

Church of England Primary Academy Trust

Attendance Policy 2016

Approved by: Curriculum and Safeguarding Committee

Date: 7.12.16

Signed: (Chair of C&S committee) *S. Curtis*

Review Date: (every 3 years) Autumn Term 2019

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies including: Behaviour, Exclusion, Anti-Bullying, PSHCE, SEND and other relevant policies

1. RATIONALE

At Westwoodside Church of England Academy we work together in partnership to ensure that all registered children attend school regularly and punctually. All children have the right to a full time and effective education.

For children to make the most of their educational experiences regular attendance is essential. At Westwoodside we recognise that irregular attendance disrupts the continuity of learning, undermines educational progress and can lead to underachievement and low attainment. Irregular attendance also prevents children from forming friendships in school and can lead to greater disaffection. Regular attendance on the other hand ensures continuity in learning, supports children to be happy and confident and to make supportive friendships. Children are enabled to make the most of all the opportunities the school has to offer.

We aim to work in partnership to ensure that every child can access a full-time education they deserve which helps them reach their full potential.

2. AIMS OF THIS POLICY

To promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which children feel safe, secure and valued.

Ensure that the curriculum is motivating and engaging for all children

Raise the importance of good attendance and punctuality

Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absence are recorded promptly and consistently.

Supporting parents and carers to ensure that children maintain good attendance and punctuality.

3. PUPILS RESPONSIBILITIES

- Children are expected to attend school and indeed all their lessons.
- They should be punctual so that they don't miss the start of learning especially those that are starting to walk to school themselves.
- Pupils may not leave the academy without a responsible adult.
- Pupils will inform their trusted adult if they have issues that are preventing them from attending school or being on time.

4. PARENT / CARERS RESPONSIBILITIES

- Parents and Carers have a legal duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed, fed and in a fit condition for learning so that they can receive a full time education
- If a child is absent from school for an unavoidable reason parents and carers must offer a reason for that absence. Parents should notify the school in person, by phone or preferably in writing.
- A child's absence is unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from their parent/ carer.
- Parents will be kept informed about their child's attendance and should respond accordingly.
- Parents and Carers should ensure their child arrives at the academy in time for the start of registration at 8.55. If a child arrives after this time they should report directly to the school office with an adult.

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- Parents/ Carers should avoid booking dentist and doctor's appointments during school hours. If this is unavoidable only take the necessary amount of time - a full or a half day is not necessary for most appointments.
- Parents / Carers may need to provide evidence of medical appointments or illness.
- Parents and Carers should not book family holidays during term-time.
- Parents and Carers may make requests for leave of absence as soon as they know the leave may be needed but at least 2 weeks' notice is required except in emergencies. A request should be submitted on a 'leave of absence form' available from the school office. Evidence supporting the reasons for the leave should be attached to the form and a discussion with the Head Teacher is encouraged. Leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances e.g. sick relative, time to be with a parent who is on leave from the services, attend a passing out parade or wedding of a close relative (one day, not a honeymoon afterwards) or degree presentation etc. Leave of absence will only be granted if the child's attendance is over 95% and there are no National Curriculum tests at that time.
- Parents and Carers should work closely with the school and the Education Welfare Officer to resolve any problems that may impact on their child's attendance.

5. ACADEMY RESPONSIBILITIES

- All staff will encourage good attendance and punctuality through their examples
- Attendance is the responsibility of all staff.
- Attendance will be recorded in accordance with statutory requirements (Dfe, School Attendance Nov 2016)
- The school will promote good attendance and punctuality and will investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents and the EWO.
- Staff will respond to absenteeism firmly and consistently.
- The school will monitor attendance each half term and report outcomes to EWO, Governors and parents.

6. REGISTRATION

Registers are called twice daily. Once at 8.55 am and again at 1.15pm. They are completed on a paper register sheet. Registers officially close at 9.05 am and 1.20pm.

Any child arriving in class after this time is recorded as 'late' for that session. Late marks are added to the register by the class teacher or office staff to ensure they are recorded as present. Late marks are officially recorded and may be reported to the EWO in the same way as unauthorised absence is.

L = late before registers close (present)

U = late after registers close (unauthorised absence)

If pupils fail to arrive before registers closes they are marked absent. Pupils who arrive after 9.05 and 1.20pm must report to the school office and be signed in by their parent/ carer. If a pupil is persistently late then the Head teacher will notify parents and request an explanation.

