who will take appropriate action to indicate that the child is 'missing in education'. Children will lose their place at the school if they are not at school for 4 weeks and we have not been advised of the reason.

Staff

Mrs Sullivan in the school office deals with most routine attendance matters, and can help with queries. More serious issues will be dealt with by the Headteacher and the Education Welfare Officer.

This policy was written January 2016

JW/Policy statements/Attendance