The administration team will call parents if a child has failed to arrive at school. This will be done between 9.30 and 10.00am. If contact cannot be made then the matter will be referred to the Head Teacher and further action may be taken. Similarly, if contact has been made but there are concerns, then follow up action may also ensue.

Parents are reminded that if a pupil arrives in school after registers have closed and an acceptable explanation is not forthcoming then the pupil has to be recorded as 'unauthorised absent' for that session.

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Teachers complete registers in accordance with guidance in the staff handbook. Any notes or messages about absence should be passed to the school office as soon as possible to be added to the child's file. Class teachers who have particular concerns about a child's attendance should speak to the Head Teacher as soon as possible.

Administration staff enter the registers on the SIMs system along with any explanations for absence. The Head teacher and administration staff regularly review attendance.

Should no explanation for the absence be given then the Admin team or Head Teacher will attempt to contact the parent/ carer. Should this be impossible and no reasonable explanation received the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

The academy does not have to accept explanations offered by parents/ carers. If there is any doubt as to the validity of the explanation then it may be recorded as unauthorised.

Where children are frequently absent from school due to illness parents/ carers may be asked to provide evidence of attendance at the doctor or minor injury/illness clinic. The school provides information about common illnesses which was written in conjunction with the EWO service and the NHS.

7. MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Governors set an attendance target each year in line with National attendance rates. They receive reports against this target on a termly basis.

Patterns of attendance for children and families are scrutinised to inform the picture of attendance e.g. if all children from one family are absent on the same day due to illness. Attendance is tracked by number of sessions missed as well as the % of sessions missed. A child who misses 3 and ½ days per half term is at risk of persistent absenteeism.

Attendance is deemed good if it is over 95%.

Attendance of 85% or lower is deemed persistent absenteeism.

When attendance falls below 95% parents will receive a letter informing them of their child's level of attendance.

A reason for a period of absence is always required. If no acceptable reason is received a letter will be sent enquiring as to the reason for the absence. If no acceptable reason is received after 2 weeks then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. A referral will be made to the EWO if necessary.

Referral systems to the EWO are in place and are followed rigorously. Relevant letters are sent at significant points, these are copied and filed as evidence is needed.

Attendance is reviewed on a half termly basis.

A letter will be sent to all parents if they are identified as having attendance issues. This letter will inform them of the schools concerns and offer support to resolve problems that may be preventing a child attending.

The pupil's attendance will be closely monitored and if, after a set period, there appears to be no improvement then carers will be invited to a meeting with the Head Teacher and EWO to discuss the issue and hopefully resolve any issues preventing the child attending.

If the parent/ carer does not attend the meeting and attendance does not improve then a referral to the EWO will be made.

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A penalty notice will be issued if there are 10 or more unauthorised sessions (half days).

8. PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

- Sharing leaflets about attendance and referring to it in the regular school newsletters.
- Praising children for their 100% attendance during a week
- Celebrating when the whole class is present for a whole week.
- Giving out half termly certificates for 100% attendance. This ensures that children have the opportunity to gain certificates even if they have been genuinely ill during one half term.
- Presenting termly certificates for 100% attendance
- Presenting annual certificates for 100% attendance.
- Personal encouragement and congratulations is offered to individual children too.
- Reporting each child's attendance in their annual report.
- Governors monitor attendance via the Head Teacher's report and compare it to national figures.

9. SUPPORTING ATTENDANCE

- Celebrating good attendance with individuals, classes and the whole school.
- Regularly reviewing registers and attendance patterns.
- Reporting attendance to parents so they can take positive action to improve attendance.
- Making referrals to the EWO for additional support. Poor attendance may lead to a parenting contract, order or penalty notice / prosecution.
- Pupils absent due to a long term illness will receive support to continue their learning and support to reintegrate back into school.

10. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years or in light of National or Local changes.

DOCUMENTS:

Dfe: School attendance Nov 2016

Dfe: School attendance parental responsibility measure Jan 2015

Date:	Agreed By:	Changes made
7.12.16	Curriculum Committee	Letter to go out at the time % attendance falls below set level, change this point in policy. Updated to guidance rec'd from NLC. Agreed to send policy to parents